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MISTRY OP FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

21st **June,** 1948.

Colonel T. Bonde,

Chief of Staff of the

United Nations Observers

for the United Nations Mediator.

Sir,

With reference to our conversation this morning, I have to inform you of the following conclusions reached by the Provisional Government of Israel on the two points under di.s- cussion.

1) We agree to evacuate our fifteen wounded from Kfar Darom with a view to their being transferred first to a hospital in Tel Aviv and then after their recovery to some other suitable place under the surveillance of the United Nations observers.

We also propose to take our unit of forty-odd men out of Kfar Darom and post it elsewhere in that area.

Our acceptance of the conditions set by you for the evacua- tion of the wounded is due solely to humanitarian reasons. On ':־ V the merits of the case and from a purely military point of view

we cannot agree that the conditions are warranted. We deny ;1־' ' that Kfar Darom is completely encircled and besieged and we do not

accept the position that the treatment of those who were wounded in-its defence can properly be assimilated to that of prisoners s of .war. '

v Consequent on the removal of our unit, which entered Kfar \*\*׳■••־'׳ DaronTafter the truce , we believe that there will be no gustifica-

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־ tioh for the invading Egyptian forces remaining in the position which;they occupied to the east of Kfar Darom by way of reaction «••־ to the ?entry of‘that unit. We should, therefore, be grateful if

you would take steps to prevail upon the Egyptian'forces to with-

draw from that position.

2 י) With regard to the supply and replacement convoys to : our settlements and defence posts in the Negev area, south of

7:0־\*• 'the pbiht of intersection of the roads Ma^dal-Falluja and Julis«

£::■\*' •r Bureir, we,־note that you agree that it is perfectly legitimate

, for-us, within the terms of the :truce, to arrange for the above

1 convoys to travel south and return ncsth through that point of intersection and that an attempt of the Egyptian unit now in occupation of that point to interfere with the normal movement of our convoys would he tantamount to a breach of the truce. I was gratified to hear that on this vital point you had made your attitude clear to the Egyptian authorities concerned. Given the clear circumstances in this !!!stance, the fact that the Egyptian reply has not yet been received is no reason why we should defer action indefinitely. It is eleven days since the truce has been in operation and no convoys have passed. The provisioning of the Israeli Negev, including the Israeli forces stationed there cannot be left at the mercy of the unilateral interpretation of the truce terms by the invading army.

I therefore beg to inform you that we propose, at a time which would appear to us appropriate, to take a convoy of supplies and replacements across that point of intersection even if no satisfactory reply has by then been received from the Egyptian side. We are extremely anxious to avoid any clash with the Egyptian or any other forces during the truce period, but we must make it clear that if our convoy finds itself attacked, its guards will return the fire and we shall then accuse the enemy of having broken the truce. Moreover, we shall consider, our- selves free to retaliate against an Egyptian attack on our convoy by,taking similar action against any Egyptian convoy which might pass along any route where our forces hold a commanding position such as is held by the above Egyptian unit on the roads in question.

I repeat that we are most anxious to see this conflict in the Negev peacefully resolved and would therefore urge you to make a further effort to prevail upon the Egyptian authorities not to oppose a procedure which you have agreed is right and proper.

1־ have the honour to be’,

■ Sir> ־ ׳

־. Your obedient servant,

, M. Shertok.

MINISTER OP FOREIGN AFFAIRS.