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LETTER DATED 20 AUGUST 1990 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
JORDAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to inform you of the following:

1. On the afternoon of Saturday, 18 August 1990, a United States warship intercepted the Sudanese cargo vessel Dongola as it was sailing northwards to the port of Aqaba, before it had entered Jordanian territorial waters. The United States warship used its military helicopters to circle the Sudanese vessel and ordered it not to proceed to Aqaba but to alter course towards the south. Although the captain of the Sudanese vessel informed the United States warship that his vessel was proceeding to the port of Aqaba in order to transport Sudanese nationals in Jordan back to their country, the United States ship insisted that its order be obeyed and forced the vessel to alter course and sail southwards.

2. The following complications arose as a result of this incident:

(a) The port of Aqaba is now considered to be a war risk area and, accordingly, the cost of insurance premiums for vessels proceeding to it has risen.

(b) Companies transporting goods to Jordan have begun to refuse to send their ships to the port of Aqaba, with companies in Singapore and Japan already declining to load foodstuffs for Jordan. It should be noted that Aqaba is Jordan's only maritime outlet, accounting for 80 per cent of its imports of foodstuffs from abroad.

(c) The process of transporting refugees who have arrived in Jordan from Iraq and Kuwait on their way back to their countries of origin has been held up. Since the beginning of the current crisis in the Arabian Gulf region, Jordan has facilitated the entry of thousands of refugees from Iraq and Kuwait into its territory, for purely humanitarian reasons. The presence of these large numbers of refugees in Jordan represents a heavy burden for the country, and its mosques, churches and schools are now filled with refugees of many different nationalities, all of whom are waiting to be transported home. The aforementioned incident adds

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to the problems faced by Jordan in facilitating the refugees' passage, to the extent that it may be unable to continue opening its borders to them and providing what facilities and assistance it can.

3. I request that you use your good offices with the Government of the United States to prevent the recurrence of any such incident. The incident constitutes a violation of international law, particularly since the Security Council resolution concerning the current crisis in the Arabian Gulf region, namely, resolution 661 (1990), does not give any State the right to take unilateral action to apply the said resolution.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Abdullah SALAH
Permanent Representative

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