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REPORT BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE PRESENT STATUS  
OF THE DEMILITARIZED ZONE SET UP BY THE GENERAL  
ARMISTICE AGREEMENT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND SYRIA  
(PART A)

1. At its 1312th meeting, on 28 October 1966, the Security Council, on the suggestion of the representative of Jordan, requested from the Secretary-General a report on the present status of the Demilitarized Zones in the General Armistice Agreements. A first part of this report (Part A) was to be submitted as soon as possible and would deal only with the status of the Demilitarized Zone (D/Zone) in the north between Israel and Syria. The second part of the report (Part B), dealing with other Demilitarized Zones, would follow some time later.
2. This first part of the report is based on factual information provided by the Chief of Staff of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization in Palestine (UNTSO) and covers the prevailing situation in the northern D/Zone as regards encroachment, in addition to those violations reported in the recent inspection of the Zone (see S/7561/Rev.1).
3. It must be pointed out that in seeking a report on the northern D/Zone the representative of Jordan stressed that he did not expect an exhaustive examination of the subject, but only the present status of the D/Zone which was related to the present discussion in the Security Council.

A. Fortifications in the Demilitarized Zone

4. During the week from 15 to 21 October 1966, the Israel delegation submitted to the Chairman of the Israel-Syrian Mixed Armistice Commission (ISMAC) seven complaints alleging that "Syrian fortifications and strong points encroached on the D/Zone at the following approximate map references..." The Israel delegation pointed out twenty-eight map references (MR) in this connexion: 2125-2326, 2124-2321, 2122-2323, 2121-2324, 2112-2319, 2105-2320, 2108-2320, 2105-2322, 2105-2323, 2101-2341, 2100-2345, 2102-2348, 2111-2368, 2113-2378, 2107-2463,

2077-2557, 2093-2666, 2091-2671, 2093-2675, 2093-2685, 2092-2699, 2095-2705, 2096-2708, 2100-2717, 2123-2919, 2125-2923, 2128-2928 and 2134-2946. In addition, the Israel delegation, during the same period, complained daily that "continually during the day, Syrian soldiers occupied positions on Tell-Azazyat", in the northern sector of the D/Zone.

5. On the other side, daily during the period from 15 to 21 October 1966, the Syrian delegation forwarded to the Chairman of the ISMAC a complaint, the text of which is as follows:

"Israel fortifications and strongpoints encroached at the following points: Dardara Farm, El-Khoury Farm, Gadct, Mishmar Hay Yarden, Tell-Aswad, approximately MR 207900-266775, Tell-Abu-Rish, Maqbarat Banat Yacoub and Shajarat Banat Yacoub."

These locations are in the central sector of the D/Zone. During the same period, the Syrian delegation also daily complained that:

"Israel fortifications and strongpoints encroached at the following points: Tel Ketzir, Ein-Gev, Alot El Hiss, Qurein Jaradeh and Naon."

These locations are in the southern sector of the D/Zone.

6. The above-mentioned Israel and Syrian complaints have been submitted daily for several years. Israel authorities have requested no investigation of their complaints alleging encroachment by Syrian fortifications upon the D/Zone. Syrian authorities have asked for the investigation of their above-mentioned complaints in respect of Israel fortifications in the D/Zone.

7. No investigation of the Syrian complaints has been carried out. In his report dated 27 June 1957 (S/3844, paragraphs 6 and 13), the Acting Chief of Staff of UNTSO referred to the difficulties experienced in connexion with the investigation in June 1956 of a Syrian complaint regarding the erection of fortifications in the Israel settlement of Hagovrim in the central sector of the D/Zone and at Susita in the southern sector. Investigations were allowed only after a delay of several days. Since June 1956, United Nations Military Observers have been prevented from carrying out investigations in the Hagovrim and Susita areas. Access to the Dardara area, in the central sector of the D/Zone, has also been refused to United Nations Military Observers. Such restriction on the freedom of movement of United Nations Military Observers has prevented the investigation of recent Syrian complaints relating to Israel fortifications in the D/Zone. Israel contests the right of Syria, which it asserts "has no locus standi in the D/Zone", to forward

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such complaints to the Chairman of the ISMAC (see report by the UNTSO Chief of Staff dated 6 January 1955, S/3343, paragraph 20).

8. The practical result is that the daily complaints lodged with the Chairman of the ISMAC by the delegations of Israel and Syria concerning fortifications are, so to speak, standing complaints in which each party reaffirms its position against an "illegal" situation which is neither considered by a Mixed Armistice Commission which does not meet nor even investigated by United Nations Military Observers acting according to the Mixed Armistice Commission procedure or under article V, paragraph 5, of the General Armistice Agreement.

9. The simultaneous inspections of the D/Zone and of the defensive areas arranged from time to time during periods of tension by the Chief of Staff of UNTSO do not allow an adequate visit to alleged fortifications in the D/Zone. Like the previous one, the last inspection carried out on 19 October 1966 (S/7561/Rev.1) dealt exclusively with "accusations of a build-up of forces and equipment". During the course of this inspection, the United Nations Military Observers saw a number of Israel and Syrian military positions in the D/Zone, although such observations did not come expressly within the purview of their inspection.

