

UNITED NATIONS
SECURITY
COUNCIL



GENERAL

S/1459
20 February 1950

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 12 FEBRUARY 1950 FROM THE CHIEF OF STAFF
OF THE TRUCE SUPERVISION ORGANIZATION IN PALESTINE
TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TRANSMITTING A REPORT
ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE MIXED ARMISTICE
COMMISSIONS

I have the honour to submit to you, for your information, a summary report on the activities of the Mixed Armistice Commissions, established to implement the General Armistice Agreements concluded between Israel and her four neighbour States during the year 1949.

In general it can be said that the work done in the four Mixed Armistice Commissions has been reasonably successful so far. It will be noted that on 24 February 1950, the Egyptian-Israel General Armistice Agreement will have been in force for a period of one year.

You may rest assured that the French, Belgian and American officers and enlisted men who are assigned to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization and on loan to the several Mixed Armistice Commissions, will intensify their efforts during the year 1950, to maintain the good relations that now exist between the parties concerned. These efforts will be continued until peace is restored in Palestine.

(Signed) W. E. Riley
Brigadier General, USMC
Chief of Staff

REPORT ON
S/1459

REPORT ON ACTIVITIES
OF THE MIXED ARMISTICE COMMISSIONS

Four Mixed Armistice Commissions, established to implement the General Armistice Agreement concluded between Israel and her four neighbour States, are presently operating in the Middle East. Armistice negotiations between Israel and her neighbour States started on the Greek island of Rhodes, on 12 January 1949, pursuant to the Security Council resolution of 16 November 1948. The negotiations resulted in the signing of General Armistice Agreements, on Rhodes, between Israel and Egypt on 24 February 1949 and between Israel and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on 3 April 1949, and at Ras En Naqoura, between Israel and Lebanon on 23 March 1949. Subsequently, a General Armistice Agreement between Israel and Syria was signed on 20 July 1949 on the Hill 232, near Makarajin at the Syrian-Israeli border.

The general principles laid down in those four Armistice Agreements are alike. In each of them the two parties undertake to respect the injunction of the Security Council against resort to military force in the settlement of the Palestine question; in each the parties pledge to refrain from aggressive action and to respect the right of the other party to its security and freedom from fear of attack; in each of the General Armistice Agreements the parties moreover recognize these agreements as indispensable steps towards the liquidation of armed conflict and the restoration of peace in Palestine; furthermore the respective parties acknowledge in each Armistice Agreement that no provision of the Agreement shall in any way prejudice the rights, claims and positions of the other party in any ultimate peaceful settlement of the Palestine question.

All four General Armistice Agreements are to remain in force until the Palestine conflict is peacefully settled, but they can be revised by mutual agreement of the parties. In the absence of such mutual agreement, and after the agreements have been in force for one year, either party may call upon the Secretary-General of the United Nations to convoke a conference of representatives of the two parties for the purpose of revising the Agreement. If such a conference should fail to settle the dispute, either party may bring the matter before the Security Council.

In order to implement these general principles as well as the specific provisions laid down in the four General Armistice Agreements, each Agreement

/provides for

provides for the establishment of a Mixed Armistice Commission consisting of an equal number of Israeli and Arab representatives and a neutral chairman appointed by the Chief of Staff of the Truce Supervision Organization from the United Nations military personnel assigned to the Mission. The General Armistice Agreements between Israel on the one side and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Lebanon and Syria on the other side, provide that the respective Mixed Armistice Commissions shall consist, in addition to the Chairman, of two Israeli and two Arab representatives. In the Case of the Egyptian-Israeli Mixed Armistice Commission provision was made for three representatives from each side.

Decisions of the Mixed Armistice Commissions, to the extent possible, shall be unanimous. However, when unanimity cannot be achieved, decisions can be taken - and have been taken in practice - by majority vote, which for all practical purposes means that the chairman votes for one or the other side.

The main tasks given to the four Mixed Armistice Commissions under the General Armistice Agreements were: to avoid any resumption of hostilities, to arrange for the exchange of prisoners of war, to establish permanent armistice demarcation lines in accordance with the principles laid down in the General Armistice Agreements and to carry out specific provisions made in those Armistice Agreements with a view of facilitating the transition to a permanent peace in Palestine.

