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LETTER DATED 28 APRIL 1967 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF  
SYRIA ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Acting on instructions from my Government, I have the honour to confirm the contents of my letter to you of 9 April 1967 (S/7845) regarding the unprovoked attack perpetrated by Israeli armed forces on 7 April, along the Syrian-Israeli Armistice Demarcation lines and inside Syrian territory. This confirmation is all the more necessary especially in view of the distorted version of the events of that day, submitted to you by the Israeli letter of 14 April 1967 (S/7835).

1. The premeditated Israeli attack of 7 April was carried out in accordance with a well-prepared plan to provoke Syria into a large-scale battle. The following facts cannot be denied by the Israelis:

On 2 April at 1720 hours local time an Israeli tractor cultivated a section of Arab land in the southern D/Zone which was never before cultivated. This cultivation was backed by armed Israeli soldiers entrenched near the area.

On 3 April at 1355 hours local time an Israeli tractor cultivated another section of Arab land in the southern D/Zone, also never before cultivated, and again was backed by regular Israeli soldiers entrenched in the area.

These two cases of cultivation constitutes a flagrant violation of the General Armistice Agreement, and on 4 April two complaints regarding the matter were submitted to the Chairman of the Mixed Armistice Commission. They were followed on the same day by a memorandum submitted by the Senior Syrian delegate to the Chairman of the Mixed Armistice Commission. In it he compared the reaction of Syria when requested by the Chairman of the Commission to defer cultivation in a strip in the northern D/Zone, to that of Israel when a similar request was addressed to them by the Chairman. Syria had complied with the Chairman's request but Israel did not. And, in the same memorandum, he warned the Chairman

of the Commission against the movement of Israeli military personnel and equipment into the southern D/Zone which indicated beyond any doubt that preparations were being made for military action.

Concerning the Israeli attack of 7 April, the facts as stated in my letter of 9 April (S/7843) need not be repeated. However, had Israel heeded the appeal of the Chairman of ISMAC, the tragic events of 7 April would not have taken place. But, further acts of clear and premeditated provocation, and violation of the General Armistice Agreement by Israel must be emphasized. These are:

(a) The extension of cultivation and encroachments by the Israelis of Arab lands in the southern D/Zone never before cultivated.

(b) The introduction and resorting to armed forces to carry out cultivation in areas forbidden by the General Armistice Agreement.

(c) The ignoring of the repeated appeals made by the Chief of Staff of UNTSO to stop cultivation of disputed lands pending final settlement.

(d) The use of an armoured tractor which constitutes an act of violation of the General Armistice Agreement.

(e) The ignoring of the warning to withdraw the armoured tractor.

(f) The refusal of the cease-fire proposed by the Chairman of ISMAC which Syria accepted to be effective at 1015 hours; Israel offered 1130 hours for the cease-fire but reneged, and resumed its brutal air bombardment of Syrian positions across the Armistice Demarcation line and inside Syrian territory after 1130 hours. All these facts whose sequence is accurately given here, and which can be ascertained through the United Nations machinery in the area, prove beyond any doubt that Israel had prepared for this attack and provoked Syria who, in what followed, acted in legitimate self-defence.

The Israelis, well intent on further aggression, continued their acts of provocation after 7 April. Thus on 11 April at 1115 hours local time they sent an armoured tractor in violation of the General Armistice Agreement, to cultivate a disputed area in the southern D/Zone, withdrew after an exchange of fire, returned it again at 1230 hours local time and later withdrew after another exchange of fire.

2. Having executed their aggression of 7 April as planned, the Israeli authorities - in their typical pattern of hypocrisy and diversionary tactics - resort now to talk about the resumption of the meetings of ISMAC and to accuse Syria falsely of obstructing these meetings. It should be made clear in this

connexion that the unwarranted large scale Israeli military attack of 7 April had sabotaged the meetings of ISMAC and obviated the usefulness of the appeal made by the Secretary-General on 15 January toward this end. Israel cannot now come with clean hands, nor invoke the appeal of the Secretary-General, nor take refuge in the meetings of ISMAC to cover up its massive criminal warlike act hiding behind false accusations and deliberate distortions of facts.

