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*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Officer in Charge of
Palestine-Israel-Jordan Affairs (Waller)*

CONFIDENTIAL

[WASHINGTON,] January 15, 1954.

Subject: Israel-Arab Relations, including: the Egyptian blockade, the Israel-Jordan Armistice, the Banat Ya'qub project, the Arab League, and arms supplies for the Near East.

Participants: The Secretary

Ambassador Abba Eban of Israel

Minister Reuven Shiloah of Israel

NEA—Mr. Byroade

NE—Mr. Waller

Ambassador Eban reviewed Egyptian activities during the past few years to maintain and intensify the blockade against shipping to and from Israel. Egypt's denial of Suez Canal transit facilities is costing Israel annually an amount equivalent to US aid. Each time Israel has sought political action through the SC the US has said the time was inopportune. He has now been authorized to bring the matter again to the SC at a suitable time. His present thinking is to do so in February after the Banat Ya'qub resolution has been passed and the SC agenda is less crowded. He said the British Government believes conclusion of an Anglo-Egyptian agreement on Suez would help the Egyptian Government initiate peace talks with Israel. Pending such an agreement Israel wants the SC to order Egypt to abolish the restrictive regulations. Egyptian compliance with the SC resolution would strengthen the armistice machinery.

The Ambassador said Israel's most pressing concern with Jordan is for a conference as required by Article XII of the Armistice Agreement. Israel is not trying to drag Jordan into peace discussions. On the contrary, Israel wants to limit the conference to the terms of the Armistice Agreement and has asked the UNSYG to reassure the Jordanians on this score. It is basically a question of Jordan honoring its signature.

The Ambassador said he was disquieted by Syrian reaction to the compromise text of the Banat Ya'qub resolution, since the Jordan River flows some 60 miles in Israel but not one inch in Syria. Israel is not enthusiastic about the resolution but recognizes it does give Israel an opportunity to present its case to the Chief of Staff. In a recent conversation, Vyshinsky strongly denied he supports the Syrian viewpoint. His objection to paragraph 11 of the draft resolu-