Practical experience during the past several months has shown that, in addition to working on those general and major tasks, the Mixed Armistice Commissions - the only forum on which Arabs and Israelis are presently co-operating in direct contact under United Nations auspices - have been able to settle and to alleviate innumerable human problems arising between the parties on a local level and generally to contribute to the growing human understanding between people who but a year ago were involved in a bitter and sanguinary conflict.

EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI MIXED ARMISTICE COMMISSION

The Egyptian-Israeli Mixed Armistice Commission has its permanent headquarters at the former Palestinian frontier post of El Auja, a place consisting of two ramshackle stone houses and an equally dilapidated stable building. The members of the Israeli-Egyptian Mixed Armistice Commission, the

/United Nations

United Nations observers, and the Israeli and Egyptian guards and the service personnel attached to it, are the only inhabitants of El Auja. From this headquarters, at which Israeli and Egyptian representatives spend their lives together, sleep in a common dormitory, eat at the same table and spend their leisure pitching horseshoes together, the Mixed Armistice Commission is conducting its business which included supervision of peaceful relations in an area stretching over more than 150 kilometres from south of Tel Aviv to the Red Sea.

One of the specific tasks given to the Egyptian-Israeli Mixed Armistice Commission under the General Armistice Agreement was to carry out and to supervise the evacuation of Egyptian troops who had been surrounded in the area of El Faluja during the hostilities in the fall of 1948. In implementation of that provision, 2747 Egyptian military personnel together with their equipment and their supplies were evacuated by the Mixed Armistice Commission between 26 and 29 February 1949 and taken to Egyptian territory. Later on, in six operations stretching over a period between 28 February and 22 April, 3463 Arab civilians who elected to leave El Faluja were evacuated without incident by the Mixed Armistice Commission. Moreover, the Mixed Armistice Commission arranged for and supervised a mass exchange of prisoners of war under which 1216 Egyptian prisoners of war in Israeli hands and 144 Israeli prisoners of war in Egyptian hands were delivered to their respective countries on the 7, 8 and 9 of March.

The two most difficult and protracted problems so far handled by the Egyptian-Israeli Mixed Armistice Commission, concerned the delineation of areas in which only defensive forces are permitted by the General Armistice Agreement and the establishment and supervision of demarcation lines bordering the narrow strip of land around Gaza which is held by Egyptian forces.

As to the first issue, the General Armistice Agreement provided that a certain part of Palestine, generally coincident with the Negev, should be divided into an Eastern and a Western Front by a line ending at the southernmost tip of Palestine. The armistice permitted the presence of only defensive Israeli and Egyptian forces in the areas of the Western Front under the control of each party. A dispute arose between the parties on two points:

- (a) Whether the term "Western Front" (in which only defensive forces are permitted) referred only to areas within the boundaries of the former

/Palestine

Palestine Mandate or whether it also extended to Egyptian territory bordering the Gaza strip;

(b) on the interpretation of the words "southernmost tip of Palestine": this latter point was of obvious importance to either party because it involved control of some ten kilometres of the Red Sea Shore.

These two issues led to lengthy and occasionally bitter discussions in the El Auja Mixed Armistice Commission and were finally referred, by the way of appeal, to the "Special Committee" composed of the United Nations Chief of Staff of the Truce Supervision Organization and one member each of the Egyptian and Israeli delegations with the armistice conference at Rhodes. (This Special Committee to which decisions made by the Mixed Armistice Commission can be appealed for interpretation of the intent of the articles contained in the General Armistice Agreement is a specific institution provided for only in the Egyptian-Israeli General Armistice Agreement. Decisions made by this Special Committee are final but decisions made in the other three Mixed Armistice Commissions are considered final and cannot be appealed to a Special Committee.)

After protracted discussions in the Mixed Armistice Commission as well as in the Special Committee, satisfactory agreements on both issues mentioned above were reached. Under these arrangements the dividing line between the Eastern and the Western Front now ends at a point on the Red Sea Gulf of Aqaba, half way between the international boundaries of Trans-Jordan and Egypt. The Negev area under Israeli control in the Western Front includes all land outside the Gaza strip; the area included in the Gaza-Rafah strip is under Egyptian control; the Egyptian territory immediately southward of the Gaza strip is included into the area in which only defensive forces are permitted. The reason for the protracted discussions that took place in connexion with the determination of the line separating the Western and Eastern fronts in the Negev may be summarized as follows: On or about 10 March 1949 the Israelis advanced into the Gulf of Aqaba area and established a settlement at Um Reshresh and an outpost at Bir Qattar in the Western zone. The establishment of this outpost at Bir Qattar took place after the signing of the Egyptian-Israeli General Armistice Agreement. The Israelis were interested in having the line drawn so as to place this outpost in the Eastern Front area. This matter is now being discussed in the Mixed Armistice Commission.

