

No. 880

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Memorandum of Conversation, by the Officer in Charge of Israel-Jordan Affairs (Bergus)

CONFIDENTIAL

[WASHINGTON,] August 31, 1954.

Subject: Review of U.S.-Lebanon Relations

Participants: Dr. Charles Malik, Ambassador of Lebanon
NEA—Mr. Jernegan
NE—Mr. Bergus

Ambassador Malik stated that he was returning to Beirut for consultations on September 2 and planned to remain for about two weeks. He wished to review the current situation before returning so that he would be in a position to discuss matters fully with the Lebanese Government. Firstly, he wondered whether there was anything useful which he might tell President Chamoun with regard to the prospects of an official visit to the United States by the President of Lebanon. The Ambassador hoped that such a visit might be possible for the spring of 1955.

Mr. Jernegan replied that he had no information for the Ambassador at this time on the subject. The matter was still under consideration at the White House and so far as was known the definitive schedule of official visitors for next year had not been drawn up. Mr. Jernegan would look into the matter but he doubted whether he would have any information on the subject prior to the Ambassador's departure.

The Ambassador inquired as to the prospect of FY 1955 special economic aid for Lebanon. Mr. Jernegan reviewed the situation, pointing out the cut which the appropriation for development assistance in the Near East had sustained in the Congress, and outlining the needs in other countries of the area. We had made a start in Lebanon in FY 1954 and the program there would continue. We could not predict the magnitude or character of our FY 1955 program in Lebanon. We understood that the Lebanese Government and the U.S. Operations Mission in Beirut were presently working out projects for presentation to Washington. Once these were presented, a decision would be made as to the nature of our program for the current fiscal year. In all probability, our program for Lebanon would be small for this year. Funds were short and it would take time to build up the programs resulting from the allocations given Lebanon at the close of FY 1954. We wished also to avoid going back to Congress next year with large unobligated balances.