

TELEGRAMS DATED 13, 15, 16 AND 18 JULY 1948 TO THE PRESIDENT OF
THE SECURITY COUNCIL FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE
SECURITY COUNCIL'S TRUCE COMMISSION ON
THE SUBJECT OF JERUSALEM*

I

"Jerusalem, 13 July.

The managing Director of the Jerusalem Electric Corporation having appealed to the Red Cross in vain, on (13) May last, requested the members of the Security Council's Truce Commission to give the protection of their respective flags to the Central Electricity Buildings.

This request was acceded to in view of the character of the Electricity Company, an essential public service which provides light and power to the two communities. The Electricity Works has thus functioned, to general satisfaction, for two months under the protection of the three flags. With greatest devotion to duty the members of the personnel, often at the peril of their lives, repaired lines damaged by shell-fire and in addition took advantage of the truce period to re-establish connections with the old town occupied by the Arabs.

On Tuesday, 6 July, the members of the dissident group ERGOUN ZWAI LEUMI, claiming to act in the name of the Jewish Army arrested the Managing Director and four other members of the personnel of British nationality.

In spite of energetic protests by the President who went to the spot as soon as he became aware of the fact, the victims are still held prisoners by the dissidents.

The latter are in the course of collecting proofs of espionage against the English members of the personnel while the Jewish authorities are negotiating for them to be transferred to the Government at Tel Aviv.

The mystery maintained in the accusations and the dilatory negotiations lead my colleagues and myself to think that this incident, even if the

* These telegrams were received 26 July 1948 through the French delegation to the United Nations.

accusations are partially justified, may well be also only a part of the general plans carefully prepared by the Jews to take illegal possession of the Electricity Works and its equipment. The dismissal of Arab personnel at the beginning of the truce, the recent threats against non-Jewish personnel and the arrest of the five Englishmen, are different stages of this plan to absorb the Central Electricity Company of Jerusalem into the network of the powerful Jewish Company, the "Rutenberg Palestine Electric Corporation" embracing the entire country.

This plan would without doubt, in addition, constitute a new blow at the international status of Jerusalem and its independence, vis-à-vis, the Jewish State and would hasten the movement to include the Holy City in the frontiers of Israel.

We have given the Jews reasonable time for the release of the Englishmen by the dissidents. On the expiry of this period, if we reach no results, we shall request the Security Council to take all measures which it considers appropriate."

II

"Jerusalem, 15 July.

Following our telegram of last Tuesday regarding the kidnapping of the five British members of the personnel of the Jerusalem Electric Company by the "IZL", we regret to announce that although the twenty-four hours given to the Jews last Monday was extended to fifty-six hours, we have not yet received any satisfactory reply. We therefore transmit the matter to the Security Council in order that it may take such measures as it deems appropriate in the situation."

III

"Jerusalem, 16 July.

We do not yet know officially the terms of the Security Council resolution adopted last night.

In order to avoid misunderstandings or disputes which might prevent the truce from coming into effect we thought meanwhile that we should determine the boundaries of the zone in Jerusalem in which the cease-fire should take effect within twenty-four hours.

We propose therefore to transmit the following note to the Arab and Jewish Commands so soon as we receive instructions from the Security Council:

"The zone in Jerusalem in which the truce will commence on 17 July at X hours is delimited as follows:

SHUFAT - Demilitarized zone of Mount Scopus - BETHANIA -
ABUDIS-SUR-BADROR-UNN TUBA - CRADEMAR ELIAS - EBIT SAFABA- EL MALEA -
BAIT VEGAN - DEI YASIN - LIFTA - SHARFAT.

All the localities and sites named above are included in the truce zone in Jerusalem."

IV

Jerusalem, 18 July.

"After a quiet day marked by a few local incidents of little importance, and a night the peace of which was interrupted at intervals by artillery fire away from the City outside the municipal boundaries and disturbed by the noise of military vehicles which from ten in the evening on were transporting Jewish munitions and troops towards the front, suddenly this morning at 10:40 hours G.M.T. the fighting broke out again with great violence at the New Gate (not far from the ramparts and in the northern quarters of the New City at Mousra, Beit, Isbahan, Sheikh, Jarrah). The Jews claim that the truce was violated by the Arabs who fired first from the ramparts.

In view of the state of exhaustion of the Arab troops after the fighting and bombardment of the preceding night, even if they fired first - a fact which will be difficult to establish without a qualified observer - their fire was not heavy and does not constitute a regular assault.

The extreme rapidity and concentration of the fire which is characteristic of the tactics of the Jewish forces attempting to demoralize the enemy, the incessant transport of munitions and troops towards the front from ten in the evening onwards (eight hours before the end of the truce), Mr. Shertok's statements emphasizing that the truce for Jerusalem was completely disadvantageous and had no value for the Jews, the Byzantine quarrels which Dr. tried to provoke yesterday evening, after the Arabs had observed the truce for twelve hours, by claiming that the Commission had not received any formal affirmative reply from the Commander in Chief of the Arab troops in Jerusalem whereas I had informed him of the tenor of the interview which my American colleague had had the same morning with Glubb Pasha when he had confirmed that he had sent Colonel Tell the required instructions in time - all these facts confirmed the suppositions which I mentioned in my dispatch of yesterday evening.

A meeting of the military commanders of both sides to trace the no-man's land had been planned for today at noon. As a result of the fighting in progress it could not take place, which was no doubt what the aggressor wanted.

My American colleague who is on a visit to Amman has been away for two days. We expect him to return about noon.

/At the moment

At the moment the fighting seems to have slackened and the Jews are no doubt regrouping their shock troops, which in Jerusalem are mainly formed by members of the dissident groups. The Arabs are bombarding the city and the Jewish Agency is said to have been hit several times. The Jewish commander has just informed me that if the Arabs do not cease this bombardment immediately he will be obliged to submit the Old City to an artillery barrage. The Arab commander has replied that he is ready to order his troops to cease fire at the time stipulated by the Truce Commission. Having made contact with both sides I have fixed that hour for 11 hours G.M.T. today.

(signed) NEUWENHUYNS