/The problem

The problem of establishing and guarding the demarcation line separating the Gaza strip from the Israeli-held Negev area, proved a vexing one, largely due to the presence of more than 200,000 Arab refugees in this Gaza area. It is naturally difficult to prevent people living on a bare subsistence level, and far too often below it, from crossing lines beyond which they hope to find a few blades of grass for their hungry sheep, or a few dry twigs for fuel. In addition, there have also occurred occasional nightly clandestine excursions between Gaza and Hebron which must be considered as smuggling excursions. These latter activities are largely motivated by the great discrepancy of prices prevailing in the two areas.

The Mixed Armistice Commission had to deal with scores of complaints arising from these conditions and involving the death of Arabs and Israelis as well as many head of livestock.

Most of these complaints concerned the shooting by Israelis of Arab civilians and livestock, said to have illegally crossed the demarcation lines. In the most serious case of this kind, Egypt complained that Israeli military forces, on the 7 and 14 October, had shelled and machine-gunned the Arab villages of Apassan and Beit Hanun in Egyptian-controlled territory of the Gaza strip involving the death of seven and the wounding of twenty civilians. Israel on the other hand complained about border incidents which had resulted in the death of four Israeli settlers and the wounding of twenty others. To avoid such incidents in the future, the Mixed Armistice Commission finally decided to set up mixed border patrols comprised of officers and enlisted men from each side. These mixed teams are presently patrolling the demarcation line in jeeps and they seem to be working satisfactorily.

This Mixed Armistice Commission is handling many complaints submitted by both sides which theoretically are beyond the scope of the General Armistice Agreement. However, as the Mixed Armistice Commission is the only agency that is qualified to clear up such complaints, both sides desire to make use of this medium.

The first year of the existence of this Agreement will expire on 23 February 1950. Although there have been many complaints submitted to the Mixed Armistice Commission which at times appeared insoluble due to the stand taken by both sides, a solution has eventually been arrived at and both sides

/were willing

were willing to accept it. It must be admitted that the General Armistice Agreement entered into by these two States had the desired effect, namely to bring an end to the hostilities in order to facilitate the transition from the then imposed truce to permanent peace in Palestine. I cannot speak too highly of the conscientious endeavours of the members of the Egyptian-Israeli Delegations to the Mixed Armistice Commission to find satisfactory solutions to the complaints submitted by either side.

HASHEMITE JORDAN KINGDOM - ISRAELI
MIXED ARMISTICE COMMISSION

The Mixed Armistice Commission for Israel and the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom has set up its headquarters at Mandelbaum Gate, crossing point between the Israeli and the Arab part of Jerusalem and the most thoroughly destroyed part of the Holy City. Here, in the partly wrecked building of a former Bible Mission, and surrounded by the ruins of the past war, the Mixed Armistice Commission is holding its meetings which are predominantly devoted to two main issues: (a) the drawing and controlling of some 500 kilometres of demarcation lines and (b) the fate of considerable numbers of Palestinian Arabs who were affected by the re-drawing of these lines.

The drawing of demarcation lines between Israeli-held territory and the area occupied by military forces of the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom was complicated by the fact that a large portion of the fighting front in central and northern Palestine had been manned by Iraqi forces in the recent hostilities. Under the terms of the General Armistice Agreement, the Iraqi forces were withdrawn and replaced by military forces of the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom. However, this replacement involved a considerable change of the lines, a change which could not be carried out without inflicting serious hardships upon the population and the affected areas. It was inevitable that thousands of people, in the course of this re-drawing of demarcation lines, were cut off from the fields that were their livelihood, cut off from their only resources of water and from the meager pastures on which they used to graze their cattle.

