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Israel - Jordan border

1 July 58

Ben-Aurion, David (Prime Minister of  
Israel)

- 1 letter from D.H.

1 July 1958

Dear Mr. Ben Gurion,

I thank you for your reply to my message of 23 June. May I start with an "objection". Your affairs are not "small": in fact, even the little road up at Mount Scopus rightly claims as much of my attention as what is going on in Lebanon.

Certainly, I appreciate your right of having the situation examined by your men, but when I changed my mind overnight after our recent talk it was in what I considered to be your own best interest. I am sure you agree with me that you would stand to lose, if I permitted myself to put in question the authority of my chief advisers in the eyes of the Arabs; I cannot create a situation in which they will be entitled to say that they could well challenge the objectivity of the findings and rulings of the Chief of Staff, or of my Executive Assistant, as I, myself, had found it necessary to submit their findings to a checking by the parties.

In your letter you indicate that in this particular case you gave orders to allow the inhabitants of Issawiya free passage along the track passing through the area. It is not clear whether this order extended the time period which had already been granted for daylight hours to the hours of darkness. In Mr. Cordier's last meeting with your officials, assurance was given for the opening of the road during daylight hours for full use of village vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The practical implication of my letter to you as explained by Mr. Cordier to Mr. Eytan was to request around the clock opening of the road for such use. Am I to interpret your order as stated in your letter to mean that the road is now open around the clock?

I shall now go ahead with the Article 8 problem in relation to Anman, trusting that your orders go the whole way so that I have a reasonable chance to succeed in an operation which, as you fully appreciate, at best is quite delicate. I trust that in your own mind there is no doubt as to the relative value of the possible gain in this case and of what it might mean to Israel to go all the way in meeting the appeal made by Mr. Cordier and the Chief of Staff.

As a matter of course, we shall publish an addendum to the report on the 26 May incident, setting out the ballistic findings.

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

Regarding what you say about the situation in Lebanon, I think that the address of your apprehensions should not be the Secretary-General. My role in this drama is a very limited one: to do whatever I can, with the tool created by the Security Council in the Observation Group, and using my authority under the Charter, ensuring against illegal traffic in arms and infiltration. I shall give to your representatives here a summary of my personal position which may help you to understand what is my part in this problem. It is not for me to say whether the independence of Lebanon is threatened and, if so, by whom. Historians will be able to trace the sequence of events which, I am afraid, will distribute the responsibility very broadly if things were to go wrong.

I appreciated very much meeting you again and wish to renew my warm thanks. Please remember me also to Mrs. Ben Gurion who, I hope, is now quite well again. I was most sorry not to meet her on the occasion of my last visit.

Dag Hammarskjöld

DRAFT

2 July 1958

see UNTSO Code  
Name Signature  
UNTSO 481

Dear Mr. Ben Gurion,

Thank you for your reply. Last time it was not difficult for me to write to you quickly, as the matters were very clear in my mind. <sup>Permit me again</sup> ~~This time I want~~ to compete with you in the quickness of the pen.

<sup>me</sup> My main reason for writing you is that I wish to tell you that I have at once made an approach to Amman as forceful and convincing as I can manage to make it. I shall do my utmost in order to get results.

I had this morning an opportunity to spell out to Mr. Eban and Mr. Kidron more fully what I meant by the "modesty" of my role. I also ~~was~~ could tell them what problems have to be solved, were a decision to be taken on a UN force in Lebanon. What I wished to make perfectly clear ~~was~~ was that if anything which, with any stretch of imagination, could be called a Middle Eastern <sup>" "</sup> Munich were to come about, it would not be as a result of any activity within my sphere of competence.

You should know from rich personal experience that my stubbornness in attempts to find peaceful solutions is matched by my stubbornness in ~~attempts to find peaceful solutions~~ <sup>it</sup> resisting compromises putting in question the principles on which, alone, peace can be maintained.

I warmly appreciate your final words about the friendship with which I would be received by you and Mrs. Ben Gurion - once I can return with the leisure necessary fully to enjoy your warm hospitality.

Please convey my warmest good wishes to Mrs. Ben Gurion.

In friendship,

Yours sincerely

DH