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*HS L 179:115a*



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Kielron, M. R. (Deputy Representative of Israel  
to the U.N.)

- 2 letters from D.H.

L 179: 1159

13 August 1956

Dear Mr. Kidron,

I feel that it may be useful to put on paper some of the views I expressed to you in the course of our recent conversation. I am sure that you may wish to bring to the attention of your Government this appraisal of the situation and my reasons for concern about the unsatisfactory outcome so far, of the discussions of various practical problems.

You will have observed that in my report on the development along the Israel/Jordan Demarcation Line of 3 August 1956, I stated that I did not circulate those parts of the report of the Chief of Staff which concerned other aspects of the UN activities in the area, such as local arrangements and the development in the demilitarized zones. The reason was that those parts of the report referred to questions concerning which negotiations were not yet concluded. My intention in taking this stand was, as you certainly appreciate, to keep open the chances for a positive outcome of the discussion on various pending questions. For your information I enclose those parts of the report of the Chief of Staff concerning local arrangements and the development in the demilitarized zones which were not circulated. These extracts give a good survey of questions which still have to be solved.

At my recent talks in Jerusalem I left the settlement of the various pending questions, which fall within the orbit of the direct responsibilities of the Chief of Staff, to further discussions between him and the Israeli authorities, limiting myself to such observations of a general nature as I considered relevant to the case. However, this obviously does not mean that I disinterest myself in the outcome of those discussions. On the contrary,

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under my mandates from the Security Council of 4 April and 4 June 1956, I am under an obligation to use my best endeavours not only to reduce tension along the armistice demarcation lines, but to further the implementation of various arrangements which were enumerated by the Security Council and which, all of them, are brought into focus by those problems which the Chief of Staff has to settle with the Israeli authorities. Under these mandates I consider it my duty to report to the Security Council important developments, in a favourable or in an unfavourable direction, changing the situation as set out in my report of 6 May. A negative outcome of present discussions would definitely oblige me to go on record with the Security Council, as failures to reach the desired results would, each by itself and even more so taken together, represent a further serious departure from full compliance with the armistice agreements and from the organizational arrangements envisaged by the Security Council.

The questions of observer arrangements in the Tiberias area and for the El Auja Demilitarized Zone will again be taken up with the Israeli authorities by the Chief of Staff. He will likewise take up again the relevant developments concerning the MAC meetings at El Auja and the fortification works in the Demilitarized Zones to which the Armistice Agreements themselves lend special importance. As the matters have been pending for too long already, I feel that these renewed contacts must bring us to the final point, whether it be positive or negative. I do not consider that much more time should be needed for final decisions, and I do not find that we can grant ourselves much time if the situation is not to become one in which the confidence in the United Nations itself might be seriously undermined.

With reference to the statement 28 June of Mr. Ben Gurion to the Chief of Staff, I have, personally, to bring up again the question of the marking of the Demarcation Line around the Gaza Strip. I wish to stress the considerable importance I attach to a speedy and satisfactory solution along the lines proposed by General Burns. Irrespective of various regrettable incidents which have recently taken place in the Gaza area, I feel that a failure to mark the Demarcation Line and to find proper arrangements for meetings of

the Egyptian-Israeli Mixed Armistice Commission might seriously endanger the success of our efforts in that area. To delay arrangements considered essential for the strengthening of the cease fire by difficulties raised from the Israeli side, would be a policy which - seen in conjunction with various recent incidents, indicating a laxer observance of the cease fire arrangements among Israeli troops in the area - might put Israel in a light which, I am sure, would be misleading. I therefore earnestly hope that the Government will see its way to accepting the proposals of the Chief of Staff also as they concern the marking of the Demarcation Line.

I spoke to you - and I speak here - with great frankness, because I feel in duty bound to give a clear picture of how I envisage the situation created by the long drawn out differences concerning various practical arrangements. It is my firm hope that in this last round of negotiations concerning the pending questions the Government of Israel will see its way to accepting of our proposals or requests. They are moderate and inspired only by a wish to assist in the maintenance of peaceful conditions. They are, I should add, the very minimum we have to demand to fulfil our obligations under the Armistice Agreements and the relevant Security Council decisions. I have what I believe to be a full understanding of the problems of Israel. But having that understanding, I still cannot see why you do not accept the requests or proposals for action regarding the matters referred to in this letter; the arguments of a formal or legal nature which have been given, frankly, do not seem to me to carry decisive weight, or even in all cases to be correct.

You will certainly appreciate that the final outcome will have a bearing on my efforts to be of assistance and on the chance of their leading to the desired improvement in the general situation. Trusting the wish of your Government to give me all support, I hope that, in the light of what I have said, it will help me by a speedy and favourable solution to the pending practical questions.

Yours sincerely,

17 October 1956

Dear Mr. Kidron,

I have now received the parts of Mr. Ben-Gurion's statement in the "Knesset" which refer to the United Nations and the Armistice regime.

I have read it with all the understanding that I can bring to bear on his attitude. Having gone out of my way again and again in order to render the utmost justice to Israel's difficulties and viewpoints, having avoided anything but what under strict rules of law was necessary as to the relationship between Israel and the United Nations, I find in the speech a sweeping public indictment of the United Nations and its agents, repeating in a sharpened form allegations, many times discussed between us in detail. Mr. Ben-Gurion cannot have failed to understand that these allegations are founded on an interpretation of facts and law which, at least, is open to serious and honest differences of opinion. However, there is not in his speech any indication of the possibility that the United Nations may have reasons for its stand which deserve consideration.

I regret deeply that this official stand should be Mr. Ben-Gurion's first words after my last letter and the long exchange of views that it ended. In my treatment of the Palestine problem nothing now seems to remain but the duties of the chief executive officer of the Organization concerning the role of which Mr. Ben-Gurion has so clearly indicated his views.

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