According to the General Armistice Agreement, the implementation of this new armistice line, laid down in the Agreement itself, had to be completed within fifteen weeks. During those fifteen weeks United Nations observers attached to the Israeli-Hashemite Jordan Kingdom Mixed Armistice Commission, were working for sixteen hours a day and more, travelling in their jeeps and
/on foot

on foot through the area, visiting the affected villages, holding town meetings to inform the villagers of the impending change and of their rights and duties under the General Armistice Agreement, and trying to remove hardships by local arrangements and by minor adjustments of the proposed line.

Generally the re-arrangement of the demarcation line was carried out satisfactorily and without serious incidents thanks to the understanding and co-operation by both parties. Some disputes arose, however, subsequently on the question, which Arab inhabitants of the areas thus transferred to Israeli control would be allowed to remain in the Israeli occupied territory and which ones would have to return to Arab territory. In general the Arab contention was that all Arabs living in the villages at the time of the transfer, should be permitted to remain in the Israeli controlled area. The Government of Israel, on the other hand, contended that many inhabitants of the transferred villages were not bona fide residents but refugees from other parts who had only recently settled in the affected villages and who, therefore, were to be returned to the Arab side.

In the most important case of this kind, the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom complained on 28 June 1949 against the expulsion of approximately 1500 Arab civilians from the Baqa el Gharbyia area in central Palestine which had been transferred to Israeli control. After investigating the situation through a sub-committee, the Mixed Armistice Commission decided, by majority vote, that Israel had violated the General Armistice Agreement by driving the civilians across the demarcation line into the territory of the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom. But still the question remained how many of the expelled civilians should be permitted to return to their villages permanently. A committee comprised of both parties is presently trying to find an amicable solution to this problem by mutual agreement. Similar problems in other parts of Palestine, such as in Wadi Fukin, south of Bethlehem, was settled in the Mixed Armistice Commission by agreeing upon readjustments of the demarcation lines.

An important goal in re-drawing the demarcation lines between Israeli-held territory and territory held by the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom, has been the liquidation of strips of no-man's land which had been established during the hostilities in order to keep the opposing forces apart, but which after the termination of the fighting were a needless waste of scarce land and a continuous source of friction. The liquidation of these no-man's lands has been

/successfully

successfully accomplished all along the line with the exception of Jerusalem proper and the area to the immediate northwest of the Holy City. The problem of liquidating these last remaining no-man's lands, presently dominates the work to be done within the framework of the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom - Israeli Mixed Armistice Commission. Largely this problem falls within the scope of the "Special Committee", an organ specifically set up by the General Armistice Agreement.

This Special Committee under the Armistice Agreement is composed of two representatives of each party with no United Nations representative present. The Special Committee has been established by the Armistice Agreement for the purpose of enlarging the scope of the Agreement and effecting improvements in its application. Specifically it has been given the task of making arrangements aimed at: free movement of traffic on the roads, including the Bethlehem and Tel Aviv-Jerusalem roads (the former road is at present partly under Israeli and partly under Hashemite Jordan Kingdom control and, therefore, unusable, and the latter road is cut by an Arab salient in the Latrun area northwest of Jerusalem); resumption of the normal functioning of the cultural and humanitarian institutions on Mount Scopus and free access thereto; free access to the Holy Places and cultural institutions and use of the cemetery on the Mount of Olives; resumption of operation of the Latrun pumping station; provision of electricity for the Holy City; and resumption of operation of the railroad to Jerusalem.

While these problems are under discussion in the Special Committee, the Mixed Armistice Commission itself is trying to draw up a satisfactory single demarcation line within the city of Jerusalem, thus dissolving the remaining areas of no-man's lands, including the special neutralized area surrounding Government House, headquarters of the Chief of Staff and of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine. This latter area had become the subject of action by the Mixed Armistice Commission last summer when the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom lodged a complaint that Israeli forces had advanced into the area; and Israel, on the other hand, charged that an Arab outpost had been illegally set up in the area. The Mixed Armistice Commission decided that both parties had violated the Armistice Agreement by permitting their forces to enter the area and both parties withdrew their forces from there forthwith.

/In addition

In addition to the work highlighted above, and to its routine work involving the arduous job of marking on the ground 500 kilometres of demarcation lines, the Chief of Staff and the United Nations observers attached to the Hachemite Jordan Kingdom - Israeli Mixed Armistice Commission, were given last summer an, as it were, extra-curricular job. This job concerned the disposal of a potentially dangerous cache of approximately three tons of dynamite buried in an abandoned tunnel by the Israeli forces during the 1948 fighting in a strip of no-man's land just in front of the Damascus Gate of the Old City of Jerusalem.

