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UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

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IS/22

11 June 1949

Original: English

19 DEC 1950

Letter dated 10 June 1949
addressed by Dr. Walter Eytan, Head of the
Delegation of Israel, to the Principal Secretary
of the Conciliation Commission

Dear Mr. Azcárate,

I should be glad if you would bring to the attention of the Conciliation Commission the following facts concerning the recent incident in Jerusalem.

In April this year agreement was reached between Israeli and Transjordan representatives on the division between the two countries of the Government House area. Under this agreement, the whole of the area was divided, except for Government House itself, which was left in the hands of the United Nations staff.

Following upon this agreement, and in accordance with its terms, troops of the Arab Legion occupied the greater part of the area allotted to Transjordan, while possession was established on the Israeli side by ploughing and fencing, carried out by military personnel.

It appears that this agreement, which had been concluded by officially accredited representatives, and with the full knowledge of General Riley, was subsequently disputed by Transjordan, thus creating the recent "incident". No movement of Israeli troops has ever taken place except as provided for under the original agreement.

In view of the ambiguous situation, Lieutenant Colonel M. Dayan, commanding Israeli forces in Jerusalem, has now offered to negotiate a new agreement and has announced his readiness, as a gesture of goodwill, to withdraw his troops during the period of the negotiations, providing the Transjordan commander agrees to do likewise.

I understand that General Riley, on receipt of this offer, proceeded to Amman to convey it to the Transjordan authorities. This is the present position.

From the information in my possession, I would repeat what I told the Commission yesterday - that this "incident" appears to be one that is wholly within the province of the Mixed Armistice Commission. The Mixed Armistice Commission, of which General Riley is nominally the head, seems fortunately, to be well on the way to settling it, particularly if the Transjordan authorities, who have challenged the previous agreement, can be persuaded to negotiate a new one.

I am convinced that there is no good ground for allowing this incident to interfere with the progress of the Lausanne talks.

Yours sincerely,

S/ Walter Eytan