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LETTER DATED 1 JULY 1960 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ISRAEL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour, on instructions from my Government, to bring to the attention of the Security Council the deteriorating situation on the Israel-Syrian border, resulting from recent acts of aggression committed by the Armed Forces of the United Arab Republic.

These actions have disrupted a period of relative quiet on that border, since the situation was last brought to the attention of the Council in the letter dated 3 February 1960 from the Acting Permanent Representative of Israel to the President of the Security Council (S/4264).

On 11 June 1960 an Israel police jeep on its routine daily patrol, struck a landmine which had been laid in the roadway along the west bank of the River Jordan, about one and a half kilometres south of the B'not Ya'acov Bridge and opposite a Syrian military outpost on the other side of the River. A complaint was immediately lodged with the Israel-Syrian Mixed Armistice Commission, and investigation by United Nations Observers confirmed that the footprints of three persons led from the Syrian border to the spot where the mine had been laid, and back to the border.

On 12 June 1960, at 0830 hours, Syrian troops opened fire on a police patrol jeep moving along the roadway mentioned above, and in the vicinity of the mine incident. The fire was not returned, and a complaint was lodged with the Israel-Syrian Mixed Armistice Commission.

Early the same morning of 12 June 1960, in the Beth Katzir area, in the demilitarized zone southeast of Lake Kinneret, Syrian military positions opened fire on an Israel farmer, who was driving a tractor while ploughing land regularly cultivated by his village, Beth Katzir. The farmer was pinned down by the fire. Israel immediately lodged a complaint with the Israel-Syrian Mixed Armistice Commission. At 1130 hours, a United Nations Observer entered the area

accompanied by an Israel Liaison Officer, and they observed the firing which was proceeding on the farmer and on the village itself. When some bursts of fire were also directed at the Observer and the Liaison Officer, the Observer withdrew. The firing continued until 1400 hours, when the farmer finally succeeded in getting back to the village without being hit. No fire was returned at any time from the Israel side.

Again on the same morning, 12 June, an Israel police launch patrolling Lake Kinneret observed a Syrian fishing boat and shore fishermen illegally fishing in the Lake under cover of a Syrian unit, armed with sub-machine guns and anti-tank weapons, which had dug itself in just above the shore and remained there until after the fishermen had pulled in their nets and withdrawn. The Israel police launch refrained from engaging the fishermen or the military unit.

On 27 June Radio Cairo broadcast a bellicose and threatening declaration by the Commanding Officer of the First Syrian Army, which is deployed in the area of the Israel-Syrian border. This declaration states (as translated from Arabic):

"We shall not wait for negotiations. The First Syrian Army knows its duty. We warn: We shall not wait until we are attacked in order to retaliate. The enemy will be faced with the combined might of the Arab world forces. The orders issued to the forces on the border are clear: first shoot and then wait for instructions."

"The First Command will not let Israel profit in any way. Information which has reached the First Army Command indicates Israel's intention to attack the demilitarized zone for propaganda purposes. We have decided to defeat these intentions at all cost.

The assertion in this statement regarding "Israel's intention to attack the demilitarized zone" is totally without foundation.

On 28 June (the day following the above declaration), at 1650 hours, the Syrian military positions at Upper Tawfiq, on the Syrian side of the border, suddenly opened heavy fire with medium machine guns on a police patrol moving through the fields of Beth Katzir southeast of the village. The patrol commander was wounded in this totally unprovoked attack, and attempts to extricate him were frustrated by continuous Syrian firing. United Nations observers on the spot made several attempts to persuade the Syrians to cease fire but met with refusal and threatening language. Eventually a brief cease-fire was arranged during which the wounded police officer was removed. By this time his condition had become

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critical, and he died on the way to the hospital. Throughout this incident, too, no fire was returned from the Israel side. Again a complaint was submitted to the Israel-Syrian Mixed Armistice Commission.

This renewal of unilateral armed action by the Armed Forces of the United Arab Republic along the Syrian border during recent weeks, is especially disquieting because it has been accompanied by a concentration of U.A.R. troops in the border area, and also by fresh expression by United Arab Republic leaders of their policy of active belligerency against Israel. For instance, on 8 May 1960, President Nasser is reported to have declared at Damietta that -

"... Never shall we forget the rights of the people of Palestine, which are the rights of the whole Arab nation. In spite of the Zionist and imperialistic plots and of the support of Zionism by the United States, Britain and France, we declare that we will get what is due to us with our own hands and our own force."

(Radio Cairo, 8 May 1960.)

Again, on 24 June 1960, President Nasser is reported to have declared at Alexandria that "the Arab nation ...had the holy duty of regaining the usurped land".

As the Government of Israel has repeatedly pointed out in previous communications to the Security Council, these aggressive actions and declarations of the United Arab Republic constitute a violation of the United Nations Charter and a constant threat to peace in the area.

I have the honour to request that this letter be circulated to all Members of the Security Council.

Please accept, etc.

(Signed) Michael Comay
Permanent Representative

