

## **Dr. Hammarskjöld's Visit to Further Middle East.**

The situation on the borders of Israel, Jordan, and Egypt gravely deteriorated between July and October, as a result of frontier incidents (many of them caused by terrorist activities of Arab infiltrators) and of the Israeli Government's policy of replying to such incidents by organized reprisal raids. Details of developments on the frontiers and their international repercussions are given below under cross-headings.

The U.N. Secretary-General, Dr. Hammarskjöld, accompanied by Major-General Burns, Chief of Staff of the U.N. Truce Supervisory Organization, arrived on July 19 in Jerusalem, where he had long discussions with the Israeli Premier, Mr. Ben-Gurion. A communiqué issued on July 20 stated that they had made "a full and fruitful review of developments in this area since the last visit of the Secretary-General," and had discussed "ways and means to establish the state of affairs envisaged in the armistice agreements between Israel and her neighbours." Dr. Hammarskjöld and General Burns afterwards proceeded to Amman for talks with the Jordanian Premier, M. Hashem, and thence to Cairo, where they met President Nasser, Dr. Fawzi (the Egyptian Foreign Minister), and M. Ahmed el Shukairy (Assistant Secretary-General of the Arab League) on July 22. Before leaving Cairo on July 23, Dr. Hammarskjöld stated that he had received assurances from both sides that no action would be taken that would upset the relative calm prevailing along the Israeli frontier.

Despite these assurances, a new series of incidents began immediately after Dr. Hammarskjöld's visit, the most important of which are tabulated below.

*July 24.* Two U.N. observers were injured by the explosion of a mine in the Mount Scopus demilitarized zone near Jerusalem while investigating an Israeli complaint that Arab Legionnaires had penetrated into the area.

***July 25.* An exchange of fire occurred in the Jerusalem area, several Jordanians being wounded:** a third U.N. observer was wounded when Jordanian villagers fired on a U.N. team which was investigating the incident: and the Arab Legion command announced that **an Israeli plane which had flown over Jordanian territory north of Jerusalem had been shot down.**

*July 26.* Dr. Hammarskjöld announced that he had directed "a new strong appeal to all concerned to take all measures necessary for the protection of the cease-fire to which they are bound by solemn undertakings to the U.N." The incidents, he added, were "expressions of the deeply disturbed conditions which still prevail, and which render it imperative for all concerned to impose the discipline which alone can preserve peace and order."

*July 27.* An Israeli convey escorting an American archaeologist was fired on in the Negev, east of El Auja; a group of Egyptians fired on an Israeli settlement in the El Auja demilitarized zone,

wounding two civilians; and two Israelis were injured when their lorry struck a mine in the same area.

*July 28.* Hr. Rasmusson, a Danish radio operator attached to the U.N. Truce Supervisory Organization, was killed by the explosion of a mine near the Gaza strip.

***Aug. 2. An Israeli patrol fired on a Jordanian patrol in the same area, killing two National Guardsmen.*** The Israeli-Jordanian Mixed Armistice Commission found Israel responsible for this incident on Aug. 6.

*Aug. 16.* Armed Jordanians ambushed a bus and two jeeps escorting it on the road to Elath, killing a woman and three soldiers and wounding seven Israelis, whilst five more Israelis were injured when a lorry struck a mine near Beersheva. Dr. Hammarskjöld issued a statement on the same day condemning these attacks on Israeli civilians, and announcing that “in the light of the results of the investigations it will be decided what action should be taken by me because of these most serious acts of violence, including requests for punishment of the transgressors.” This was the first occasion on which the Secretary-General had commented publicly on Israeli-Arab frontier incidents immediately after they had occurred.

*Aug. 17.* Israeli units entered the Gaza strip at two points, fired on an Egyptian patrol three of whom were killed, and ambushed an Army jeep, killing six medical staff. Dr. Hammarskjöld immediately issued a second statement deploring these incidents, and emphasizing that acts of retaliation could “not be considered as acts of self-defence in the sense of the U.N. Charter.”

***Aug. 21. An Israeli patrol which had crossed the frontier in the Jenin area clashed with a Jordanian patrol, an Israeli being killed and three Jordanians wounded.*** The Mixed Armistice Commission found Israel responsible for this incident on Aug. 29.

*Aug. 24.* Israeli and Egyptian troops exchanged fire in the Gaza strip area, two Israelis being wounded.

*Aug. 30.* Two Israeli soldiers were killed and four injured when their vehicle was blown up by a mine in the El Auja zone.

