

No. 763

784.00/1-1154: Despatch

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

SECRET

JERUSALEM, January 11, 1954.

No. 129

Ref: Dept's CA-3150 December 11, 1953

Subject: Internationalization of Jerusalem

Summary

General Dayan, Chief of Staff, Israel Defense Forces, has informed me that subject to the definition of demilitarization of Jerusalem, he believed Israel would not only consider it favorably but had already discussed it. The Vatican retreat, if true, is most startling of revised thinking on this problem. Jordan has taken a far more open stand against internationalization; Colonel Eddy, former American Minister to Saudi Arabia has changed his mind and is now against internationalization as is the majority of the Palestine Refugee Political Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Izzat Tannous in Beirut. One obstacle to settlement of the issue is Israel's defiant move of her Foreign Office (Con despatch 10, July 14, 1953).¹ If the problem is settled by keeping the city divided as now Israel will again be boosted in her self-righteousness and Arabs will have another reason to deplore United Nations and Western inability to make Israel conform to any standards other than Israel's own desires.

1) On a visit to Jerusalem January 2 General Dayan and his wife and three children paid us a visit. Knowing how much Mrs. Dayan loves Jerusalem I asked the General privately whether there would ever be any possibility of moving the General Staff of the Israel Defense Forces to the city. I recalled that the number of troops in both sides of Jerusalem was limited by the Armistice Agreement with Jordan and wondered if complete demilitarization took place whether that would improve the chances of his coming here to live. Dayan replied that depending on the definition of demilitarization he felt Israel would agree to it and in fact had already been discussed.

"If you ever tell anyone that the Chief of Staff, whose job it is to defend Israel and its government, ever suggested the demilitarization of the capital, I'll deny it," he warned me smiling.

¹ Not printed.