



UNITED NATIONS
SECURITY
COUNCIL



Distr.
GENERAL

S/7901
23 May 1967

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 22 MAY 1967 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF ISRAEL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

The grave situation developing along the borders of Israel compels me to deal with a number of points raised by the Syrian Representative in his letter of 15 May 1967 (S/7885). The admissions and assertions made in that letter shed light on the circumstances which have led to the present crisis.

The Syrian Representative himself admits that terrorist activities are being carried out inside Israel territory. However, he tries to absolve his Government and the Arab Governments concerned, from any responsibility for the armed incursions into Israel carried out from their territories. Syria, as well as other signatories of General Armistice Agreements with Israel, is bound to observe scrupulously its obligations to prevent any crossings of her border into Israel, and to refrain from the planning, organizing, executing, supporting and abetting of warlike or any other kind of aggressive activities, whether undertaken by regular or irregular forces, either by large military formations or by small groups of terrorists and saboteurs.

Syria has freely entered into these obligations which are total and unconditional. They are as binding today as they were when the General Armistice Agreement with Israel was signed in 1949. The repudiation of these obligations on the one hand, and the hostile attitude and continuous belligerent policies practised by the Syrian Government, constitute the underlying causes of the present situation. The Secretary-General in his statement of 11 May 1967 (Press Release SO/SM/708), has accurately described this state of affairs and the incumbent responsibilities. Instead of heeding the call of the Secretary-General to the Governments concerned "to take every measure within their means to put an end to such activities", the Syrian Government chose to extend the scope of its hostility and to involve other countries in it.

Under the pretext of an imaginary conspiracy upon which the Syrian Representative dwells with such vivid fancy, the Government of Syria has further advanced its carefully planned, blatantly and frequently pronounced goal to provoke a general onslaught on Israel.

In this context the reference to Gaza in the Syrian letter is ominous and revealing. It preceded by a few days the events which were to bring about the present crisis. It is noteworthy that in that particular area, which is inhabited by a large Palestinian Arab population, calm had prevailed along the border for many years, while now it has become a centre of dangerous agitation.

The Representative of Syria refers to statements made by Israel leaders, which he chooses to interpret as indicating alleged Israel aggressive intentions against Syria and its regime. Any objective study of these statements will clearly show that they refer to the intolerable situation created by Syrian aggressiveness and the necessity to take counter-measures to curb the long series of ever increasing violence. In his statement of 14 May 1967, on the eve of Israel's 19th Independence Day, the Prime Minister of Israel stated inter alia:

"The Arab States and the nations of the world ought to know that any border which is tranquil from their side will also be quiet from our side. If they try to sow unrest on our border - unrest will come to theirs."

On the other hand, careful perusal of statements made by Syrian Government leaders, does not reveal even the mildest indication of a desire on their part to maintain tranquility along Israel's border. On the contrary, the Syrian leaders have manifested with unprecedented brutality and frankness their avowed aim to open a total war against Israel, and use all means to bring about its destruction.

At the very time when the present crisis in the Middle East was mounting as a result of Syria's provocation, intensified by the expulsion of the United Nations Emergency Force, and by the menacing build-up of Syrian and Egyptian military forces along the border of Israel, the Syrian Minister of Defence, General Assad, declared on 20 May 1967:

"The Syrian forces are prepared to initiate the liberation and the blowing up of the aggressive Zionist existence in our Arab homeland. The Syrian Army, which has been waiting for a long time, is unanimous in its will to precipitate

the battle. However, the army has been waiting for a signal from the political leadership. I (the Minister of Defence), as a military man, am of the opinion that the time is ripe for a war of liberation."

In that statement, the Syrian Minister boastfully admitted that Syrian aircraft had overflown Israel territory tens of times since 23 February 1967, for observation purposes and other unspecified missions. The last time, according to him, was on 14 May 1967, at 1200 hours, when Syrian aircraft penetrated Israel airspace for tens of kilometres.

The Representative of Syria in his letter, ascribes to Israel sinister designs against the present Government of Syria. I wish to state categorically that it is not Israel's concern what Government or regime is directing the affairs of Syria. Israel has no quarrel either with the domestic policies of Syria, or with its foreign relations. The trouble arises when Syria extends its activities beyond her border, interfering with the affairs of Israel, by organizing supporting and launching acts of violence against the lives and property of the citizens of Israel.

The policy of my Government was summed up as recently as today in the statement by the Prime Minister of Israel in the Knesset, as follows:

"I would like to say to the Arab countries that we harbour no aggressive designs. We have no interest whatever to violate either their security, or their territory. We expect the same principles to be applied towards Israel... Israel, with complete confidence in her defensive strength and in steadfastness, expresses her readiness to participate in an effort to strengthen stability and to advance peace in our area."

I have the honour to request that this letter be circulated among the members of the Security Council as a Council document.

Please accept, etc.,

(Signed) Gideon RAFAEL
Permanent Representative
