

684A.8678-3054: Telegram

*The Chargé in Syria (Strong) to the Department of State*<sup>1</sup>

TOP SECRET

DAMASCUS, August 30, 1954—2 p. m.

96. Deptcirtel 108, August 21. USSR threat to area requires US weigh moves here for effect on Soviet position. Evidence Commie activity in Syria multiplying; US-Israel treaty on public exchange notes would undermine US position here and play into Soviet hands. Almost certainly any commitment from US to Israel sufficient to satisfy Israelis would, if known, revive Arab fears of US favoritism toward Israel. As noted Beirut Embtel 171 to Department August 21, Arab fears this score have been diminishing recently as result US actions during last year and half. Should US appear give special attention Israeli security problem, however, opportunity would be presented USSR increase ties with Syria, viz. Soviet vetoes Banat Ya Qub and Suez.

In any case, extent to which Israeli fears justified requires careful examination. In light Israel policy provocation and retaliation (e.g. Amman 67, August 24)<sup>2</sup> and relative military capabilities, Arab fears Israeli aggression seem more realistic than Israeli psychosis re Arabs. See no justification large-scale US assurances to Israel which might lead Tel Aviv continue provocative policy in hope instigating Arab attack.

For foregoing considerations believe treaty method particularly undesirable. Syria unlikely desire similar treaty but would view Israel-US pact as hostile act by US. Secret exchange of notes on other hand might afford possibility satisfying Israel's reasonable requirements.

Following are Embassy specific suggestions:

1. Note should avoid committing US in advance to act automatically but indicate measures, including, NSC economic sanctions, we would take after we determined unprovoked aggression had occurred.

2. Reconsider reference in text military build-up jeopardizing Israel's security (numbered paragraph 1, reference telegram), since basic and should [sic] US contention is that, view tripartite declaration and other considerations. US arms aid Arabs will not place Israel in jeopardy. Present wording appears question this.

3. View possibility US-Israel exchange becoming known, might consider parallel US exchanges with Arabs to demonstrate continu-

<sup>1</sup> Repeated to Tel Aviv, Amman, Beirut, Baghdad, Cairo, and Jidda.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed.