

No. 798

67484A/4-1754: Telegram

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

CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY TEL AVIV, April 17, 1954—noon.

1071. Embtel 1061, ² Cairo telegram to Department 1305. ³

Raphael and Tekoah of Foreign Ministry yesterday said Israel delegation consisting of Tekoah and Divon of Foreign Ministry and Colonel Harkabi and Lt. Colonel Shalev of IDF would be prepared meet Colonel Riad at either Beersheba or Gaza on April 19 on agenda "cessation of all acts of hostility and in particular of violations of border security". I said I feared delegation of that size and agenda of that scope would kill prospects of meeting of kind Shiloah, Hart and I had proposed. They agreed discuss matter with Sharett and last evening said IG willing have Tekoah representing Foreign Ministry and Shalev representing military meet with Riad without formal agenda but with purpose of (1) "telling Riad of IG's anxieties re border situation and hearing from Riad what Egypt willing to do about it" and (2) discussing later meeting of plenipotentiaries on over all peace.

Re latter, they said IG had, immediately prior discussion between Shiloah, Hart and myself, made direct contact with Egypt concerning possibilities such meeting. I said re (1) I thought meeting would be more fruitful if it took form of mutual discussion of common problem and (2) proposal would of course require full consideration at highest level Egyptian Government and too great emphasis on it might result in wrecking informal exploratory meeting on border problems which Shiloah, Hart and I had discussed. Said I appreciated Sharett's agreement to such ambitious meeting and would forward IG's suggestions.

RUSSELL

¹ Sent also to Cairo as telegram 82.

² In telegram 1061 from Tel Aviv, Apr. 15, 3 p. m., Chargé Russell reported that Arthur Lourie, the new head of the U.S. Division of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, had stated that the Israeli Government hoped that the proposed meeting with an Egyptian representative would deal with a broader range of questions than those relating to the immediate border situation. Russell expressed the hope to Lourie that the Israeli Government would not attempt to "place too heavy a load on this fragile craft on its first voyage." (684A.35/4-1554)

³ Not printed.