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Dual DistributionPRELIMINARY REPORT DATED 25 OCTOBER 1948 FROM THE ACTING MEDIATOR  
FOR PALESTINE TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON OBSERVANCE  
OF THE TRUCE IN THE NEGEB AND IN THE LEBANESE SECTOR

I have the honour to submit the following report for transmission to the President of the Security Council.

## I. THE NEGEB

1. In accordance with the Security Council's resolution of 19 October regarding the recent fighting in the Negeb, both sides accepted a cease-fire effective as from 1200 hours GMT, 22 October. The Chief of Staff of the Truce Supervision informed me by cable dispatched on 22 October that United Nations Senior Military Observers with the Egyptian army and in Tel Aviv, respectively, were instructed to give the area the widest coverage possible. The Chief of Staff has subsequently dispatched to me a number of reports concerning the post-cease-fire situation in the Negeb, which are summarized as follows:

2. On 23 October the Senior United Nations Military Observer at Gaza reported statements from Egyptian military authorities

(a) that on 23 October at 0955 hours GMT Jewish attacks continued in the vicinity of Beit Hanun and that Jewish forces were mining the Gaza-Majdal road;

(b) that on 23 October at 1135 hours GMT, Jewish attacks were continuing in an area 8 kilometers southeast of El Faluja;

(c) that on the morning of 23 October, Jewish forces attacked and captured the villages of Beiraban, Zakariya, Ajur and Ed Dawayima, and positions in an area 8 kilometers southeast of El Faluja and Kh. Megrah Esh Sherif 6 kilometers northeast of Bir Asluj on the Beersheba road.

3. Gaza Observers were unable to check on these allegations owing to the fact that the roads were blocked by the combatants.

4. The representative of the Acting Mediator in Cairo reports that he was informed on 23 October by the Egyptian military authorities that the Israeli forces had launched a "strong general offensive on the whole (Negeb) front" on the night of 22 October. He was also informed that on the night of 22-23 October at 1130 hours "Jewish gunboats sunk Egyptian cruiser King Farouk". The Egyptian authorities stated that if the attacks did not cease effectively by 2000 hours (local time) they would consider themselves free to "take any necessary action for the defence of Egyptian forces and positions".
5. In a later message also sent on 23 October the representative of the Acting Mediator in Cairo reported that "having been informed General Riley expected in Negeb tomorrow Minister War agrees to postponement (of any action) in order to make possible peaceful settlement difficulties".
6. The following cable from the United Nations Chief of Staff of the Truce Supervision is the report of Tel Aviv Observer teams in the Negeb on 22 to 23 October:

"Following is ... report from Tel Aviv Observer teams in Negeb on 22-23 October. 22 October: Deiraban evacuated by Egyptians and area quiet. Negeb generally quiet except for sporadic fire. (Observer) teams at Deiraban and in sector east of Julis Gaza road. 23 October: 1215Z Israeli machine guns vicinity Beit Hanun fired on Egyptian trucks trying to escape from Al Majdal. Negeb area observed quiet otherwise. (Observer) teams on Julis Gaza road and to Beersheba. 24 October will be limited to two teams. One will be vicinity Beit Hanun. Teams are allowed to stay only during daylight hours and in predetermined locations".
7. On 24 October the Chief of Staff of the Truce Supervision met the General Officer Commanding the Egyptian Forces in Gaza and discussed with him the situation in the Negeb with a view to maintaining the cease-fire and settling outstanding differences.
8. United Nations Observers who visited various parts of the Negeb front since 22 October, including a visit to Beersheba on 23 October, reported "only sporadic bursts of fire and no evidence of attacks". Observations, however, were not complete since they were limited to daylight hours and to pre-determined places, and the teams were required by the Israeli authorities to return to Tel Aviv before darkness.

9. On 24 October all Observer teams from Tel Aviv were denied access to the Negeb and the southern front. A later message dispatched from Truce Supervision Headquarters late on 24 October stated that the Israeli military authorities declared that this denial was an error and that Observers would be able to visit the Negeb on 25 October.

10. In his daily report of 24 October the Chief of Staff reported that the "Egyptian corvette King Farouk was sunk at about 221930Z by attack of Jewish explosive laden motorboat".

