

SECURITY
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CABLEGRAM DATED 11 MARCH 1949 FROM THE ACTING MEDIATOR
FOR PALESTINE TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL
CONCERNING ALLEGED MILITARY OPERATIONS BY ISRAELI FORCES
IN THE SOUTHERN NEGEV

I have the honor to inform the Security Council that in the past few days I have received several complaints from the Transjordan delegation at Rhodes alleging military operations by Israeli forces in the Southern Negev, particularly in the north of Aquaba. Specifically these complaints allege:

- (a) attempts of Israeli forces to cross "lines occupied by our (Arab Legion) forces north of Aquaba";
- (b) an Israeli force which appeared "at a point about thirty-five kilometers northwest of Aquaba town in Egyptian territory";
- (c) Israeli Auster Aircraft flying over El Ghamer MR 170991 on 3 March, El Ghamer being in Transjordan territory;
- (d) that "considerable force of Jewish jeeps and armored cars supported by aircraft crossed our (Arab Legion) lines on the morning of 7 March 1949, one kilometer west of Bir Ibn Ode MR 140970 and proceeded southwest up to Wadi Jefrafi";
- (e) as reported to me on 10 March that "military operations against Arab Legion in Wadi Araba continue. Israeli forces attacking Arab Legion positions with tanks and armored cars."

The Transjordan complaints have been transmitted by me immediately to Israeli authorities through the Israeli delegation at Rhodes. In formal notes Israeli authorities have informed me:

- (a) that at no point south of the Dead Sea have Israeli forces moved beyond the frontier;
- (b) that no Israeli forces have attacked any Transjordan positions or patrols;
- (c) that Israeli units encountered a mobile Arab Legion patrol west of Gherandal on the Palestine side of the Transjordan frontier, and that on this occasion the Arab patrol fired a few rounds and moved away, the fire not being returned by the Israelis. Israeli authorities on their part protest strongly against the "invasion of Israeli territory" by Transjordan forces and demand their withdrawal.

/The Foreign

The Foreign Minister of Israel on 10 March has given me emphatic assurance that there have been no clashes between armed forces in this area. The head of the Israeli delegation at Rhodes has denied that Israeli forces have any intention of advancing on Aquaba.

The area involved is one in which there has been little or no fighting in the past. There are no fixed fighting lines and the military positions held by the two forces are not defined. Military movement in the past has been confined entirely to small scale patrol activity.

I have directed the United Nations observers to make a thorough and prompt investigation of all complaints, to verify military positions and their date of establishment and to apply fully the conditions of the truce. I have also addressed identical notes to the two Governments calling upon them scrupulously to observe the conditions of the truce as regards activities of their forces in this area and to permit no situation to develop which would in any way jeopardize the armistice negotiations now in progress between them.

I have at this time no reports from observers which verify that there has been any fighting in this area.

Ralph Bunche

