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בבוסה,

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י. תרע

Arab aggression and Israel counteraction

The following is a short review of Arab aggression which brought about Israel counteraction:

1. Kibya - night of 14/15 October 1953.

The Jordanian campaign of murder, robbery, theft and sabotage increased in intensity since the latter part of 1952. This campaign was organized by small groups with the support of the Jordan National Guard, the Police and the Arab Legion. Its object was to undermine Israel's moral and to paralyze her economy while inflicting as many casualties as possible. The direct economic loss caused in 1952 was estimated at over 2.5 million dollars. There were 1208 certified illegal border crossings from Jordan in the first nine months of 1953, following the 3742 crossings from Jordan in the year 1952. Between May 1950 and August 1953 Israel casualties amounted to 421 killed and wounded; there were 128 cases of sabotage or mining; 866 clashes with armed marauders on Israel territory, 122 armed robberies and 3263 thefts and burglaries.

On May 26 1953 handgrenade were thrown and small arms fired into a house in Beit Nabala killing a woman and causing injury to her husband and two children. In the same night handgrenades were thrown into three houses in Deir Tariff, wounding a woman. Grenades were thrown into a house in Beit Arif and a woman and child were wounded, while a house was blown up by high explosives. On June 9 a handgrenade was thrown into a house in Tirat Yehuda and the owner of the house was killed. On the following day a house was blown up and a woman killed at Mishmar Ayalon. On June 11 armed Jordanians opened fire on villagers at Kfar Hess killing a woman and wounding her husband. On June 19 shots were fired at close range on two watchmen at Beit Nekufa killing one of them and wounding the other. On 22 June Jordanian soldiers attacked an Israel patrol from over the armistice line in the Tulkarem area.

On 8 September Arab marauders killed two men and wounded one at Achieser. On the same day a passenger bus was attacked. On 4 October Jordanian units attacked Beit Nabala and fired on a crowded passenger bus in Lod. On October 6 the Haifa-Tel Aviv passenger train was attacked in the coastal plain. On 13 October an attack on Yahoud on the outskirts of Tel Aviv resulted in the murder of a mother of five children, her 3½ year old girl and 1½ year old boy, and the serious wounding of a 70 year old woman and a child.

The background of Jordanian aggression which led to the Kibya action was also noted by the Security Council in its resolution of 24 November 1953 which declared inter alia: "...takes note of the fact that there is a substantial evidence of crossing of the D.L. by unauthorized persons often resulting in acts of violence and requests the Government of Jordan to continue and strengthen the measures which they have already taken to prevent such crossings..."

2. Nahalin - 24 March 1954.

Among numerous Jordanian acts of aggression preceding the Nahalin action mention should be made of the murderous attack on a civilian bus near Ma'aleh Akrahim on 17 March 1954. Eleven of the passengers were massacred by an armed gang who crossed into Israel from Jordan. Another incident to be mentioned here was the murder on 26 March by infiltrators from Jordan of a watchman at Kissalon village in the Jerusalem corridor. Also during March a tractor driver was killed near Shuval settlement by marauders from Jordan.

3. The clash at Gaza - 28 February 1955.

In the period between 1 July 1954 and 31 January 1955 Israel casualties in the Egyptian sector of the border amounted to 7 killed and 24 wounded. Egyptian aggression resulted in 40

irregular Egyptian forces. There were 9 serious cases of mining and sabotage and 136 cases of theft and robbery. In the period from 1 March 1954 to 1 March 1955 1836 crossings by Egyptian infiltrators into Israel were registered by the Israel authorities.

General Burns, the Chief of Staff of the UNTSO who assumed his office at the end of August 1954 realized immediately the dangerous deterioration of the situation along the Gaza strip and as early as 11 November 1954 submitted a report, his first one as Chief of Staff, to the Security Council describing the growing tension.

Following are excerpts from the report by the UN Chief of Staff, General Burns, following the Gaza incident (S/3373 of 17 March 1955): "...infiltration from Egyptian- controlled territory has not been the only cause of present tension, but has undoubtedly been one of its main causes".

"The Gaza incident would appear in this context as retaliation for the spying, sabotage and murders for which the Egyptian military intelligence service was said to be responsible".

"...The Egyptian authorities should apply strictly the severe penalties provided by Egyptian ordinances against illegal crossing of the D.L., take the measures necessary to ensure that no arms or explosives are in possession of unstable elements and, especially, give adequate publicity to punishments meted out for theft or illegal crossing. Such publicity should include notification to the MAC. Otherwise, it is understandable that, seeing no news of infiltrators being punished, the Israelis refuse to believe that a serious attempt is being made to prevent the depredations which eventually built up tension to a dangerous point."

