

No. 900

684A.85/10-154: Telegram

*The Chargé in Israel (Russell) to the Department of State*¹

CONFIDENTIAL

TEL AVIV, October 1, 1954—3 p. m.

306. Deptel 185. ² Eytan, Director General Foreign Ministry, this morning, when I met him at Lydda airport at British Ambassador's leave-taking, told me Prime Minister, who is on two weeks unofficial vacation, Embassy had asked him to give me following message:

Prime Minister upset and anxious as result recent border episodes, especially along Gaza Strip. He had hoped, following his last meeting with me (Embtel 260),³ that US would take energetic action toward Egypt and publicize it. US has in past been expeditious in making public its condemnation of Israel for similar acts and it looks as though US applying double standard. Israel's restraint, instead of having tranquilizing effect, has been rewarded by two extremely serious incidents including killing of two men at Beit Hashikma. As result, atmosphere in that part Israel extremely grim. Sharett says he has taken pains to see that as far as lies within power of Israel Government nothing will be done but doesn't know how long he can maintain restraint in light of new incidents. Would like to feel US would take energetic action and publicize it. That of itself would have tranquilizing effect. Also, situation on Jordan border getting serious again. Three days ago one of most valuable flocks of blooded sheep in country, worth IL75,000, stolen from Kibbutz. Day before yesterday man killed at Bar Ginra in Jerusalem corridor.

I told Eytan: (1) With respect publicity of US position on order [border] incidents we drew distinction between army action such as Beit Liqya and private marauding. (2) Our representatives in Arab countries inclined give authorities greater credit for efforts to prevent infiltration that Israel Government accords them. (3) We believe General Burns efforts establish practice of frequent visits to trouble spots by border teams best available means of reducing very type of incident which concerns Prime Minister and we hope

authorities at the southern entrance of the Suez Canal. (U.N. doc. S/3296) In a letter of Sept. 29, Egypt stated that the *Bat Galim* had approached the harbor of Suez and without provocation had opened fire with small arms on Egyptian fishing boats within territorial waters. Egypt had arrested the crew and ordered an inquiry to determine responsibility for the incident. (U.N. doc. S/3297)

¹ Repeated to Amman, Cairo, and Jerusalem.

² Not printed.

³ Document 892.