

No. 672

883.211/9-2158 Telegram

*The Chargé in Jordan (Lynch) to the Department of State*¹

SECRET PRIORITY

AMMAN, September 21, 1953—1 p. m.

129. Deptel 123.² Embassy has described Jordan's position with respect to regional scheme for development of Jordan Valley in Embtel 125.³ Embassy is convinced political and psychological considerations rule out possibility of Jordan's acquiescence under any circumstances short of an over-all peace settlement acceptable to the Arabs. So charged is the political atmosphere in Jordan vis-à-vis Israel, that economic sense is not the criterion by which they reach decisions. Emotion dictates a course of no piecemeal, non-political agreements with Israel until, if ever, a satisfactory over-all political settlement is achieved. This means that a course of US policy action which envisages a step-by-step approach to the solution of the Arab-Israeli problem (as exemplified by the regional Jordan Valley scheme) is doomed to failure at the start. Its only real chance of success is that it become an integral part of a realistic over-all political settlement based on a recognition of the fact that without major Israeli concessions (territorial and/or otherwise) there will be neither a settlement of the Arab-Israeli problem nor stability in the Middle East.

Given this hypothesis, it can be seen that the injection into the picture of new "circumstances" such as the Banat Yaacov diversion incident does not alter the situation as far as Jordan is concerned. That Israel has undertaken further unilateral action with respect to the use of Jordan Valley waters is, therefore, not a lever we can successfully use to persuade Jordan to give up her own unilateral scheme (the Yarmuk project) to the mutual interest of both countries. It is axiomatic of the Jordanian Arab, mirrored in the policy actions of his leaders, that he would rather hurt himself than help his "enemy". Even if Jordan is given to understand that refusing to accede to a regional scheme for development of the Jordan Valley means consummation of the Banat Yaacov scheme in the form of total diversion of the Upper Jordan into Israel, Jordan will stand fast. Presumably she would wish to go ahead with Yarmuk project on assumption that loss of Jordan waters would perceptibly but not seriously reduce the efficacy of Yarmuk scheme.

¹ Repeated to Tel Aviv, Damascus, Beirut, Jidda, Cairo, Baghdad, London, and Haifa.

² Printed as telegram 207 to Tel Aviv, Document 664.

³ Document 667.