

684A.85/10-1753: Telegram

*The Chargé in Israel (Russell) to the Department of State*¹

SECRET NIACT

TEL AVIV, October 17, 1953—10 p. m.

472. At request Foreign Minister Sharett, met with him at his residence Tel Aviv this afternoon. Referring to Israel-Jordan border situation, he stated following:

Did not wish say word in justification anything which had happened. Wished repeat, however, that the latest incident treated in isolation would distort picture. Latest events must be understood against recent rising tide border lawlessness including thefts, firing at transport, and such incidents as that at Yehud. This situation intolerable, he said. Israel hoped for sign Jordan agreed situation was intolerable and would agree meet with Israel leaders on highest level in order find means reduce border tension.

Of late, Foreign Minister stated, Israel has "met with imputations of very serious design". Had just received report of conversation between Byroade and Nahum Goldmann, according to which Byroade said that underlying rationalization of all that has happened in last few months is "grim design on part of Israel to unleash furies in region by provoking war". Foreign Minister stated he hoped that report was inaccurate since there could be "no more fantastic misreading".²

Said it was true Israel does not accept state of economic stagnation and will make use of its sovereignty to explore all possible schemes of development. Has been true Israel not willing cease pursue this course just because part of project is in demilitarized zone. To cease for this reason will not only guarantee stagnation of zone, but prevent other kinds development. To conclude from this, however, that Israel is deliberately bent on "producing first-rate catastrophe in Middle East is too fantastic for words". Foreign Minister said he wished "completely disabuse Assistant Secretary Byroade's honest and clean mind of such pollution which can only

¹ Repeated to London, Amman, and Paris; sent by pouch to the Arab capitals.

² In telegram 309 to Tel Aviv, Oct. 19, 7:16 p. m., Byroade advised Russell as follows:

"Statement attributed by Nahum Goldmann to me, urtel 472, was made with introduction 'I cannot believe it could be true, but sometimes I am forced to wonder if underlying rationalization of all that has happened in last few months is grim design on part of Israel to unleash furies in region by provoking war.' Think you handled conversation great skill in spite of propaganda thrown your way about state of my mind." (684A.85/10-1753)