

No. 781

680.84A/3-2454

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Officer in Charge of Lebanon-Syria Affairs (Allen)

CONFIDENTIAL

[WASHINGTON,] March 24, 1954.

Subject: Israeli-Arab Tension and U.S. "Support" of Israel

Participants: Seven Arab Chiefs of Mission:

Ambassador Malik—Lebanon
Ambassador Shabandar—Iraq
Ambassador Al-Faqih—Saudi Arabia
Chargé d'Affaires Zabarah—Yemen
Ambassador Zeineddine—Syria
Ambassador Rifai—Jordan
Chargé d'Affaires Labban—Egypt
The Secretary
NEA—Mr. Byroade
NE—Mr. Allen

Ambassador Malik acted as spokesman for the Arab group. He said all were calling on instructions of their governments to call to the attention of the Secretary the mounting tension in the Near East "caused by Israel"; to express their belief that underlying Israel's "aggressive actions" over the past few months was the intention to provoke one or another of the Arab countries to react in such a way as to give Israel an excuse for a large-scale military attack; and to inform the U.S. Government that in the event of an Israeli attack on any Arab country, all would instantaneously give full military support to the attacked country, as they were bound to do under the Arab Collective Security Pact.

Ambassador Malik listed as examples of Israel's aggressiveness the Qibya incident; the al-Auja incident (on the Israel-Egyptian border last fall); Israel's attempt to divert the Jordan at Banat Ya'qub; Israel's attempt to "force" Jordan to attend a "peace conference" with Israel (under Article 12 of the Armistice Agreement); the constant pressure exerted by Israel to prevent economic and military aid going to the Arab countries; recent Israeli troop movements; recent belligerent speeches of the Israel Minister of Defense and Chief of Staff; and the violent Israel reaction to the regrettable "bus" incident in the Negev. He stated that these Israeli actions have created a most dangerous atmosphere of tension.

Ambassador Malik said that the Arab representatives were approaching the United States for two reasons: because of the interest they know the United States, as a member of the UN, has in