night that Lebanese basically would like to soften existing conditions. GOL has even sought to keep out of press inflammatory remarks attributed to Israeli officials such as Dayan's alleged Reserve Officers Day statement that war with Arabs is "inevitable" which carried in AFP story with Defense Minister's comments against Iraqi alignment with Turks and Pakistanis.

HARE

No. 778

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

CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY TEL AVIV, March 19, 1954—5 p. m.

954. Re Embtel 951. [2] Bendor, head US division Foreign Ministry, last evening at dinner Tel Aviv, made following comments which he said could be regarded in nature of official statement: Israel public shocked and bitter at Negev bus ambush. Too early to tell what direction reaction will take. Israeli Government and public fundamentally divided between policy of forcefully demonstrating Israel strength and determination at this time and policy of restraint enunciated by Sharett in speech three days ago (Embtel 944). [2] Reaction of world opinion, UN, Western powers and particularly US to latest outrage and international measures flowing therefrom could be determining factor. (Unofficially Bendor said Sharett's position with public and even within own party also likely to be determined thereby.)

Bendor said great importance therefore will attach to whether US expresses its strong abhorrence of bus ambush episode and is active in securing Security Council resolution of severe condemnation.

I expressed to Bendor my concern over mounting tension and increasing tempo and seriousness of recent episodes. I said it might be necessary to choose between statements and resolutions of abhorrence and condemnation on one hand or on other hand utilizing Jordan's possible need rectify impairment moral position by urging Jordan agree to meeting on border problem with Israel under Article 12 or possibly (to enable Jordan to save face in light of recent rejection of meeting) under some other terms of reference. Bendor

[1] Repeated to Amman.
[2] Not printed.