

TELEGRAMS DATED 11, 12, 15, 17 JULY 1948 TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL TRUCE COMMISSION ON THE SUBJECT OF JERUSALEM*

Jerusalem, 11 July 1948

I

"In Jerusalem, position warfare has been renewed.

From the Mount of Olives Arab batteries are bombarding the New City as well as the King David Hotel, which was occupied by Jewish forces Friday morning.

Jewish sources announce that their batteries are returning fire on the Old City.

Two Egyptian Spitfires are reported to have bombarded the northern sections of the city today.

Mention should be made also of exchange of mortar fire and great activity on the part of snipers.

In Jerusalem a growing tendency is noted on the part of the Jews to disregard the rules of international law: after their attempt Thursday evening to occupy the King David Hotel during the period of truce, certain elements of their armed forces last night attempted to seize the building of the Pontifical Bible Institute, property of the Holy See. Only energetic last-minute intervention of the Consul-General of France prevented them from carrying out their design.

In view of the apparent indifference of the Christian world to the bombardments of the city by the Arab Legion before the Truce, the Jews declare that they will not need more than fifteen days to seize the rest of the city, nine-tenths of which is already in their hands. Jerusalem will serve, if not yet as the capital of the Jewish State, at least as a valuable item for barter at the time of negotiations prior to the re-establishment of peace.

It is clear from the information given above that if the Security Council does not intervene immediately and energetically to put an end to the fighting now taking place in Jerusalem, the international character of this city established by the decision of the Assembly of 29 November 1947, seems to me to be seriously threatened."

* These telegrams were received on 22 July 1948 through the French delegation to the United Nations.

II

Jerusalem, 12 July 1948

"Jerusalem 12 July 1948

Constant exchange of fire between artillery and Arab automatic arms.

The Consulate General of France, headquarters of the Truce Commission, was hit twice last night and again this morning by shells fired from Arab positions in the old city.

The King David Hotel, occupied by Jewish forces, has also been hit several times.

The Y.M.C.A. building situated just behind the King David Hotel and under the Red Cross flag has also been hit several times. No victims.

In western Palestine the Jewish forces, after taking Lydda, appear to be deploying in order to take Ramleh, stronghold of the Arab irregulars on the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv road."

III

Jerusalem, 15 July 1948

"Jerusalem, 14 July.

"Regular and certain Jewish progress in western Palestine. The claimed capture of Ramleh on the road from Jerusalem to Tel-Aviv would consolidate the control of the aerodrome and of the town of Lydda which was occupied the previous day.

"Having inflicted a defeat on Iraqi troops the Jews have retaken the pumping station at Roselain which is the starting point for the water-supply line to Jerusalem from the coast.

"This is the station which the Arabs refused to operate during the Truce, thus committing a grave violation of the agreement of 9 June.

"In Jerusalem the situation is calm on the whole; we are afraid, however, that there will be a strong Jewish attack against the Old City between noon today and tomorrow evening, a possible date for the beginning of the Truce in Jerusalem.

"The Jews who generally respected the resolution of 29 November concerning the international character of Jerusalem have been particularly irritated by the proposal to give control of the city to the Arabs.

"That is why they seem determined to try to take the rest of the city before the Truce comes into force, so that they can have a trump card in their hands at the peace negotiations.

"This confirms the end of my message of last Monday, insisting that unless the Security Council takes immediate and energetic action the international character of Jerusalem would seem to my colleagues and myself to be seriously threatened.

"Furthermore, one of my American colleague's collaborators who visited the Old City yesterday afternoon reports that life there is almost normal, the damage caused by mortar bombardment negligible and the Arab occupying forces calm and confident."

IV

Jerusalem, 17 July 1948

"The Chairman of the Truce Commission to the President of the Security Council, New York.

"Jerusalem, 17 July.

"Continuation of my telegram of yesterday concerning the 'cease-fire'. The zone of application has been reduced by common agreement to the limits of the Old City of Jerusalem. The cease-fire became effective at 02.00 GMT after a violent bombardment by Arab artillery commencing at 17.30 GMT.

"We insist on the immediate arrival of observers as we have no staff to ensure that the Truce is respected."

V

Jerusalem, 17 July 1948

"Jerusalem 17 July.

"The Commission has the impression that the Jews are seeking under a futile pretext to break the Truce in Jerusalem for the attack in which they almost succeeded last night. If the Truce should be broken there is no question but that the Jews should be considered the aggressors."

VI

Jerusalem, 17 July 1948

"Reference my yesterday's telegram regarding five British employees of the Jerusalem Electric Corporation held by the Jews since the sixth of this month. Prisoners turned over to the Commandant of the Jewish forces at Jerusalem yesterday evening at 2:15 GMT presumably to be taken immediately to Tel Aviv where the accused men, it is reported, will be tried by a military court."

VII

Jerusalem, 17 July

"At the moment when a new Truce is about to come into force, the Commission feels that it should draw the Security Council's attention to the fact that since Colonel Roscher-Lund left in the middle of June, it has not had at its disposal any member of the United Nations staff. In particular, it no longer has a secretariat. In these circumstances its task is made extremely difficult and less effective.

"Moreover, the Commission would be grateful if the Council would specify its exact functions during the period of the Truce, in particular with regard to its collaboration with the Mediator and the corps of observers."