The disclosure of the presence of the dynamite and of the intention of the Israeli Government to detonate it in place caused considerable anxiety on the part of the Trans-Jordan Government, the Armenian and Greek Orthodox Patriarchs of Jerusalem and diplomatic representatives for fear the detonation would result in irreparable damage to the Holy places especially to the Holy Sepulchre. Under these circumstances the Chief of Staff was forced to relieve the Mixed Armistice Commission from further responsibility in the matter as he considered that the detonation must take place and that it was now the sole responsibility of the Israeli Government to dispose of the dynamite. However, the Chief of Staff utilized a French, a Belgian and an American military observer to check and recheck with the Israeli military authorities to see that all possible precautions were taken to avoid loss of life or damage to the Holy places. When satisfied that the Israelis had taken all such precautions, the Chief of Staff agreed to the date and hour for the detonation.

The explosion was carried out on 23 August 1949 by the Israeli Army without causing any casualties and with only negligible damage to property. The Israeli Government appreciated the part played by the United Nations in preventing the affair from becoming a political rather than a purely military problem.

SYRIAN-ISRAELI
MIXED ARMISTICE COMMISSION

A particular feature of the Israeli-Syrian General Armistice Agreement is the provision for the establishment of a special Demilitarized Zone between the countries. This provision had to be made because of the differing viewpoints of the two parties during the armistice negotiations as to the disposal of the areas within the boundaries of the former British Mandate

/which were

which were occupied by Syrian troops. A compromise agreement was finally reached under which the disputed area was to be completely demilitarized. The armistice demarcation lines between Syria and Israel outside of that area coincide with the international boundary.

The demilitarized area comprises some 250 square kilometres of land, divided into three zones, to the east and to the northeast of Lake Tiberias. Under the provisions of the General Armistice Agreement the chairman of the Israeli-Syrian Mixed Armistice Commission is personally responsible for the gradual restoration of normal civilian life in the area and it is his task to authorize the return of civilians to villages and settlements in the Demilitarized Zone. The chairman of this Mixed Armistice Commission has thus been given duties and powers in addition to those held by the chairman of the other three Mixed Armistice Commissions.

Practically all the work done in the Israeli-Syrian Mixed Armistice Commission has been centered upon the problems of the Demilitarized Zone. The pattern of disputes concerning this area generally follows three lines:

- (a) disputes about establishing of new and rebuilding of old settlements in the area;
- (b) disputes about the number of civilians to be readmitted into the area; and
- (c) disputes about the removal of military installations in the area.

As to the first point the Mixed Armistice Commission decided that a new settlement erected by returning Israelis was established without the concurrence of the chairman of the Mixed Armistice Commission charged with the normal restoration of civilian life in the Demilitarized Zone, was fenced in so as to be in the nature of a military outpost and should therefore be removed. Israel complied with that decision.

The second point - return of civilians to the area - has been causing a good deal of disputes. The chairman of the Mixed Armistice Commission could interpret his duties and powers under the General Armistice Agreement only in such a way as to permit the return of Arab and Israeli civilians in numbers corresponding to the number of Arab and Israeli civilians prior to the end of the British Mandate. According to this principle, the chairman authorized Arab and Israeli civilians to return to the area to resume their civilian life

/there as of

there as of 8 September. By the end of January 1950, the number of Israelis returned to the area under this ruling, roughly equaled the number of Israelis who had resided there at the end of the mandatory regime.

The number of Arabs returned by the end of January 1950 amounted to about 75 per cent of those living there at the expiration of the Mandate. At first, Syrian representatives opposed this ruling of the chairman and requested that the number of returning civilians be limited. At a later stage, however, the Syrian representatives accepted the chairman's ruling as to the number of returning refugees, but they are still opposed to the chairman's ruling that new settlements may be erected by returning settlers, both Arab and Israeli.

This Syrian attitude appears to be partly motivated by the disparity of economic conditions under which the returning Arab and Israeli civilians live. The returning Israeli settlers are well equipped with building materials, machinery and agricultural implements and, therefore, in a position speedily to establish permanent settlements which are considered by Syria as being of potential military value. On the other hand the returning Arab refugees often arrive completely destitute in their former villages, most of which have been levelled to the ground by the Israeli forces prior to their withdrawal from the area after the signing of the Israeli-Syrian Armistice Agreement.