*Aug. 31.* Israeli troops raided Egyptian territory at three points, two in the Gaza strip and one west of the El Auja zone, 13 Egyptian soldiers being killed and two wounded. The raids were believed to be a reprisal for the previous day's incident.

The situation deteriorated further during September and October, when Israeli forces, as reprisals for murders by Arab infiltrators and other frontier incidents, carried out a series of increasingly large-scale raids on military bases on Jordanian territory.

The succession of incidents **began on Sept. 10, when an Israeli unit was fired on by Jordanian National Guards in the Dawiyima area, and a clash ensued in which six Israelis were killed and three wounded.** The Mixed Armistice Commission found Jordan responsible

for this incident on Sept. 17. Also on Sept. 10, a railway line near Beersheba was blown up by Arab infiltrators, who were believed to have come from Egypt.

As a reprisal for the latter incident, an Israeli patrol crossed the Egyptian border in the El Auja area on Sept. 11, killed five Egyptian soldiers, and wounded a sixth.

**Another Israeli force of battalion strength crossed the Jordanian frontier west of Hebron during the night of Sept. 11–12, attacked the police post at Rahwa, killing five policemen and 10 soldiers, and then blew up the building. Five Arab Legionaries were killed and three wounded when the Israelis ambushed a patrol coming to the aid of the police post, Before returning to Israeli territory the raiders also blew up a school building.** The Mixed Armistice Commission condemned Israel on Sept. 19 for this attack, which was described in the Israeli Press as a reprisal for the Dawiyima incident.

**On Sept. 12 infiltrators from Jordan murdered three Druse guards at an Israeli oil-drilling camp in the eastern Negev. As a reprisal, a large Israeli force shelled and blew up the Jordanian police post at Gharandal (45 miles north of Aqaba) on Sept. 13, and also blew up a school building. Nine Jordanian policemen and two civilians were killed in this raid, and four policemen and two civilians wounded.** The Mixed Armistice Commission condemned the attack on Gharandal on Sept. 24 as a “flagrant breach of the armistice agreement.”

Dr. Hammarskjöld, in a statement issued on Sept. 13, emphasized that the “mounting series of incidents” since July had not invalidated the cease-fire agreements concluded in April. These agreements could be “put out of existence only if formally repealed by one of the Governments concerned, or if challenged by actions clearly indicating that the Government does not consider itself any longer bound by the obligation,” but such action would re-establish a state of war. On Sept. 14 Dr. Hammarskjöld handed almost identical Notes to the Israeli and Jordanian delegates to the U.N., stating that both Israel and Jordan must be held fully accountable for “the disregard of both the appeals from the U.N. and the obligations under the armistice agreement, specifically the cease-fire, obligation.” The British Foreign Office issued on Sept. 13 a statement condemning the Rahwa raid as a violation of Israel's recent assurances to Dr. Hammarskjöld—that the cease-fire would be respected.

**A new series of incidents began on Sept. 23, when machine-gun fire was opened from a Jordanian position on a party of archaeologists who were inspecting ruins at Ramat Rachel, south of Jerusalem four Israelis being killed and 16 wounded. On Sept. 24 an Israeli woman was killed by Jordanian fire in the Jerusalem area, and an Israeli tractor-driver was killed and another wounded south of Lake Tiberias. The Jordanian authorities alleged that in both incidents on Sept. 24 the persons killed had crossed into Jordanian territory, which was, however, denied by the Israeli authorities.**

**As a reprisal for these incidents, an Israeli force (estimated by the Jordanian military authorities at 5,000) attacked a Jordanian police post near Husan (four miles west of Bethlehem) during the night of Sept. 25–26, and after fierce hand-to-hand fighting completely demolished it. Further heavy fighting took place at the nearby village of Wadi Fukin, where the raiders blow up a school building. U.N. investigators gave the number of**

**Jordanian casualties as 37 soldiers and police and two civilians (one a 12-year-old girl) killed and 11 wounded: Jordanian claims that 90 Israelis had been killed were denied by the Israeli military authorities, who gave their casualties as nine killed and eight wounded.** The Mixed Armistice Commission condemned the Husan raid on Oct. 4, the meeting being boycotted by Israel (see below.)

