

Missions should urge restraint by all concerned and avoidance provocative acts and utterances. Situation could easily drift into widespread hostilities.

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*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Deputy Director of the Office  
of Near Eastern Affairs (Dorsey)*

SECRET

[WASHINGTON,] March 23, 1954.

Subject: Jordan's Fear of Israeli Retaliatory Action

Participants: Mr. Abdul Monem Rifa'i, Ambassador of Jordan  
NEA—Mr. Byroade  
NE—Mr. Dorsey

Ambassador Rifa'i called at 6:30 P. M. today to see Mr. Byroade on urgent business. He said he had received a telegram from his Government that Israeli Delegation had walked out of the Mixed Armistice Commission when it had failed to reach a decision to condemn Jordan for the Attack on the Israeli bus at Scorpion Pass. He translated his telegram, which stated that the Israeli Delegates were violent in their expressions and described the situation as extremely serious. Ambassador Rifa'i said that the past pattern of events indicated that such an outcome of affairs was usually followed by serious retaliatory measures. His Government had therefore requested him to approach the Department to indicate to the Israeli Ambassador its serious concern and its hope that Israel would act with the utmost restraint and caution.

Mr. Byroade said that he had already taken such action in conversation with Minister Shiloah within the past hour. He added that we would watch the situation with greatest care and reiterated the hope expressed by the Secretary in the morning that the Jordanians should also be patient and calm in the present period of tension, doing everything possible to prevent any incident developing into anything serious.

Mr. Rifa'i said the Jordanian Government felt in no way responsible for the massacre. It had taken every possible measure to reduce border tensions and would continue to do so as it would to insure all possible restraint on the part of the people. He expressed deep appreciation for the action taken by Mr. Byroade.