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LETTER DATED 20 MAY 1986 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On the instructions of my Government and in response to the accusations and threats recently made by the authorities of the Iranian régime concerning what they have described as the bombing of a civilian train, I wish to inform you of the following:

At a time when the Iranian side is continuing the daily shelling of Iraqi towns by heavy artillery and sending its aircraft time and again to bomb purely residential Iraqi targets, we find the Iranian authorities and information services seeking to provoke an unfounded major news story about what they have termed the bombing of the civilian train, using it as a pretext for the repeated shelling of towns and for threats to bomb Baghdad.

The unfounded major news story promoted by the Iranian régime about the absurd assertion that on 14 May 1986 the Iraqi air forces bombed a train carrying civilian citizens is a false accusation by means of which the Iranian régime is seeking to stand the true facts on their head. The target Iraq's aircraft were aiming at on that day was Haft Tappeh station, the starting point of the railway lines which pass through the front-line area, close to the battlefront, and are used to transport weapons, munitions, foodstuffs, military equipment, volunteers and troops from the interior of the country to the zone in which Iran's forces are operating, in the Dahlaran area, for the purpose of countering the operations of Iraq's Fourth Army Corps. At this railway station, there are a number of depots for the temporary storage of war materials being transported to the battlefronts.

In addition to all the foregoing, military sources in Iraq have abundant and reliable information which confirms that on 14 May 1986 a large number of Iranian combatants, as well as large quantities of artillery shells, weapons, munitions and foodstuffs, were being transported from Haft Tappeh station to supply more than six army divisions concentrated in that region, with a view to launching a large-scale attack on the positions of the Iraqi Army's Fourth Corps.

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Under the circumstances, Iraq's Air Force exercised the right of self-defence to bomb a purely military target of a kind which is regarded in article 28 of the Fourth Geneva Convention as one of the important strategic points which are not rendered immune from military operations. Although the rulers of Iran are aware of this fact, they are seeking through their authorities to create pretexts for repeated bombing of Iraqi towns, threatening to bomb purely residential areas and thus clearly revealing the intentions of the perverse régime in Teheran with regard to the people of Iraq who are fighting in defence of their territory, their sovereignty and their security.

I request you to have this letter distributed as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ismat KITTANI
Permanent Representative
