

Prime Minister stated that he proposed to summon French Chargé and say to him approximately what he had said to us.

At diplomatic reception I discussed situation with my British and Turk colleagues and found that both of them agreed with me that recent border incidents had been systematically exaggerated by Israelis in press and over radio in order to build up apparent justification for large-scale aggression against Jordan.²

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² In response to this telegram, the Department stated on Apr. 24 that it was awaiting reports fixing responsibility for the attack before determining what action, if any, might be appropriate. (Telegram 856 to Amman, Apr. 24, 7:25 p. m.; 684A.85/4-2353)

No. 599

684A.85/4-2453: Telegram

*The Consul at Jerusalem (Tyler) to the Department of State*¹

SECRET PRIORITY

JERUSALEM, April 24, 1953—8 p. m.

142. Exchange of fire in Jerusalem on 22nd between armed forces Jordan and Israel most grimly serious threat to peace between two countries since armistice signed. UN not able to determine who fired first shot. Both sides agreed yesterday not to fire in Jerusalem area even if fired at unless an all-out attack was in progress. But after this meeting (Contel 139, April 23)² three shots were fired from Israel side. Lt. Col. Gaon immediately visited lines and came back shaken. He had found, he told General Riley, the shots came from civilians who had installed themselves in house in no man's land about 200 yards from American Consulate on Arab side. All police and army posts had been quiet.

One of civilians has been captured, the name of a second known and although Gaon was not explicit he fears a gang is abroad in Israel-Jerusalem. Whether terrorist, Herut revisionist, all matters for speculation, but this may go far to explain hitherto unexplained murders blamed on infiltrators (mytel 141, April 24).² It may be they who started shooting on 22nd with intent to start larger armed action.

If there does prove to be a gang intent on getting Israel to war with neighbors, made easier by Israel's too often repeated cry of

¹ Repeated priority to Tel Aviv, Amman, Beirut, Cairo, Damascus, London, and Paris.

² Not printed.