

No. 812

674.84A/4-2854: Telegram

*The Ambassador in Egypt (Caffery) to the Department of State*¹

CONFIDENTIAL

CAIRO, April 28, 1954—11 a. m.

1359. Re urtel 85.² Egypt lodged complaints April 25 and 26 and requested emergency meeting MAC re Israeli fire across demarcation line at Egyptian posts with heavy weapons on those days.

Egyptian Government decision re informal meeting with Israelis given Embassy office by Riad last night is:

1. Two emergency meetings requested by Egypt must be held before any informal meeting can take place.
2. After MAC meetings Gohar (not Riad) being authorized meet Shalev informally any time.
3. Riad cannot meet with Israelis under pressure such as recent incidents but only after lapse of time during which quiet maintained in Area.

Riad unaware any incident April 24. He said on April 25 Israelis opened fire across DZ with automatic weapons. Egypt replied. Then Israelis started fire with heavy weapons against five Egyptian posts. UN observer obtained cessation Israeli fire on twenty-fifth by appeal higher Israeli military authority. Fact that heavy weapon fire resumed twenty-sixth can only mean according to Riad that use of such fire is Israeli Government policy designed achieve political objective. Only sheer luck there were no Egyptian casualties.

"If use heavy weapons is official Israeli policy" Riad said, "What is the use of our meeting with them?" "What could we say?" "Can we change orders of Israeli Government to its responsible officers to use artillery?"

Egyptians believe Israeli proposal for meeting outlined in reflet designed by-pass UN machinery and that reference to "latest developments" reveals reasons behind latest incidents involving use heavy weapons.³

CAFFERY

¹ Sent to Tel Aviv as telegram 77; repeated to the Department, London, Amman, Baghdad, Beirut, Damascus, Jidda and Jerusalem.

² Printed as telegram 1114 from Tel Aviv, Document 810.

³ In a conversation on May 3 with Eytan, Director General of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, Chargé Russell inquired whether, in view of the fact that emergency meetings of the Mixed Armistice Commission had now been held, the Israeli Government now wished to proceed with a meeting between Gohar and Shalev. Eytan replied that the proposed meeting had been so downgraded from the Israeli Government's original concept and would be so nearly like a regular Mixed Armistice Commission meeting, that Israel was not disposed to press the matter. However, if Gohar wanted to make a specific proposal for a meeting, Shalev would be prepared to attend. (Telegram 1157 from Tel Aviv, May 4, 6 p. m.; 674.84A/5-454) Ambassador Caffery reported on May 6 that Riad was content to let the proposed meeting between Gohar and Shalev drop. (Telegram 1401 from Cairo, May 6, 2 p. m.; 674.84A/5-654)