There is no doubt that the dispute could be more easily resolved if the economic conditions of civilians returning from both sides could be somewhat equalized by providing the returning Arab refugees with building materials and with agricultural implements. However, the chairman of the Mixed Armistice Commission and the Chief of Staff have no means at their disposal to assist the rehabilitation of Arab refugees returning to their homes nor are they in a position officially to enlist the co-operation of any of the other United Nations agencies in the area that might conceivably be concerned with this problem. However, the representative in Beirut of the United Nations Relief for Palestine Refugees and the International Red Cross have provided limited aid to the returning Arab refugees.

As to the third point, the Israeli-Syrian Mixed Armistice Commission, with the co-operation of both parties, has completed the removal of military installations, mines and fortifications from the demilitarized zones as specified in the General Armistice Agreement.

/No other

No other major disputes have so far arisen within the sphere of the Israeli-Syrian Mixed Armistice Commission.

ISRAELI-LEBANON
MIXED ARMISTICE COMMISSION

The problems involved in the working of the Israeli-Lebanon Mixed Armistice Commission have been simpler than those confronting the other three Mixed Armistice Commissions. There was no major argument about the establishment of demarcation lines which generally followed the international boundary existing prior to the end of the British Mandate. Prisoners of war were exchanged within twenty-four hours after the signing of the Armistice Agreement, and practically all the missing persons in either country have been located through the Mixed Armistice Commission. Both countries are co-operating successfully in routine tasks such as removal of mines and demolishing of forbidden fortifications.

The smooth operation of this Mixed Armistice Commission is also signified by the fact that an agreement was reached under which Israel was permitted to use a portion of a Lebanese road in order to permit contact with an Israeli settlement near the Lebanese boundary for which there are at present no other means of contact.

REUNION OF REFUGEE FAMILIES

In addition to their varied tasks under the General Armistice Agreements, the four Mixed Armistice Commissions have been assisting in the implementation of an agreement between Israel and her four neighbour States on the reunion of certain Arab refugees with family members residing in Israel.

This agreement was reached in principle during negotiations before the Palestine Conciliation Commission in Lausanne last summer, and the Government of Israel requested in a letter to the Chief of Staff the assistance of the respective Mixed Armistice Commissions in making the agreement operative.

Responding to this request, the Chairman of the four Mixed Armistice Commissions established the necessary contacts with authorities on both sides and succeeded in making concrete arrangements for the return to Israel of certain dependent family members from Lebanon, the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom

/and Egypt.

and Egypt. Discussions with Syrian authorities are still continuing at this date.

The arrangements made and supervised by the Mixed Armistice Commission chairmen have so far resulted in the return of 523 dependent family members from Lebanon, and 267 from the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom. The first 115 were scheduled to return from Egyptian-held territory on February 16.

/SUMMARY AND

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This condensed report on the activities of the Mixed Armistice Commissions can, of necessity, touch only on the major issues handled by the four bodies. It must forego a description of the arduous routine work done day by day by Arab and Israeli representatives and by the Chief of Staff's military observer corps, twenty officers and twenty enlisted men from Belgium, France and the United States. It cannot dwell on the scores of "little" problems - many of them involving great human tragedies - handled by these men every day, the problems of people shot and maimed or killed in incidents along demarcation lines; the hundreds of on-the-spot negotiations between Arabs and Israelis, arranged by United Nations observers to recover stolen or looted property. It cannot tell of the hundreds of investigations and conciliations to recover cows and sheep and goats illegally appropriated by one or the other side or, more often, strayed across demarcation lines of which cows and sheep and goats are happily unaware. It cannot describe the incessant efforts to clear up misunderstandings and to smooth out frictions between the parties, efforts made by observers in talks with local authorities as well by the Chief of Staff in top-level discussions in the capitals of the Middle East.

In general it can be said that the work done in the four Mixed Armistice Commissions has been reasonably successful so far.

Regrettable incidents and misunderstandings, possibly unavoidable under the circumstances, have occurred and may occur in the future. But there is reason to assume that, provided continued co-operation by all parties is forthcoming, the main aim of the four General Armistice Agreements can be achieved: to facilitate the transition to a permanent peace in Palestine.

Jerusalem, 12 February 1950.

