

**Middle East - Suez story No  
37-40: Middle East - Suez  
story No 37-40 - 8**

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Dag Hammarskjöld's saml.

Middle East / Suez story -37

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9 Dec. 57

Vigier, Henri (U. N. Truce Supervision Organi-  
-zation, Jerusalem)

- 1 letter from D.H.
- 1 encl. (letter from D.H. to Ben-Gurion)

9 December 1957

PERSONAL

Dear Henri,

First of all, my warmest thanks for all your support and assistance during some busy and dramatic days. I cannot tell you how much I appreciated this contact.

.....

Enclosed please find a letter to Mr. Ben-Gurion and copies of the same letter for yourself. I would appreciate it if you would hand the letter over personally to Mr. Ben-Gurion, provided that you are in agreement with the texts. If you are not, cable me your observations and hold the letter until we are agreed.

With kindest regards,

Dag Hammarskjöld

Mr. Henri Vigier,  
UNTSO,  
Jerusalem, Palestine.

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Mr. Henri Vigier,  
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Jerusalem, Palestine.

STRICTLY PERSONAL

9 December 1957

Dear Mr. Ben-Gurion,

First of all, my warmest thanks for your cooperation, patience, hospitality and friendship. As usual, the contact with you proved most helpful. I highly appreciated again to have this opportunity of telling you the "full story" on some important issues and to have the benefit of a frank exchange of views with you.

As I promised you, I shall now try to put down my conclusions from the contacts in Damascus. This much I can say without hesitation: they do not lend any support to a pessimistic interpretation of recent incidents. On the contrary, I was struck by a series of small symptoms of "independence" and of clear indications of a stronger position for the Foreign Minister than is generally realised outside Syria. One amusing detail may be quoted: while the Russian radio sender in Arabic made an attack on me, the Syrian Government put out all its flags in an ostentatious selling of my visit to the public; I think the interpretation is quite obvious.

The most essential part of my talks took place with Bitar in the presence of Bizri, which gives a reasonable guarantee for representativeness. I concluded from the long exchange of views that the Turko-Syrian conflict may be considered as written off also in Damascus, and that they do not want to run into any kind of conflict with you. Obviously they, as many other Arabic countries, are more than concerned about their domestic affairs, especially from the economic angle, and do not, under such circumstances, wish anything better than to be able to get on, being mature enough to see that international adventures would be their undoing.

The main Syrian complaint against Israel is that you, step by step, build out your positions in the Demilitarized Zone, while at the same time you refuse cooperation with the MAC in such cases where the MAC would be the natural forum for a discussion of your steps. The Syrians, for that reason, feel that they are sliding down-hill without any effective means of a peaceful nature to counter-balance what they regard as your policy, short of raising the issues with the Security Council. They do not consider the incidents as anything

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His Excellency,  
Mr. David Ben-Gurion,  
Prime Minister of Israel,  
Jerusalem, Israel.

but counter-productive in the respects which interest them. In this situation their criticism is turned against the UN as ineffectual as the protector of what they consider to be their rights under the Armistice Agreement. I leave it to you to make your observations on this arguments, on its validity - and, perhaps, on the parallels which it might have in the thinking of other nations, including Israel. Whatever my own views on the matter are, I am convinced that this story represents their main line of thinking, and that recent developments on the border are not part of any plans on high levels.

I took up the Deron case immediately upon my return to New York, and will have it on record in Cairo that if this question is not - as I certainly hope - resolved before my arrival in Cairo, I will take it up personally with the President.

As our final discussion was a little bit rushed and as I wish the record to be straight, I annex to this letter a memorandum setting out my interpretation of the situation concerning the transport of fuel under the Mount Scopus Agreement.

Reiterating my thanks and looking forward to the day when I may help you shearing sheep in Sid Boker, and with warmest personal regards to Mrs. Ben-Gurion whom I was very happy to meet again,

most sincerely yours,

Dag Hammarskjöld