The Israeli Foreign Minister, Mrs. Meir, saw General Burns at her own request on Sept. 26. According to an official statement issued afterwards by the Foreign Ministry, she described the raid as “the inevitable consequence of the chain of murder and aggression committed by Jordanian forces against the citizens of Israel in Israeli territory”: assured General Burns that Israel's policy was “to maintain the cease-fire on a basis of reciprocity”; and requested Dr. Hammarskjöld and General Burns to “take the necessary steps to ensure the observance by Jordan of her cease-fire undertakings.” **The statement recalled that 36 Israelis had been killed and 51 wounded in Jordanian attacks during the past six months.**

M. Rifal, the permanent Jordanian delegate to the U.N., in a statement issued later the same day, declared that the Israeli Government's avowal of its responsibility for the raid “proves that Israel is not qualified to be a member of the United Nations.” “We may bring this recent brutal attack before the Security Council any minute,” the statement continued, “but if the matter is going to be a further condemnation against Israel, such condemnations have previously been passed and were completely disregarded by Israel. The question therefore becomes whether the Security Council would take real action against Israel for her repeated violations, or whether we ourselves will be compelled to put an end to any such aggression.”

A statement issued by the British Foreign Office on Sept. 26 deplored both the recent frontier incidents and the Israeli reprisals, pointing out that “reprisal raids have been repeatedly condemned by the Security Council,” and that “the U.N. Secretary-General has expressed the view that such raids cannot be considered as within the limits of legitimate self-defence.”

In the course of the same day, Dr. Hammarskjöld interviewed the representatives of Britain, France, the U.S.A., the Soviet Union, Jordan, and Israel. He afterwards issued a statement recommending that, if the Governments of Jordan and Israel did not bring the situation rapidly under control, “the Security Council should take the matter up in order to reaffirm its policy as established in previous resolutions, and, were the Council to find the continued deterioration to constitute a threat to peace, to decide on what further measures may be indicated.”

**On Oct. 4 raiders from Jordan ambushed two cars on the Beersheba-Sodom road 10 miles from the frontier, killing five Israelis and wounding another, whilst on Oct. 9 two Israeli civilians were murdered seven miles from the frontier between Petah Tiqva and Natanya by Jordanians armed with sub-machine guns. In consequence, Israeli forces carried out during the night of Oct. 10–11 their largest reprisal raid hitherto in the area of Qalqilya (north-east of Tel Aviv), and a pitched battle ensued in which both sides suffered serious casualties.**

**The attack began at 9.30 p.m. on Oct. 10, when two Israeli infantry regiments, supported by armour and artillery, advanced into Jordanian territory along a six-mile front between**

**Tulkarm and Habia, under cover of a heavy artillery barrage. The main attack was directed against the fortified police barracks at Qalqilya, which served as the regional headquarters for the Arab Legion, National Guard, and police. After a three-hour bombardment of the village amid violent hand-to-hand fighting, the Israelis stormed the barracks and blow it up, together with fuel and ammunition dumps and a pumping station. A Jordanian battalion was ambushed at Nebi Elias while on its way to Qalqilya, and fighting continued for some hours, during which an Israeli company was out off until relieved by tanks and aircraft. Jordanian Army and National Guard centres in the villages of Habia, Soufin, and Jayous were also attacked, whilst Jordanian artillery shelled three Israeli settlements, though without causing any casualties.**

**When the attack began the Jordanians informed the Truce Supervisory Organization, and King Hussein hurried from Jerusalem to direct operations in person. An appeal by General Burns for a ceasefire was rejected by the Israelis, but after the demolition of the Qalqilya barracks they agreed to accept his appeal. Fighting was accordingly broken off at 4.30 a.m. on Oct. 11, when the Israelis withdrew. The Israeli military authorities admitted the death of 18 members of their forces, whilst a report issued by General Burns on Oct. 18 gave the number of Jordanians killed as 48, including three civilians. The total casualties, the report pointed out, were the highest resulting from any incident since the Israeli bombardment of Gaza in April (see 14793 A).**

The Israeli Foreign Ministry, in a statement issued on Oct. 11, claimed that the raid had been directed against “a centre of Jordanian aggression,” which had “reached new heights of ferocity and cruelty” during the last few days. As U.N. organs had “remained powerless before the onslaught of Jordanian aggression,” the statement added, Israel had been left to face with her own means “an unbridled campaign of murderous Jordanian assaults.”

**Israel withdrew from the Israeli-Jordanian Mixed Armistice Commission on Oct. 3, following the Commission's decision concerning the circumstances of the incident on Sept. 23 in which a number of Israeli archaeologists were killed or wounded by Jordanian fire at Ramat Rachel (see above). The Jordanian military authorities maintained that the incident had been caused by a single soldier who had been mentally deranged. This explanation was accepted by the neutral chairman of the Mixed Armistice Commission on Oct. 1, but the Israeli Government contented that more than one soldier had fired, and announced on Oct. 3 that in protest against the Commission absolving Jordan from blame it would no longer participate in the Commission's work.**

A report to the Security Council by Dr. Hammarskjöld on the general frontier situation, dated Sept. 12, was published by U.N. headquarters in New York on Sept. 28.

