

had brought into the open the corruption of the Farouk regime and had led to a cleanup.

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No. 661

68842614/9-1053: Telegram

*The Chargé in Israel (Russell) to the Department of State*<sup>1</sup>

SECRET PRIORITY TEL AVIV, September 10, 1953—9 p. m.

309. Embassy discussed this morning in Tel Aviv with Joseph Tekoah, assistant legal adviser to Foreign Ministry, developments referred to in Deptel 195,<sup>2</sup> Embtel 305<sup>3</sup> and Jerusalem Telegram 33<sup>4</sup> to Department. Tekoah made following points:

(1) Present construction is additional stage in work that has been going on in connection with Huleh project for last few years;

(2) It will not affect volume of water in river or utilization of that water by Israelis or Arabs presently using it;

(3) It is not the beginning of those aspects of larger Lowdermilk project discussed with Syrians in latter stage of Israel-Syrian negotiations but is limited project which can be [but] need not necessarily be linked after its completion in two to three years with basic Lowdermilk system;

(4) If linked at that time, would not affect present water supply from Jordan River to Arab lands on east bank of Jordan above Tiberias;

(5) No work has begun on larger water projects discussed with Syrians which Israelis consider still on agenda when negotiations with Syria resumed;

(6) Tillitson made no objection when informed of construction plans on day it commenced (September 2) and given guarantee it would not involve construction on Arab-owned land or affect present water supply to Arab lands;

(7) Tillitson after discussion with Shalev September 7 did not deliver letter requesting Israel stop damming Jordan River (Jerusalem 33 to Department);

(8) Israel did not stop construction of dike as requested in Ben-nike letter September 8, on ground that request made on basis incorrect assumptions that island was Arab-owned and would be flooded as consequence this damming. Tekoah stated island was seasonal, appearing in summer and regularly inundated in winter, and was to best of IG knowledge not Arab-owned;

<sup>1</sup> Repeated priority to Damascus and Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> Document 658.

<sup>3</sup> Dated Sept. 8, not printed; it reported on the visit on Sept. 6 by the TCA water resources adviser to the site of the Israeli diversion of the Jordan River. (6884.2614/9-853)

<sup>4</sup> Not printed, but see footnote 2, Document 653.