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LETTER DATED 17 JUNE 1971 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ISRAEL
TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions of my Government I have the honour to refer to the letter addressed to you on 15 June 1971 by the Permanent Representative of Syria (A/8324, S/10224) in reply to my letter of 10 June 1971 (A/8323 and Corr.1, S/10220 and Corr.1).

A letter which stoops to abuse of the national liberation movement of another nation does not deserve serious attention. The Syrian letter's vilification of the Jewish people's liberation movement - Zionism, is a mere reflection of Syria's persistent warfare against the rights of the Jewish people to equality with other nations and to independence in the Jewish homeland.

The Syrian Representative ignores the reminder contained in my letter of 10 June, that Syria has barred all thought of peace with Israel, rejected the Security Council resolution 242 (1967), which called for peace with Israel, refused to participate in the peace-making efforts under the auspices of Ambassador Gunnar Jarring, continues to wage terror warfare against Israel and cruelly oppresses the Jewish community of Syria. These are the fundamental facts of the situation. Instead of dealing with them, the Syrian letter continues to quibble over one-sided resolutions known to be creations of Arab propaganda.

The absurdity of the references in the previous Syrian letter of 8 June 1971 (A/8321, S/10219) to resolution WHA 24.33 of the World Health Organization having been exposed, the new Syrian letter of 15 June resorts to another text which is equally oblivious of the truth. It quotes from resolution 9 (XXVII) of the

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Commission on Human Rights, alleging violations of human rights in Israeli-controlled territory. The majority of the members of the Commission refused to support this resolution. Only representatives of Arab, Soviet, and Moslem States and their traditional followers voted for it. The resolution expresses solely their biased views.

Even Arab sources, when not called upon to distort facts for propaganda purposes, acknowledge the true situation in Israeli-administered territories.

Thus the Beirut daily Al-Hawadeth of 27 April 1971 described the conditions of life in these territories as follows:

"Talking to a Lebanese journalist, West Bank Arabs visiting Kuwait contrasted their experience of Jordanian rule with conditions prevailing under Israeli administration:

"A small minority of the people are merchants while the overwhelming majority are farmers, labourers or Government employees. The merchants face the choice of trading or starving. They can neither import nor export without co-operating (with the administration).

"Government employees now enjoy such economic well-being as never before. They receive salaries from the Jordanian Treasury, which is known and agreed by Israel. They also receive Israeli salaries, so that their income has doubled since 1967. Government employees have paid off their debts and raised their standard of living beyond anything dreamt of before.

"Farmers continue to work their land and gather the harvest. Israel has helped them with marketing their produce.

"As for the labourers - Israel, as is well known, suffers from a lack of manpower, which has become even more severe owing to the increase in building and development projects... therefore, Israel gave work to the unemployed. Israel offered work at four times the wages they had earned under Jordanian rule, for an eight-hour day, while previously hours were unlimited.

"The property owners and professionals, doctors and lawyers continue as usual, unaffected by the occupation. They are flooded with tempting proposals of large loans for improvement.

"This is the naked truth and reality, without the adornments of patriotism, the holy cause, etc."

In fact, the above-mentioned resolutions, cited in the Syrian letters, clearly demonstrate the impossibility of dealing with the Middle East situation equitably and effectively by means of United Nations resolutions that are not based on agreement of the parties to the conflict. In an organization in which Israel with its single vote has to defend itself against the continued hostility of the Arab-Soviet bloc commanding approximately forty-five votes, Israel's case is repeatedly denied judgement on its merits. World public opinion is aware of this and evaluates United Nations debates and resolutions accordingly.

With regard to the Syrian allegations concerning the situation in Jerusalem, I should like to bring to your attention a statement adopted on 9 June 1971 at the Conference of Catholic, Protestant and Evangelical leaders of the United States on Jerusalem and Israel. The statement declares, inter alia:

"Our inquiry into the question of public housing in the Old City and environs has convinced us that the construction of these buildings is a legitimate effort on the part of the Israeli Government to effectuate a renewal of certain slum areas of the City, to rehouse in new apartments Arabs from these quarters, to provide living space for a Jewish population increased by immigration, and to re-introduce a Jewish presence into the Old City from which it had been forcibly barred after the war of 1948. The development plans are in no sense designed to oust the Arabs, nor to 'suffocate' the Christian and Muslim population. While we are concerned about the sacred character of the City, we believe that this housing is sufficiently removed from the holy places to avoid the charge of diminishing the sanctity of the City.

"We believe, further, that the claim that the Christian-Arab population is diminishing in Israel is incorrect. Since the end of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, the Christian and Muslim population of Israel has more than doubled. The trickle of Christian emigration has not affected this upward trend. In Jerusalem, the non-Jewish total (Christian and Muslim) has increased steadily in the last three years. The question of emigration should be judged in contrast with the actual exodus of many Arab Christians from Arab countries, particularly from Lebanon and Egypt.

"We are encouraged by such creative efforts as those already initiated by Israeli officials with Christian ecumenical and Arab civic leaders for special jurisdictional arrangements over the holy places and in Arab areas of Jerusalem. On the other hand, we regret all interventions that fail to take into account the political rights and sovereignty of the State of Israel."

I have the honour to request that this letter be circulated as official documents of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

(Signed) Yosef TEKOAH
Permanent Representative of Israel
to the United Nations
