

SECURITY
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CABLEGRAM DATED 28 SEPTEMBER 1948 FROM MR. RALPH BUNCHE TO THE SECRETARY -
GENERAL CONCERNING INVESTIGATION OF VIOLATION BY ARAB FORCES*

FOR INFORMATION OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL:

INQUIRY BY SPECIAL INVESTIGATION TEAM HAS CONFIRMED PRELIMINARY REPORT FORWARDED 24 SEPTEMBER CONCERNING ARAB ATTACK ON JERUSALEM-BOUND CONVOY AT LATRUN PUMPING STATION. CONVOY CONSISTING OF EIGHT LORRIES, TWO AUTOMOBILES AND TWO UN JEEPS WAS DISPATCHED ON 22 SEPTEMBER FROM AL QUARAB AFTER COLONEL DUMONCEL OF THE FRENCH ARMY AND SENIOR UNITED NATIONS OBSERVER FOR JERUSALEM CONVOYS HAD MADE NECESSARY PREPARATIONS FOR PASSAGE. AS THE CONVOY APPROACHED LATRUN PUMPING STATION IT WAS FIRED UPON AND BROUGHT TO A HALT. THE OCCUPANTS OF THE VEHICLES DEBARKED HURRIEDLY SOME OF THEM HIDING IN THE DITCH ALONG THE ROAD OTHERS RUNNING INTO NEARBY FIELDS.

SOON THREE ARABS APPEARED DRESSED IN KHAKI UNIFORMS WITH CAFTIAHS AND ARMED WITH RIFLES. HALTED MOMENTARILY BY COLONEL DUMONCEL'S COURAGEOUS EFFORTS THE ARABS RESUMED THEIR ATTACK FIRING AT THE OBSERVER AND SHOOTING DEAD THE FOUR PERSONS WHO HAD TAKEN REFUGE IN THE DITCH. AT LENGTH THE ARABS RETIRED AND THE VEHICLES OF THE CONVOY WHICH COULD YET OPERATE RETURNED TO THEIR STARTING PLACE.

THE CHIEF OF STAFF DECIDED THAT THIS INCIDENT MUST BE CONSIDERED A MOST SERIOUS BREACH OF THE TRUCE AND BE CHARGED AGAINST THE ARAB FORCES OF TRANSJORDAN.

I CONCURRED IN THIS DECISION AND HAVE REQUESTED THE UNITED NATIONS REPRESENTATIVE IN AMMAN TO DELIVER IT TO THE TRANSJORDAN FOREIGN MINISTER.

* See cablegram (S/1014) dated 24 September 1948, from Mr. Bunche.

I ALSO INSTRUCTED THE UNITED NATIONS REPRESENTATIVE TO PRESENT THE FOLLOWING VIEWS ON MY BEHALF: THE ATTACK ON AN UNARMED CONVOY ESCORTED BY AN UNARMED UNITED NATIONS OBSERVER AND THE SUBSEQUENT MASSACRE OF FOUR UNARMED PERSONS WERE UNPROVOKED AND UTTERLY RUTHLESS. IT WAS A SERIOUS BREACH OF GOOD FAITH AND OF THE TERMS OF THE TRUCE. THE EXACT IDENTITY OF THE ASSAILANTS REMAINS UNKNOWN BUT THIS IS IRRELEVANT IN THAT THE ATTACK OCCURRED IN TERRITORY UNDER THE CONTROL OF TRANSJORDAN FORCES AND BY THE PROVISIONS OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL OF 19 AUGUST THE GOVERNMENT OF TRANSJORDAN IS OBLIGATED TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUCH ACTS. THE GOVERNMENT OF TRANSJORDAN THEREFORE IS REQUESTED TO TAKE ALL NECESSARY MEASURES TO APPREHEND AND PUNISH THE CULPRITS AND TO ENSURE THAT SUCH ACTS WILL NOT AGAIN OCCUR.

BUNCHE

