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10/2/51

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GENERAL HEADQUARTERS

ISRAEL DEFENCE FORCES

S/457-616

March 8th, 1951.

Aloof M. Makleff, Deputy Chief of Staff.

POLICY ON SYRIAN MAC

1. If we accept General Riley's opinion and a decision of the MAC which will doubtless be taken tonight against us in the matter of the drainage of the Huleh, we shall

- a) incur a great loss in the stoppage of the Huleh drainage scheme.
- b) Lose all we have gained in establishing our de facto sovereignty in the demilitarized zones, or at least a good deal of it.
- c) Ensure that our sovereignty in our sector on Mt. Scopus will also not be recognized by the U.N.

2. On the other hand the use of Arab (local) lands by our kibbutzim in the demilitarized zones, the destroying of houses of Samra, the petty persecution of the Arab population (local) in the demilitarized zones, though it has served its purpose in the past, is highly undesirable at the moment. The troubles we were making were not for the benefit of Ein Gev or Tel el Qasser, nor for the sake of annoying the Arabs and the U.N., but with the purpose of establishing our sovereignty de facto in the area and of encouraging the local Arab population to leave the zones and sell their lands (also for the above purpose). We have now reached the stage of trying to establish our sovereignty de jure and this attempt will have to be made on an international level and in Lake Success. Unless we behave fairly with the local Arabs now, we are seriously endangering our chances of success for no sufficient reason. If the starting of troubles should once again become desirable, this is easily done. In this new policy in the area itself, all the contact should of course be direct with the local Arabs and not with the Syrians, and should not include Arabs residing in Syria.

3. I therefore propose

- a) that we press on General Riley via the State Department and if possible, do our best to contact Bunche and get his support.
 - b) we reaffirm our position on the MAC as yesterday, and declare that if the MAC takes a decision against us in this matter, its decision will be ultra vires and will not be accepted by us.
 - c) We immediately contact the local Arabs, reach a temporary understanding to allow the people of Nugeb to cultivate the 130 dunams north of Ein Gev, pay compensation in kind to the owners of the lands cultivated by Tel El Qasser, and allow them to cultivate that part of their lands which has not been cultivated by us; pay compensation to the owners of the houses in Samra which were destroyed, pay compensation to the owner of the land which was flooded by the work of the concession near Huleh.
 - d) Continue with the work on the drainage of the Huleh and answer fire with fire.
- [Handwritten signatures and initials]