A new situation has arisen after the Israeli aggression of 7 April. These considerations cannot be ignored nor brushed aside lightly. All of this constitutes chains in the same series of Israeli illegal policies as illustrated by the following facts:

(a) The Israeli denial of any competence of the Commission to deal with issues pertaining to the D/Zone which in fact it boycotted since 1951. This Israeli unilateral position had been refuted by competent United Nations organs and settled once and for all, first by the authoritative statement of Dr. Ralph Bunche, the then Acting Mediator for Palestine, contained in his letter of 29 June 1949 addressed to the signatories to the Armistice Agreement. His statement was once again reaffirmed by the Chief of Staff of UNTSO before the Security Council on 25 April 1951 and incorporated in Security Council resolution of 18 May 1951.

(b) Its utter disregard of three Security Council resolutions.

(i) Resolution No. 93 of 18 May 1951 (S/2157) stating inter alia that the Security Council "Decides that Arab civilians who have been removed from the demilitarized zone by the Government of Israel should be permitted to return forthwith to their homes and that the Mixed Armistice Commission should supervise their return and rehabilitation in a manner to be determined by the Commission." It is to be noted that this injunction calls for the return of Arab civilians forthwith.

(ii) Resolution 111 of 19 January 1956 (S/3538) condemning Israel for its attack in the Lake Tiberias area as a flagrant violation of the cease-fire provisions of its resolution of 15 July 1948, of the terms of the General Armistice Agreement. Paragraphs 4 and 5 state that the Security Council "Expresses its grave concern at the failure of the Government of Israel to comply with its obligations;"

"Calls upon the Government of Israel to do so in the future, in default of which the Council will have to consider what further measures under the Charter are required to maintain or restore the peace;

- (iii) Resolution 171 of 9 April 1962 (S/5111) also condemning Israel for attack on Syrian territory and stating that the Security Council "Calls for strict observance of article V of the General Armistice Agreement which provides for the exclusion of armed forces from the Demilitarized Zone and annex IV of that Agreement which sets limits on forces in the defensive area."

(c) The continued denial to recognize Syria as a party to any dispute concerning the D/Zone. For, while accepting the appeal of the Secretary-General of 15 January 1967 to meet in an emergency meeting of the Commission "with a view to reaching an understanding on the problems of cultivation in the area" the chief Israeli delegate to the meetings declared on 18 January, prior to any meeting "We have refused to consider Syria as a party when dealing with the problems of the demilitarized zone. We have also refused to discuss this problem whenever Syria tried to raise it. Every time Syria attempted to come first and discuss the matter we have objected to it."

Thus Israel's attendance of the meetings of MAC were meant to put a final seal to its military occupation of the D/Zone, its violation of the United Nations Charter and the General Armistice Agreement and its complete disregard of the Security Council resolutions referred to above and their injunctions.

In view of this hideous challenge of the rule of law, Syria solemnly reaffirms its stand, namely, that Security Council resolutions should be fully implemented and accordingly Israel should:

1. Withdraw completely its military and para-military forces from the D/Zone.
2. Arab farmers should be permitted to return to their lands in the D/Zone.
3. Israeli military fortifications in the D/Zone should be demolished as requested by UNTSO (see Secretary-General's report S/7573 of 2 November 1966).

These are not new demands. These are the injunctions of the Security Council that must be implemented and complied with. Failing this, how can any meeting be fruitful when one party has consistently chosen not to bind itself to international undertakings. In fact, the United Nations would be failing in its

role and its prestige would adversely be affected if it condones continued aggression in our area, so frequently condemned by the Security Council.

3. Another Israeli stratagem to divert attention from their crimes, past and present, is by now the familiar accusation of a "people's war" against Israel. If the Israeli representatives seem to forget - the world would not be able to forget - that the Arab people of Palestine have been ousted by Zionist terrorism, sabotage, and outlawed gangster gangs.

In this era where the legitimacy of the liberation movements of peoples aiming at the restoration of their inalienable rights is universally recognized, Syria will never be a party to any act that may deprive two million and a half Arab Palestinians from restoring their legitimate rights. It is the fault of those who usurped the rights of Arab Palestinians and continue to do so, and not the Arab Palestinians' fault if these latter come to conclude that "people's war" is the only means left to them to regain their rights. In this respect it is of no avail to hypocritically put the blame on Syria. For, the essential thing is to re-establish justice and to redress the torts.

4. The Israeli representative must obviously finish his letter with an appeal for peace, which is nothing but a smoke-screen that comes before or after each Israeli aggression. The massive ground and aerial attack of 7 April is a glaring example of Israeli deceit, mockery and double crossing. Surely the international community cannot be deceived by such false appeals. Because in the last analysis acts and not words really count.

I should be grateful if the text of this letter could be circulated to the members of the Security Council as an official document.

Accept, etc.

(Signed) George J. TOMEH  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative

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