

CABLEGRAM DATED 18 AUGUST 1948 FROM THE UNITED NATIONS MEDIATOR TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TRANSMITTING A COMMUNICATION FROM THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL CONCERNING THE SITUATION IN
JERUSALEM

For President of Security Council:

Have just received the following communication from Mr. Shertok:

"I feel I must approach you personally regarding the situation in Jerusalem. When I had the pleasure of receiving you in my house in Jerusalem August 10th and you informed me of your request addressed to both sides for three days abstention from returning fire, I drew your and your staff's attention to the fact that contrary to its written undertaking Arab Legion failed to evacuate positions in Nomansland which they had occupied during Truce and pointed out futility of our entering new arrangements presupposing minimum good faith Arab side as long as that patent breach faith persisted. I explained that for us to agree not return fire under those circumstances meant risking being faced with occupation new positions by Arabs which we would be unable to prevent. You agreed my line was reasonable and promised in first instance to do everything to prevail upon Arabs to vacate Nomansland whereupon I said we might then consider next step. I was therefore somewhat surprised when on following day Bernhard Joseph received letter from you calling upon us enter into above arrangement not for three days but for unlimited period without your giving any indication as to whether Arab positions in Nomansland had been or would be evacuated. These positions were not in fact evacuated and are to this day in Arab occupation. Meanwhile you were reported to have announced you received affirmative reply to your letter from Arab side, and none from us, making reservation only as regards shelling as distinct from sniping by making clear that if our positions are shelled with danger being destroyed we must consider ourselves free to return fire. The extent to which Arab side [words apparently missing] despite your public commendation and reliance you apparently placed their good word despite their violation initial Nomansland agreement has been indicated by subsequent events in Jerusalem. During nights of 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th August Arabs launched severe attacks along entire front as in worst days war. They fired two-inch and three-inch mortars from Mt. Zion sector, throw incendiary material over
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Page 2

wall, bombarded our positions Sheikh Jarrah and police school sectors with six pounder guns and directed heavy machine gun fire from their positions Deir Abu Tor whence they also threw hand grenades. We lost four killed seventeen wounded. Manner in which arrangement regarding not returning fire works in practice is also tragically illustrated by death of our Liaison Officer Sev Herzog who when escorting American Consul General through our lines at very moment of removing roadblock was hit by Arab sniper. As according press you informed Security Council on basis your observers reports that Jews in Jerusalem were bent on aggression, I would appreciate your incorporating my present statement in your supplementary report with such comments on your part as you may wish to make to Moshe Shertok, Minister for Foreign Affairs".

I have now informed Mr. Shertok that subsequent to our discussion and before calling upon parties not to return fire I had been assured by Colonel Abdullah Tell, Commander Arab Legion, Jerusalem, that Legion would immediately evacuate two positions in Nomansland referred to by Mr. Shertok during above meeting. I am presently informed by observers in Jerusalem that Arabs have now evacuated houses located in Nomansland at Deir Abu Tor and fortifications removed. I am instructing observers in Jerusalem in case other position is still held by Legion to request immediate withdrawal.

Count Folke Bernadotte