10. In 1956 the then Chief of Staff of UNTSO reported that "certain fortifications which the United Nations Observers have seen at Hagovrim and Susita go beyond what is required for the protection of civilian life", that he "requested the dismantling of the fortifications in question" and that Israel did not comply with this request and "continued to extend the fortifications in this area" (Report of the Chief of Staff of UNTSO of 5 September 1956, S/3659, annex, paragraph 23). In the same report, the Chief of Staff indicated that "investigation by United Nations Military Observers showed that some minor Syrian works of fortification were encroaching upon the demilitarized zone" and that "Syrian authorities, when requested by the Chief of Staff to demolish these works, replied they were ready to do so when the Israelis demolished the permanent fortifications in and near Hagovrim and Susita" (S/3659, annex, paragraph 24). Israel still refused to dismantle these fortifications, on the ground that Syria openly threatened Israel's security and that Israel settlements in the D/Zone could not therefore be denied "a maximum of elementary defence facilities" (Report of the Acting Chief of Staff of UNTSO of 27 June 1957, S/3844, paragraph 12).

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11. Although the present extent of Syrian and Israel fortifications in the D/Zone has not been investigated, a comparison of the complaints lodged in this respect by the parties in 1956-1957 with the recent complaints mentioned in paragraph 4 of this report tends to show that the number of fortified military positions in the D/Zone has probably increased.

B. Implementation of article V, paragraph 5, of the General Armistice Agreement

12. The "return of civilians to villages and settlements in the D/Zone and the employment of limited numbers of locally recruited civilian police in the Zone for internal security purposes" were provided for in article V, paragraph 5, of the General Armistice Agreement.

13. In October 1952, the then Chief of Staff of UNWISO, Lt.-General William E. Rile reported (S/2833, paragraph 58): "with the exception of Nugeib, Al Famma and Shamalne [which were under Syrian control] Israel police, acting under orders from police headquarters outside the Demilitarized Zone exercise control over practically the entire Demilitarized Zone". The Syrians continue to complain practically every day about the presence in the D/Zone of armed "soldiers", who Israel states are Israel Border Police, a force which should not enter the D/Zone (article V, paragraph 5, of the General Armistice Agreement).

14. The problem of the use of lands in the D/Zone still constitutes one of the main preoccupations of the Chief of Staff of UNWISO and of the Chairman of the Mixed Armistice Commission.

15. In a report which was submitted to the Security Council after the Almagor incident of 19 August 1963, reference was made to previous efforts to reduce tension by marking on the ground in the southern sector of the D/Zone the limits of a status quo of cultivation acceptable to both parties (S/5401, paragraph 44). The establishment of agreed limits of cultivation has been sought and continues to be pursued by UNWISO.

16. The part of the central sector of the D/Zone which is on the eastern bank of the Jordan River is a narrow strip of land, generally controlled by Syria, while the western bank, generally controlled by Israel, is a large area. On the western bank Arab villages have been demolished, their inhabitants evacuated. The inhabitants of the villages of Baqqara and Ghanname returned following the

Security Council resolution of 18 May 1951 (S/2517). They were later (on 30 October 1956) forced to cross into Syria where they are still living. Their lands on the western Bank of the river, and Khoury Farm in the same area, are cultivated by Israel nationals.

17. With regard to the use of land in the central sector of the D/Zone, the Syrian delegation to the Mixed Armistice Commission has continued to complain that Israelis cultivate "the Arab lands of Baqqara, Ghanname and Khoury Farm". The Israel delegation, on the other hand, complains of Syrian cultivation and grazing in Israel, in an area west of the D/Zone, the Kibbutz Almagor area (MR 2085-2590). The Israel delegation has also complained of the presence of "Arab herds and armed shepherds" in parcel four of block 13027, east of the area of the former Lake Huleh, which has been reclaimed by Israel. Arab farmers have continued to use parcel four, which they do not own, and Israel farmers have continued to use land which they do not own in the same area. Disputes about cultivation have occasionally resulted in serious fighting incidents.

18. Claims and counter-claims have been made concerning the exercise of ownership rights in parcels located in this area and which have been used "in adverse possession" by Arabs or Israelis. UNTSO is endeavouring to find a practical arrangement to cultivation problems in this and other areas in co-operation with Israel and Syria.

19. On 27 July 1966, the Secretary-General communicated to the Security Council a "note on efforts of UNTSO to relieve tension along the line between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic" (S/7434). This note dealt in particular with the acceptance by both parties of an unconditional cease-fire and with arrangements for an inspection by United Nations Military Observers of the D/Zone and the defensive areas on both sides. Such an inspection took place on 13 June 1966. The unconditional cease-fire and the inspection helped in creating a favourable atmosphere for talks aiming at a settlement of certain cultivation problems, particularly in the area of the D/Zone.

20. The development of the current tension between Israel and Syria has interfered with the progress of the talks relating to cultivation problems conducted by UNTSO in Israel and in Syria. However, the problems to be discussed have been cleared to a certain extent and it is the hope of the Chief of Staff of UNTSO that the conversations can be resumed after the Security Council concludes its present debate.