

No. 775

684A.85/3-1954: Telegram

*The Ambassador in Jordan (Mallory) to the Department of State*¹

CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY AMMAN, March 18, 1954—4 p. m.

361. Re Deptel 365,² see Embtel 360.³ Today Foreign Minister spoke to me re statements by Israeli Minister Defense Lavon and Chief of Staff Dayan on March 16 and questioned Israeli intentions. I believe Jordan clearly recognizes Israel has superior military forces. This renders any aggression by Jordan forces extremely unlikely. In event another Qibya incident retaliatory action might be forced upon Jordan by local political situation resulting from aroused public opinion. At present time, above, coupled with moderating influence of Glubb as C in C leads conclusion Israeli fears and claims groundless. Jordan particularly apprehensive Israeli action at this time because fear unstable political situation Arab world will be considered suitable moment by Israel for long contemplated aggression, presenting Israel opportunity place blame on Arabs as irresponsible. Moreover Jordan has little confidence effective Arab support.

There is no local evidence of Israel military build-up on Jordan border but local authoritative opinion is concerned over increasing border tension and increasing Israeli claims of alleged border violations. Latest Israeli claim re bus ambush adds to preoccupation:

MALLORY

¹ Repeated to Tel Aviv, London, Beirut, Damascus, Jerusalem, Cairo, Baghdad, Jidda, Rome, and Paris.

² Telegram 365 to Amman, subsequently changed to 364, is the same as telegram 654 to Tel Aviv, *supra*.

³ Telegram 360 from Amman, Mar. 18, 1 p. m., referred to the murder of Israeli bus passengers in an attack at Scorpion Pass, near Beersheba, and reported in part that the Jordanian Government was expecting a raid by Israel in retaliation. (684A.85/3-1954)