

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

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THE ISRAELI - SYRIAN GENERAL  
ARMISTICE AGREEMENT

(Working Paper prepared by the Secretariat)

1. On 20 July 1949 the delegations of Israel and Syria signed a General Armistice Agreement, the text of which is reproduced in Security Council documents S/1353 and S/1353, Add. 1. The purpose of this working paper is to present a brief analysis of this agreement in the light of the armistice agreements already concluded between Israel on the one hand and Egypt, Lebanon and the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom respectively on the other hand. Reference will also be made to those provisions in the agreement which in particular point towards the transition to permanent peace in Palestine.\*
2. The General Armistice Agreement between Syria and Israel contains a Preamble, eight Articles and four Annexes.
3. The Preamble is identical with the Preambles found in the three existing armistice agreements. It recalls in the following terms the Security Council resolutions of 16 November 1948\*\*:

"The Parties to the present Agreement  
Responding to the Security Council resolution  
of 16 November 1948 calling upon them, as a further  
provisional measure under Article 40 of the Charter  
of the United Nations and in order to facilitate  
the transition from the present truce to permanent  
peace in Palestine\*\*\*, to negotiate an armistice". . .

\* On the transitional nature and final aim of the Egyptian-Israeli and the Israeli-Lebanese Armistice Agreements, see working paper prepared by the Secretariat on 25 March 1949. (W/5)

\*\* The Preamble in the Egyptian-Israeli Armistice Agreement referred in addition to the resolution of the Security Council of 16 November 1948, to the resolution of 4 November 1948.

\*\*\* Underlined here.

4. Article I of the Agreement sets forth certain principles which shall be fully observed by the Parties during the armistice. The Article is identical with Article I in the three existing Armistice Agreements and emphasises that these principles are affirmed

"with a view to promoting the return of permanent peace in Palestine. . ."\*

Similarly, it is indicated in point 1 of the Article that the establishment of the Armistice is accepted

". . . as an indispensable step toward the liquidation of armed conflict and the restoration of peace in Palestine".\*

5. Article II of the agreement affirms certain special principles and purposes for the implementation of the Security Council resolution of 16 November 1948. This Article differs somewhat from the corresponding clause in the Egyptian-Israeli Agreement (Article IV), but is identical with Article II in the Agreements with Lebanon and the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom, except for the addition of the words "and not by political considerations" at the end of point 2 which in the Agreement with Syria reads as follows:

" It is also recognized that no provision of this Agreement shall in any way prejudice the rights, claims and positions of either Party hereto in the ultimate peaceful settlement of the Palestine question, the provisions of this Agreement being dictated exclusively by military and not by political considerations".\*

6. Article III of the Agreement decrees the Armistice as such and thereby closely follows Article II of the Egyptian-Israeli Agreements\*\*, and Article III of the Agreements with Lebanon and the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom. It should be noted, however, that the prohibition of warlike acts or acts of

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\* Underlined here.

\*\* This Article refers, in addition to the resolution of the Security Council resolution of 16 November 1948, to the resolution of 4 November 1948.

hostility conducted from territory controlled by one of the Parties against the other (point 3) has been extended to cover acts directed against civilians in territory under control of that Party.

7. Article IV of the Agreement regarding the Armistice Demarcation Line also follows Article V in the Egyptian-Israeli Agreement and Article IV in the Agreements with Lebanon and the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom.

8. Article V of the Agreement contains not only arrangements for the Armistice Demarcation Line between Israel and Syria, but also for the establishment of a Demilitarized Zone. On this last point the Agreement differs essentially from the Agreements with Lebanon and the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom which did not provide for the creation of demilitarized zones. Such zones, however, were established by Article VIII in the Egyptian-Israeli Agreement. In the Armistice Agreement with Syria, the zone is defined as the area between the Armistice Demarcation Line and the International Boundary Line, where the former line does not correspond to the latter. It is emphasized, however, in point 1 that the arrangements with respect to the Demilitarized Zone are not to be interpreted as having any relation whatsoever to ultimate territorial arrangements affecting the two Parties.

9. Article VI of the Agreement deals with exchange of prisoners of war and is identical with Article IX of the Egyptian-Israeli Agreement and Article VI of the Agreement with Lebanon. With respect to the Agreement with the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom, an exchange of prisoners of war had already been effected by special arrangements.

10. Article VII of the Agreement contains provisions for the supervision of the Armistice by a Mixed Armistice Commission. The Article follows closely Article X of the Agreement with Egypt, Article VII of the Agreement with Lebanon and Article XI of the Agreement with the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom.

11. Article VIII of the Agreement contains provisions regarding ratification, revision, etc. and follows closely Article VIII in the Agreement with Lebanon and Article XII in the Agreements with Egypt and the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom.

12. Annex I to the Agreement is a map accompanied by a detailed description of the Armistice Demarcation Line.

13. Annex II to the Agreement deals with the withdrawal of military and para-military forces, the removal of mines and the destruction of permanent fortifications. It is laid down in point 1 that the withdrawal of military and para-military forces of both parties with all their military impediments from the Demilitarized Zone shall be completed within a period of twelve weeks.

14. Annex III to the Agreement deals with certain Defensive Areas.

15. Annex IV to the Agreement contains a definition of Defensive Forces which are permitted in the Defensive Areas.