In his previous report of May 9, Dr. Hammarskjöld recalled, he had pointed out the dangers arising from the tendency of each party to interpret the armistice agreement to mean “that any one infringement of the provisions of the agreement by one party justifies reactions by the other party which, in their turn, are breaches of the armistice agreement, without any limitations as to the field within which reciprocity is considered to prevail.” By the new cease-fire agreements of April and May he had endeavoured to “lift the ceasefire clauses out of the armistice agreements,

so as to give them an independent legal status as obligations, compliance with which was conditioned only by reciprocity in respect of the implementation of the same obligations by the other parties.” None of the parties concerned, however, had taken advantage of the new situation thus established to take positive steps which would lead to a better general atmosphere. “While in many cases the parties have made energetic efforts to support the cease-fire by appropriate instructions to their forces, they have, seen in retrospect, failed to carry through a discipline sufficiently firm to forestall incidents which, step by step, must necessarily undermine the cease-fire ... If the cease-fire is permitted continuously to be challenged by actual events, it will lose its sanctity and become a dead letter... Acts of violence, supposed to have been staged by one party, have been immediately followed by acts of violence which must be supposed to have been started by persons on the other side ‘in self-defence,’ as part of a policy of retaliation...”

“The efforts of the U.N., whatever the resources used,” the report concluded, “can never be of appropriate effectiveness without the co-operation of the sovereign Governments directly concerned... I have found no reason to doubt the view formed in April that there is a general will to peace in the region, nor that the state of affairs which we have had during part of this year has been one which has offered unique possibilities for improvements of the situation. However, later developments have indicated that the will to establish peaceful conditions had not grown strong enough for any of those concerned to take the risks necessary for a use of existing opportunities. The possibilities are still there, and the U.N. must continue to impress on the Governments in the region their serious duty to use them.”

Following the Rahwa and Gharandal raids, King Hussein of Jordan visited Baghdad on Sept. 14–15 for discussions with King Faisal and the Iraqi Premier, General Nuri es-Said. A communiqué issued after the talks said that they had discussed “the dangerous situation arising from the Zionist threats and provocations” and “the immediate measures that should be taken in accordance with the Jordanian-Iraqi defence treaty.” An Iraqi military mission subsequently arrived in Amman to discuss the form which co-operation between the two countries should take, including the possibility of stationing Iraqi forces in Jordan, and following the Husan raid the Jordanian Foreign Minister, M. Abdelhadi, visited Baghdad from Sept. 26 to Oct. 1 for further talks. **The Egyptian Ambassador in Amman, M. Self Eddin, delivered a message from President Nasser to M. Hashem on Sept. 15, assuring him that Egypt “will fight if Jordan or any other Arab country is subjected to Israeli aggression, notwithstanding Egypt's preoccupation with the Suez Canal issue.”**

Following the Qalqilya raid, offers of military assistance to Jordan in the event of further Israeli attacks were received from all the Arab countries. President Nasser informed M. Abdelhadi on Oct. 11 that Egypt would supply Jordan with arms and financial help, and the Syrian Embassy in Amman announced on Oct. 16 that a large consignment of heavy and light arms had begun to enter Jordan as a gift from the Syrian people; this consignment, the Embassy stated on the following day, consisted of arms entirely of Western origin. **In Baghdad official sources stated on Oct. 12 that Iraqi troops were ready to move into Jordan at short notice if a request for their support was received.**

Grave concern was caused in Israel by this announcement, in view of the fact that Iraq had attacked Israel from Jordanian territory in 1948, had refused (unlike the other Arab States) to

sign a separate armistice agreement, and was therefore technically still at war with Israel. Israeli fears were further increased by a proposal made by General Nuri es-Said on Oct. 7, in an interview with a correspondent of *The Times*, that another effort to reach a permanent Arab-Israeli settlement in the Middle East should be made by persuading Israel to negotiate "on the basis of the 1947 U.N. Palestine proposals." This suggestion was welcomed on Oct. 8 by the Foreign Office in London, where a spokesman recalled Sir Anthony Eden's offer of Britain's good services in bringing about a compromise in his Guildhall speech last year (see 14519 A). The Israeli Foreign Ministry, however, in a statement issued on Oct. 12, gave warning that Israel would regard the entry of Iraqi troops into Jordan as a direct threat to her security and to the validity of the Israeli-Jordanian Armistice Agreement. The presence of Iraqi troops in Jordan, the statement said, would jeopardize the *status quo* in the area, whilst the Iraqi Premier's suggestion was only a move in Iraq's "expansionist drive towards the Mediterranean, which traditionally has been the basic objective of Iraqi-policy." Mrs. Meir reiterated on the following day that Israel was "determined to meet the threat to Israel's integrity" which, she said, a movement of Iraqi troops into Northern Jordan would constitute.