4. Khan Yunis - 31 August 1955.

During the period which preceded the Khan Yunis action the Egyptian forces had been using the Gaza strip as a base for systematic attacks against Israel. Having on 24 August unilaterally

broken off the negotiations with Israel which were conducted under UN auspices and which aimed at the reduction of tension in the border zone, Egypt proceeded to launch against Israel an increasingly violent campaign of aggression.

On 22 August an Egyptian outpost without the slightest provocation opened fire against a routine Israel patrol moving within Israel territory. On 25 August Egyptian military positions opened fire on Israel surveyors marking the international frontier.

On the night of 25 August Egyptian army units crossed the armistice line at four points perpetrating murder and sabotage and occupying positions on Israel territory from which they had to be forcibly ejected. A settler travelling in a jeep was killed and water installations were wrecked.

On the night of 27 August several further incursions, penetrating deep into Israel territory were executed, traffic was ambushed and water installations blown up. Two Israel soldiers and a civilian were wounded; one of the soldiers died later of his wounds. An Egyptian raider who failed to escape made a clean breast of the mission with which his unit had been entrusted.

On 28 August an Israel army vehicle struck an Egyptian-made land mine; an officer and a soldier were killed outright and two other soldiers later died of their wounds. Another vehicle struck a similar land mine resulting in the wounding of two soldiers, who later died of their wounds. Another vehicle struck a similar land mine resulting in the wounding of two soldiers.

On 29 August Egyptian jet planes had to be driven off from over Israel territory by the Israel Air Force.

That night Egyptian criminal violence reached its peak. Several outrages were committed by roaming Egyptian units, all deep within Israel territory:

- a) A family of five, including women, was attacked, the father killed and the others wounded.
- b) A radio broadcasting station was dynamited.

c) Four agricultural labourers were shot dead.

d) A military vehicle was ambushed and an officer wounded.

On 30 August yet another Israel military car was blown up by an Egyptian land mine and two of its passengers were injured.

On the afternoon of 30 August four civilians were ambushed and murdered on a road some 40 kms from the Gaza border.

On the night of 30 August handgrenades were thrown at two houses in a village situated about 20 kms from the border, heavily wounding a woman.

The same night a military vehicle was fired at and another military vehicle was attacked with handgrenades unjuring one officer.

Throughout this period mortar and machine-gun fire was repeatedly opened from Egyptian outposts against Israel army patrols and agricultural settlements.

Official communiques were issued by the Egyptian army boastful of its aggressive exploits.

Even after Egypt had formally undertaken to terminate all hostile acts on the evening of 30 August, the trail of blood continued right through the night.

The warnings of the effects of this course of aggression conveyed by Israel to Egypt through all conceivable channels having proved fruitless, and the scope and range of the act of aggression having assumed threatening proportions, Israel had no choice but to resort to self-defence. On the night of 31 August the Israel Defence Army struck against an Egyptian military camp which served as one of the bases from which the terrorist squads operated.

Action against Syrian positions North East of Lake Kinneret -

11 December 1955

This action was made necessary in the light of repeated Syrian attacks on Israel fishing vessels on the lake. It should be noted that the entire area of the lake as well as its entire coast line are within Israel territory. In the first six months of 1954 Israel casualties on the lake resulting from Syrian attacks were two killed and seven wounded. During the first ten months of 1955 there occurred at least twenty five incidents on the lake inflicting casualties among Israel fishermen and the crews of police launches, and in addition causing damage to property.

The Israel-Syrian MAC adopted on a number of occasions resolutions charging Syria with violations of the GAA by armed attacks on Israel boats on the lake. Mention should be made in this context of the resolutions of 15 March 1954, 13 July 1954, 19 July 1954, and 29 July 1954.

Syrian interferences with Israel activities on the lake were also noted in General Burns' report to the Secretary General of 20 December 1955. In his additional report of 30 December, the Chief of Staff also took note of Syrian army documents captured in the course of the fighting of 11 December 1955 which provided ample proof of standing orders issued to Syrian outposts to open fire on Israel boats.

The fact of Syrian aggression was also recorded in the Security Council resolution of 19 January 1956 which stated inter alia:

"...Noting also without prejudice to the ultimate rights, claims and positions of the parties that according to the reports of the Chief of Staff there has been interference by the Syrian authorities with Israeli activities on Lake Tiberias in contravention of the terms of the GAA between Israel and Syria".