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LETTER DATED 21 NOVEMBER 1966 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF ISRAEL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to refer to the "Report by the Secretary-General concerning the incident which took place on 13 November 1966 in Jordan", dated 18 November 1966 (S/7593), and, on instructions from my Government, to make certain factual observations on the report by the Chief-of-Staff of UNTSO, attached to the Secretary-General's report.

It appears from General Bull's report that the account of the Israel action given in it is based on hearsay - namely, statements made after the event to the United Nations Military Observers, by Jordanian witnesses. These statements are for the most part exaggerated and inaccurate, either deliberately so or because of the confusion and embellishment which is natural under the circumstances. In order to dispel inflated and unreliable accounts regarding the nature and scope of the Israel action, my Government has authorized me to put the following facts on record:

(a) The sole objective of the Israel action was to demolish a limited number of empty houses, after their occupants had been evacuated. This was done as a warning against aiding and harbouring saboteur and terrorist groups that had been carrying out a number of raids into Israel in that sector of the border. The number of houses demolished was far less than the number stated in the report.

(b) The Israel troops were given strict instructions to take every precaution for the avoidance of casualties. The total civilian casualties, as confirmed by the Chief-of-Staff's corrected Report, were three killed and seventeen injured. Of the latter, ten suffered minor injuries, requiring only first-aid, and returned home the same day. (Unfortunately, in the United Nations Report as first distributed, the civilian casualty figure was given as 3 killed, and 97 injured, owing to an error in transmission. This erroneous figure gained wide publicity.) It is not stated how or at what stage of the incident these casualties were caused, and at least part of them may have resulted from the military clash. Their number confirms that empty houses were demolished after their occupants had first been evacuated. It may be noted that according to the Report the village had a population of 5,000, and 1,200 houses.

The main casualties occurred in an unexpected clash between the Israel task force and a Jordanian unit which rushed to the scene in fifteen to twenty trucks, and launched an attack. The Israel force disengaged itself and withdrew as soon as possible. The military casualties were 15 killed and 37 wounded (29 lightly) on the Jordan side, and 1 killed and 10 wounded on the Israel side.

My Government deeply regrets all loss of life and injury that may have been caused either to military personnel or to civilians.

- (c) The number of Israel tanks used in the area of the incident was ten. None of them were Patton tanks.
- (d) The total number of personnel involved was under 400. Most of these men were needed to ensure evacuation of houses and prevention of casualties.
- (e) There was no bombardment or strafing from the air. The sole intervention by Israel aircraft was by four planes that intercepted four Jordanian planes attempting to attack the Israel ground force. One of the Jordanian planes was shot down. No Israel plane fired at any ground target.
- (f) There was no artillery shelling.

It is essential for the Security Council to have a correct factual appreciation of the 13 November action.

My Government earnestly hopes that there may now be an end to violence and bloodshed of any kind. It appeals to the Governments of neighbouring States to

co-operate to this and in order to ensure a peaceful and undisturbed existence for the population on both sides of the border.

I would request that this letter be circulated as a Security Council document.

Please accept, etc.,

(Signed) Michael COMAY
Permanent Representative
