

664A.86/9-1733: Telegram

The Chargé in Lebanon (Bruins) to the Department of State

SECRET

BEIRUT, September 17, 1953.

274. Replying last paragraph Deptel 348 September 12¹ on Jordan water allocation, Embassy assumes in view of policy line stated in Deptel 316, September 6 [4], question boils down to best method and timing of dissemination of facts presented by TVA report.

It may be possible to convince local governments of logic of our position. The real problem is to overcome the emotion of the Arab public on whole Palestine issue. Speaker of the Lebanese Parliament told Congressman Hillings last night "any Cabinet of either Lebanon, Syria or Jordan which makes a definite move toward *rapprochement* with Israel would fall before sunset. King Abdullah, last man who tried it, was riddled with bullets." He added he could not see why a great power like US worries about relations with Israel when all we have to do is to give gushing spigot of US financial aid to Israel a quarter turn downward.

I regard Lebanese public opinion less violent than above remarks or than opinion in Syria or Jordan. However, it seems to me our best chance of overcoming highly emotional Arab public opinion is "dissemination of facts" on even wider scale than suggested in Department's policy line; viz., come out with broad policy statement of our views on whole Arab-Israeli impasse and what we propose to do about it (see Embassy Despatch 135, September 9).² Tiberias reservoir project might gain Arab public acceptance as part of such over-all solution. Hesitation and indecisiveness on our part likely to unloose Pandora's box of evils.

Since Department possibly unready for move dramatic enough to overcome emotion of Arab public, it would appear only practical alternative is continued dispassionate engineering study of Yarmuk high dam plan. Studies to date show amazingly divergent conclusions. This is project of sufficient magnitude to make real dent in refugee problem, at an annual cost much lower than amounts we are devoting to Israel.

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¹ Printed as telegram 207 to Tel Aviv, Document 664.

² Not printed.