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MESSAGE DATED 27 APRIL 1949 FROM MR. SHARETT,  
FOREIGN MINISTER OF ISRAEL, TO DR. BUNCHE AND  
TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CONCILIATION COMMISSION  
(Received from Dr. Eytan by Dr. Kohn and  
transmitted from Tel Aviv by cable,  
28 April 1949)

The Government of Israel is much concerned at the course taken by the armistice negotiations with Syria. The delegations have now held four formal meetings, apart from a number of conversations conducted informally, and it has unfortunately become clear that the Syrian Government is unwilling to agree to the withdrawal of its forces occupying Israeli territory. In the armistice negotiations with the Lebanon, the Government of Israel accepted the principle that the political boundary should rank as the armistice demarcation line, although that line was not consistent with the military situation then existing, and consequently agreed to withdraw all its forces from Lebanese territory. This withdrawal was promptly carried out in accordance with the terms of the armistice agreement. The negotiations with Syria can make no progress unless the Syrian Government is prepared to accept the same principle. At the present moment the Syrian delegation appears to be using the armistice negotiations, and the fact that Syrian troops are on Israeli soil, as a means of bringing pressure on Israel to agree to what are liable to become permanent alterations in the frontier between the two countries. The Government of Israel cannot agree to anything which is calculated, in effect, to prejudice the issue in this vital respect and feels bound to insist upon the withdrawal of Syrian troops to their own territory as an essential condition for the conclusion of an armistice agreement. The Acting Mediator and his representatives gave strong support to this principle in the armistice negotiations between Israel and the Lebanon, when it happened to operate in the interests of the Lebanon,

and the Government of Israel hopes that the principle will receive equally strong support now, although its application may not be convenient to the Government of Syria.

[It is their] Government's declared intention of mobilizing immediately twenty thousand additional men to serve in the Syrian armed forces. This mobilization is justified by the Syrian Premier on the ground that a dangerous situation exists on the frontier between Syria and Transjordan. My Government, however, inclines to the view that this may merely be a cover for new aggressive action contemplated against Israel, and takes a most serious view of the fact that a step of this kind should have been taken at a time when armistice negotiations are in progress and when a peace conference is about to begin. This mobilization of twenty thousand men is also, in my Government's view, a serious violation of the terms of the truce.

Under these circumstances the Government of Israel sees little profit in discussing a final settlement with the Syrian delegation at Lausanne. Although formally this has perhaps not been stated, it is nevertheless patent that the talks at Lausanne represent a post-armistice stage in the settlement of the Palestine problem. The Government of Israel is determined to explore every possibility of reaching a final peaceful settlement with the Governments of Egypt, Transjordan and the Lebanon, with which it has during recent months concluded armistice agreements. On the other hand, so long as no progress is in the present armistice negotiations between Israel and Syria, owing to the Syrian Government's refusal to accept the political boundary as the armistice demarcation line, the Israeli delegation to the Conference at Lausanne will be instructed not to enter into conversations, formal or informal, with the representatives of Syria.

My Government would greatly appreciate it if you would use your good offices with the Syrian Government to move that Government to a speedy conclusion of the armistice negotiations, such as would bring about an amicable settlement of the question of armistice lines along that front and make possible the active inclusion of Syria in the conversations at Lausanne.