

No. 802

684A.86/4-1654: Telegram

*The Ambassador in Lebanon (Hare) to the Department of State*¹

TOP SECRET PRIORITY BEIRUT, April 18, 1954—11 a. m.

874. Despite some recent alarmist rumors situation along Lebanese-Israel frontier continues reasonably stable. However, repeated incidents along Israel's other frontiers have caused Lebanese Government grave concern and give evidence, as noted by Secretary, that Israelis deliberately engaging series of military, quasi-military and political actions aimed at keeping frontiers in turmoil and so depreciating value of UNTSO machinery that UN and great powers will feel impelled seek some new arrangement more to Israel's advantage. This situation leads me venture following comments in reply Deptel 1160, April 15:²

(1) Our declared policy of impartiality is sound but in existing circumstances it would be inconsistent with sound political judgment to interpret impartiality in terms of holding both sides equally responsible. The fact is that Israel has gotten out of line and real impartiality requires getting her renew play according to rules. After all, a referee does not cease being impartial when he penalizes an offending team.

(2) As regards direct talks, this too is a sound objective provided that circumstances are reasonably favorable but unfortunately such is not the case now nor can it be foreseen in the near future. To begin with, it would seem that Israel is in fact not so much attacking the Arab States as the UN armistice machinery itself. Secondly, it is not believed that any Arab government could, even if it would, accede to Western pressures, no matter how strong, to engage in direct conversations as matters now stand. Thirdly, even if by some miracle talks should take place now, it is difficult to believe that results would be productive in view present emotional intensity and domestic situations in countries concerned.

(3) While reiterating endorsement principles of impartiality and encouraging direct talks as feasible, it would respectfully suggest that progress toward solution of Palestine problem may have been retarded rather than stimulated in past by argument that Arab-Israel problem is "theirs" not "ours". This is not fact. Israel came into being as result action by the international community and it will take further action by the international community to settle her as peaceful Near Eastern state. To be sure the Arab States and Israel have an important share of responsibility but it is only partial. Furthermore, regardless of responsibility, the task would be

¹ Repeated to Amman, Cairo, Damascus, Tel Aviv, London, Paris, Jidda, and Jerusalem.

² Printed as telegram 407 to Amman, Document 796.