

No. 886

611,899-354: Telegram

*The Chargé in Iraq (Ireland) to the Department of State*¹

TOP SECRET PRIORITY BAGHDAD, September 3, 1954—5 p. m.

135. While Department is certainly best able judge necessity of giving Israel assurances of type proposed in Department Circular telegram 125,² Embassy feels duty to call attention to fact that unilateral declaration to Israel as phrased, together with the inevitable knowledge in Arab States that Israel has succeeded in pressurizing US into issuing such assurances, will negate in Iraq the thoughtful and constructive efforts of past 18 months' to restore confidence in US as being as genuinely interested in friendship of 40 million Arabs as of 1 1/2 million Israelis, the gradual realization of which has done much to reverse dangerous trend of Arab world away from US and the West. It may well vitiate long and painful efforts we have made in guiding Iraq toward concept of effective regional defense planning. No amount of secondary phrasing indicating similar concern for Arabs can obscure fact that in Iraqi eyes any such gesture will be regarded as gratuitous and unwarranted assurance to aggressor nation. We do not presume judge correctness of Iraqi (vis-à-vis Israel), but must point out that Iraqi conviction of aggressive Israeli designs in recent frontier incidents with neighboring Arab States is no less real than the alleged Israeli fear of Arab attack which motivates this declaration. Iraqis will find it particularly difficult to understand appearance note at this time in light of:

(1) Fact that most of recent Israel-Jordan border incidents have been of Israeli origin. (Amman to Department 79 September 2.)³

(2) No US arms have yet been received in Iraq, which is only country with military assistance agreement. Iraq has issued no threats against Israel and appears to be genuinely oriented towards defense north and northwest. Department may doubt Iraqi undertaking that US arms will be used only in defense of itself and free world but proposed note to Israel would publicly reflect suspicion of Iraq's pledged word and would not fail to cause resentment there.

(3) Iraq has now put forward collective security plan, under Article 51 of UN Charter, with request for US comments and suggestions of modifications to meet US views and containing avowed objective of peace with Israel to which we have not yet given our definite reply. While plan may come to naught, it does provide evi-

¹ Repeated to Cairo, Amman, Beirut, Damascus, Jidda, Jerusalem, Tripoli, Tel Aviv, Ankara, and London.

² Document 881.

³ See footnote 2, Document 883.