

No. 861

684A.85/8-1454: Telegram

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

SECRET

CAIRO, August 14, 1954—2 p. m.

203. When approached re substance Department's 240 August 12 Gohar reiterated Egyptian willingness to meet informally with Israelis in order to agree on ways and means to mitigate border tensions and prevent incidents. However, he asserts only way that this can be done with any hope of success is by having meeting between "the men who know" i.e., the senior delegates of each side in the EIMAC. Egyptian-Israeli frontier only fifty kilometers long (Embtel 179, August 7). Egypt would be prepared implement faithfully any understandings reached at such a meeting and he did not preclude possibility of contacts between commanders being agreed upon although on the Egyptian side he did not see how this would be of much use. "Our commanders will do what I say". Gohar reiterated idea that an Egyptian-Israeli police subcommittee of the MAC could achieve more than anything else. He reminded Embassy officer that on May 4, 1952, he had suggested to Israelis at MAC meeting that there should be mixed Egyptian-Israeli border patrols to arrest infiltrators. After first agreeing in principle, Israelis reversed themselves and said their policy was to kill, not arrest, infiltrators.

Gohar said he knew nothing about incident paragraph 1 Tel Aviv's 159, August 13 to Department.² Re paragraph 2, he said Israeli patrol crossed line; was warned by machinegun bursts turn back and after doing so mortared Egyptian outpost. No casualties.

Comment: Gohar is irked by Dayan's "propaganda" in US to effect Egyptian side not cooperative and suggesting that Gohar regards as "quite useless" meetings between commanders who are not qualified deal with civilian troublemakers. In his view MAC, aegis essential; on this basis he will talk Israelis any time.

CAFFERY

¹ Repeated to Tel Aviv and Amman.

² Paragraph 1 of telegram 159 from Tel Aviv, Aug. 13, 3 p. m., summarized a press report of a border incident in the Gaza Strip on Aug. 1. (674.84A/8-1354)