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LETTER DATED 29 MAY 1969 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ISRAEL
TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to refer to the letter addressed to you on 23 May 1969 by the Permanent Representative of Syria (A/7558, S/9220).

The Syrian contentions are utterly unfounded. Neither Professor Mazar nor any other Israeli scientist has carried out any excavations in any of the sites mentioned in the Syrian letter, nor in any other part of the area of the Golan Heights.

The historical altar from the town of Banias was temporarily removed in order to make adequate arrangements for its safety, and it was restored to its site immediately after the completion of these arrangements.

Such Syrian allegations have already been dismissed by the Commissioner-General appointed under the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1 May 1954), in a letter addressed by him on 6 February 1968 to the Director-General of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. The report of the Director-General to the seventy-eighth session of the Executive Board of UNESCO (78 EX/5 - 16 May 1968) states:

"... By a letter dated 6 February 1968, the Commissioner-General in Jerusalem informed me that investigations had been carried out, where the information supplied had been sufficient to make inquiries possible, and that the complaints in question had proved groundless... "

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Since then, the Commissioner-General has twice visited the area in question and found no reason for any complaint whatever.

It will be recalled that similar Syrian charges were investigated by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Nils-Göran Gussing, and dismissed by him (see his report of 15 September 1968 (A/6797, S/8158), para. 34).

It is doubtful whether, in the light of Syria's continued policy of aggression against Israel and its repudiation of international obligations incumbent upon it, any credence at all is given to anti-Israeli charges invented by Syria from time to time in order to divert attention from its destructive attitude.

I have the honour to request the circulation of this letter as a document of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

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