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UNITED NATIONS
TRUCE SUPERVISION ORGANIZATION

Jerusalem, 26 September 1953.

41/12
sir,

1. I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 24 September 1953, the last paragraph of which reads as follows:

"I am confident that you will give the considerations set forth in this letter your very serious attention and shall be glad to receive your comments on them."

2. I am studying each point of your letter most carefully and I shall not fail to send you my comments as soon as they are ready.

3. There are however two passages in your letter on which I would like to comment immediately. The first passage, at the beginning of paragraph 9, reads as follows:

"In the light of the foregoing, the Government of Israel fails to see any justification for the conclusion that the peaceful work of an eminently constructive and beneficial character, which is in progress within the Demilitarized Zone, should now be interrupted. It takes a particularly serious view of the fact that this conclusion was preceded by the open threats of the Syrian Government."

4. I wish to put on record that neither during my visit to Syria on 14, 15 and 16 September, nor after my visit there have I had any direct or indirect unquestionable knowledge of either Syrian threats of resorting to military action or even, as I have also read with some surprise in the press, of Syrian "ultimata" addressed to me with a view to influencing my decision.

5. I should like in this connection to give you the assurance that no kind of threats have or will influence my decisions as Chief of Staff or as Chairman of a Mixed Armistice Commission.

6. In the same paragraph 9 of your letter, I have also noted in particular the following statement:

"The Government of Israel is always ready to clear up any moot point with you and your representatives, and, if necessary, submit the issue for examination to the

Security Council."

7. In connection with this statement, I should like to make the following suggestion: In order to facilitate the proposed clearing of moot points and, if necessary, the examination of the issue by the Security Council, the Government of Israel should instruct the responsible authority to cease working in the Demilitarized Zone. Such a decision would, I am sure, be appreciated as a proof of the desire of the Government of Israel to facilitate a solution of the issue.

Yours faithfully,

(-) Major General Vagn Bennike
Chief of Staff

His Excellency Mr. Moshe Sharett,
Minister for Foreign Affairs,
Government of Israel.