

884A.85/9-254: Telegram

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

CONFIDENTIAL

TEL AVIV, August 3, 1954—7 p. m.

125. Moshe Keren, former Counselor Israeli Embassy Washington, presently chief editorial writer *Haaretz*, yesterday in reply my question as to danger of Israel outbreak said he does not believe serious danger of deliberate aggression by Israel. Believes as result present policy impasse between Israeli Government and Western Powers, sense of insecurity, frustration, and ill-will toward major powers, and particularly US likely to increase and foresees continuation present uneasy border relations between Israel and neighbors but, in absence of "a Qibya in reverse", does not believe Israeli Government will resort to outburst".

Keren said Ben Gurion has stated, and Keren believes, he will not return as Prime Minister as long as present party system continues with its innumerable squabbles and ability minority parties to hold up government action, and Keren believes no likelihood of party system change in near future. While Keren bitterly disappointed at Sharett's unwillingness to change "present obstructive and sterile policy toward US" he believes Sharett has broad political support within government and is generally successful in resolving inter party differences. Keren does not believe Lavon has sufficient backing to take over government.

Israel will undoubtedly continue its policy of reacting in strength to Arab border infringements. There is danger this may lead to Arab counter-reaction which would serve as excuse for Israel attack. IDF and supporting "activist" group have capability of promoting this kind of development and in this way could outmaneuver more moderate Sharett faction. Also, Francis Offner, Israeli *Christian Science Monitor* correspondent, believes there is element of danger in facet in Israeli character which may lead them, in face of a deteriorating international position, to gamble everything on a dramatic, desperate move to assert dominance even though it may be demonstrably against their best interest.