In her statement Mrs. Meir again rejected the "British-supported" proposal of General Nuri es-Said for a settlement based on the U.N. partition plan of 1947, saying that Iraq herself had attempted to erase this plan in 1948, "not without the aid of the British Government of those days," and that the territorial changes involved in such a settlement would endanger Israel's very existence.

Full support for the proposal to station Iraqi troops in Jordan was expressed by the British and U.S. Governments. Mr. Westlake, the British Chargé d'Affaires officially informed the Israeli Government on Oct. 12 that Iraqi troops were about to enter Jordan and would be stationed there indefinitely. If Israel considered such troop movements a sufficient reason for attacking Jordan, he added, the British Government would feel itself obliged to go to Jordan's assistance, by virtue of the Anglo-Jordanian treaty of 1948 and the Tripartite Declaration 50. The U.S. Ambassador, Mr. Lawson, told the Israeli Government on Oct. 13 that the U.S. Government had also approved the stationing of Iraqi troops in Jordan, as likely to stabilize the military situation and reduce the danger of a general conflict. In reply to Israeli inquiries, Mr. Westlake gave assurances on Oct. 14 that the Iraqi forces would be limited in number and would be stationed to the east of the River Jordan.

A communiqué issued by the Israeli Cabinet on Oct. 14 expressed "anxiety and astonishment" at the British "threat" to take action against Israel, and fully supported Mrs. Meir's declaration. The Israeli Ambassadors in London, Washington, Paris, and Moscow were recalled on the same day for consultations.

The proposal that Iraqi troops should be stationed in Jordan aroused concern in Egypt as well as in Israel. Major Salem, the former Minister of National Guidance, alleged in his newspaper *Al Shaab* on Oct. 15 that this proposal was the result of a "plot" between the British, Israeli, and Iraqi Governments, and that its real aim was to enable Iraq to take over Jordan on the eve of the Jordanian elections due to be held on Oct. 21.

An Iraqi military mission headed by Crown Prince Abdul Illah arrived in Amman on Oct. 14 for discussions with King Hussein and the Jordanian Government. At the conclusion of the talks, a Jordanian Government spokesman announced on Oct. 15 that Iraqi troops would not enter Jordan "at this time," but would be placed strategically on the border "ready to make the fastest possible approach" if they were needed. In the event of an attack by Israel they would enter Jordan immediately, and if necessary would cross to the west bank of the River Jordan. Full agreement, he added, had also been reached on the supply of war material to Jordan by Iraq. According to the Amman correspondent of *The Times*, the Jordanian Government's decision not to call in Iraqi troops was attributed by diplomatic sources to the strength of popular feeling against Iraq, to the widespread belief that the Western Powers would use Iraqi forces to influence the voting in the elections and force Jordan to join the Baghdad Pact, and to the Government's fears that their arrival would be followed by riots.

General All Abu Nuwar, the Jordanian Chief of Staff, stated on Oct. 10 that if Iraqi troops entered Jordan they would be placed under the command of the Jordanian C. in C. [This decision was believed to represent a concession by the Iraqi Government, which was reported to have refused for some weeks to place its troops under Jordanian command, as a result of its suspicions of Egyptian influence in Jordan.] General Nuwar also said that R. A. F. jet planes stationed at Amman had been put on an alert basis since the Qalqilya raid, and that arrangements had been made with Britain so that he could call on British planes "within the hour" in the event of a new Israeli attack.

Commenting on this statement on Oct. 17, a Foreign Office spokesman in London, whilst reaffirming the British Government's intention "to come to the assistance of Jordan in the event of war being made against her," emphasized, however, that "if we are to take action under the treaty, we would obviously have to decide what circumstances warrant the treaty being invoked. Any decision on action would have to be taken in London." There was "no question whatever," he added, of the R. A. F. in Jordan being placed under Jordanian command.

**Two R. A. F. jet fighters from Cyprus flow over Amman on Oct. 18, and four more on Oct. 20. The British Embassy, however, described their visit as a routine practice flight.**

M. Abdelhadi, who had visited Baghdad, Damascus, and Cairo during the previous week, left Amman on Oct. 17 for Riyadh to open discussions with the Saudi Arabian Government on military and financial aid for Jordan.