11. On 25 October the representative of the Acting Mediator in Cairo informed me that he had received the following message from the Prime Minister of Egypt:

"1. Jews still attacking Egyptian forces at Beit Gibrin and Beit Hanoun and other places. 2. Since Egyptian Government issued cease-fire order which was carried out, Jews have seized opportunity to advance and from strategic positions command the road Magdal-Beit Gibrin-Khalil. 3. We received message from Egyptian officer commanding troops saying that Jews in spite of General Riley's decision have refused to withdraw to October 14th positions. 4. Five Jewish gunboats appeared before Gaza and Nagdal menacing Egyptian positions there. These must be commanded to withdraw immediately. 5. Unless Mediator orders Jews to cease fire and return to October 14th positions in order to secure safety our roads, the Egyptian Government will be forced to secure these roads within twenty four hours of receipt of this message by Senor Azcarate".

## II. FIGHTING IN THE LEBANESE SECTOR

12. On 23 October the Chief of Staff reported that according to Israeli reports, Lebanese forces had attacked on the night of 21-22 October in the Al Manara area, 8 kilometers south of Metullah, and that fighting continued on 22 October. According to the same reports the Lebanese forces had captured Hill Shabbah and three adjacent hills commanding the Jordan Valley road. The United Nations Observers at Tiberias were not allowed by Jewish liaison officers to visit this area on the grounds that it was unsafe.

13. On 22 October the United Nations Observers in Tyre reported that the previous night at 2120-2200 hours a plane dropped four 200lb bombs and six incendiaries on suburbs east of Tyre. According to this report two civilians were killed and two wounded. A more complete report is expected.

14. On 25 October at 2200Z hours, Colonel Baruch, Israeli Liaison Officer, informed the Chief of Staff of the Truce Supervision that the situation in the north was grave.

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15. On the same day at 1940Z the Senior United Nations Military Observer at Tiberias reported to the Chief of Staff as follows:

"Returned to Tiberias at 1900 after entire day in lines from Kaukji and Jewish forces. Situation along entire front of Lebanese forces grave. Heavy fighting continues along northern end of line from Nabi Yusha to one kilometer north of Manara. Kaukji in person accepted cease-fire order from Sunno Tiberias effective 1600 today. Jews refused to accept order, and continued firing for three hours with all weapons including artillery. Kaukji also accepted order to withdraw his forces within own side of truce line pending acceptance of cease-fire order by Jews. Kaukji forces now two kilometers east of agreed truce line and have cut Nabi Yusha-Manara road in three places and have mined road. Kaukji will not keep agreement on cease-fire or withdrawal order after 1900 today since Jews continued firing and refused to recognize order. My Observers will spend entire day tomorrow in position to observe and report situation by radio. Will keep you informed by radio tomorrow".

16. The Chief of Staff of the Truce Supervision promptly requested the Provisional Government of Israel to instruct its military authorities scrupulously to observe the truce order by the Security Council and to co-operate with the United Nations Observers toward bringing about an effective cease-fire. This message of the Chief of Staff was conveyed to Mr. Shiloah of the Provisional Government of Israel who promised to contact the Israeli military authorities immediately.

17. Simultaneously the Chief of Staff of the Truce Supervision sent to the Lebanese Minister of Foreign Affairs the following message:

"UN Observers have reported on grave situation along entire Lebanese front. Jewish liaison officers have also drawn attention of this headquarters on same situation, indicating that Kaukji may be taking independent action. Under Security Council resolution of 19 August Lebanese Government is responsible for any military action undertaken by any force co-operating with Lebanese forces in the part of Palestine occupied by them. In view of gravity of situation I earnestly request Lebanese Government to instruct all military authorities operating in Lebanese sector, including non-Lebanese, scrupulously to observe truce ordered by Security Council and to co-operate with UN Observers in order to bring about effective cease-fire. Investigation of any complaint from either side

regarding violation of terms of truce will be carried out as soon as cease-fire effective and necessary decision will be issued. Same representations made in Tel Aviv".

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Ralph J. Bunche  
Acting Mediator

25 October 1948  
PARIS

