

**Increased Terrorism on Israeli Border. - Syrian Support for Terrorists. - Soviet Veto of security Council Resolution. - Israeli Reprisal Raid on Jordanian Villages. - Condemnation by security Council. - Riots in Jordan. - Military Agreement between Jordan and Saudi Arabia. - Syrian Propaganda Campaign against Jordanian Government. - New Jordanian Cabinet - U.S. Arms Supplies to Jordan.**

An intensification of Arab terrorist activities against Israel in October and November 1966 gave rise to a grave political crisis in the Middle East. After a resolution calling on Syria to strengthen its measures for preventing incidents had been vetoed in the U.N. security Council by the Soviet Union on Nov. 4, Israeli forces carried out a reprisal raid on a Jordanian village on Nov. 13, which was condemned by the security Council on Nov. 25. Violent rioting occurred in the second half of November and the first week of December in the principal towns of western Jordan, where the population demanded arms to defend themselves against further Israeli attacks. The effect of the crisis was to deepen the cleavage between the “conservative” and the “revolutionary” Arab States, as the Syrian Government and the Palestine Liberation Organization (P.L.O.) openly declared their support for the rioters and called for the overthrow of King Hussein of Jordan, whilst the Jordanian Government accused the United Arab Republic of failing to support Jordan against Israel. Details of these developments are given below.

Terrorist activities on the Israeli border sharply increased during October and the first half of November 1966, the main incidents being as follows:

*Oct. 7.* Four civilians were injured by an explosion which damaged two flats in the Israeli sector of Jerusalem. The Israeli authorities claimed that tracks had been found leading to the Jordanian border, but an Israeli complaint blaming Jordan for the explosion was rejected by the chairman of the Israeli-Jordanian Mixed Armistice Commission on Oct. 19 on the ground of insufficient evidence.

*Oct. 8.* Four Israeli border policemen were killed and two wounded when their vehicle struck a mine south of Lake Tiberias, near the Syrian and Jordanian borders. The mine was believed to have been laid by infiltrators coming from Syria.

*Oct. 14.* Three soldiers were wounded when an Israeli Army vehicle was ambushed in the Mount Hebron area near the Jordanian border.

*Oct. 18.* An Israeli Army vehicle was blown up by a mine near the Syrian border, a soldier being wounded.

*Oct. 19.* Three Arab infiltrators and an Israeli border policeman were killed and a fourth Arab captured in a gun battle near the Lebanese border. In its first communique, issued to the Lebanese Press on Oct. 27, a new terrorist organization calling itself the "Organization of Heroes of the Return to Palestine" claimed responsibility for the incident.

*Oct. 20.* A kiosk at a nature reserve on the Dead Sea was blown up and a freshly planted rattle found nearby. Tracks were said to have been found leading to the Jordanian border.

*Oct. 22.* Syrian troops fired on an Israeli tractor working in the demilitarized zone near the Syrian frontier.

*Oct. 23.* An Israeli Army vehicle struck a mine near the Syrian border.

*Oct. 27.* A goods train was derailed by a mine near Jerusalem, a railway worker being injured; immediately after the explosion shots were fired at the train from the Jordanian side of the border.

*Oct. 30.* A water pipeline was blown up in the Negev. The Israeli authorities stated that tracks had been found leading to the Jordanian border.

*Nov. 4.* A mine was found buried in a road near the Syrian border. Syrian and Israeli troops exchanged fire in the Huleh valley.

The majority of the incidents were believed to be the work of the organization known as *Al Fatah* or *El Asefa*, which had been active since January 1965 [see 21515 A]. Although little is known with certainty about this organization, the *Daily Telegraph* reported on Nov. 14 that its leader was said to be Yasser Arafat, a member of the Moslem Brotherhood, and that it had about 400 members, most of them Palestinians. It was alleged to be armed with Soviet and Czech weapons drawn largely from Syrian and Egyptian stocks, and to receive financial support from the U.A.R. and Kuwait. In recent months, the organization was reported to have received the cooperation of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

In view of the increased tension on the border, the Israeli Premier, Mr. Eshkol, announced on Nov. 8 that the term of compulsory military service for men, which had been reduced from 30 to 26 months in 1963, would again be increased to 30 months.

The Syrian Prime Minister, Dr. Zeayen, openly affirmed Syria's full support for the infiltrators in a broadcast on Oct. 11.

“We are not protectors of Israel's security,” Dr. Zeayen said. “We shall never restrain the revolution of the Palestinian people who are seeking to liberate their homeland. Under no circumstances shall we do so. In the event of Israeli aggression against Syria we shall set this whole region on fire, and turn it into a cemetery for Israel, imperialism, and imperialist agents.” Israel, he declared, was “moving into the last stage of the plot against Syria,” and was trying to play the same role as in 1956, when it had excused its attack on Egypt by referring to incursions by Egyptian *fedayeen*. Dr. Zeayen also denounced King Hussein, King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, and President Bourguiba of Tunisia, and alleged that Mr. Wasfi Tell (the Jordanian Premier) was a paid member of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

The official Syrian newspaper *Al Baath* announced on Oct. 12 that Syria had completed “all preparations” to counter any aggression from Israel or elsewhere. According to unofficial sources, more troops had been moved up to the Israeli border, and the Air Force had been put on alert. The “People's Army,” a newly formed workers' and peasants' militia, was mobilized on Oct. 19 to “protect the revolution against its enemies at home and abroad”; in Damascus thousands of men and women queued outside recruiting centres for the new force, and were promised that they would soon be issued with arms.

King Hussein stated on Oct. 11 that Jordan would be forced to open up a second front against Israel if fighting broke out between Israel and Syria. Mr. Ahmed Shukairy, the president of the P.L.O., said in Cairo on Oct. 20 that “units of the Palestine Liberation Army stand ready to respond to any appeal by the Syrian Defence Ministry to repel aggression by Zionist gangs.”

In a speech in the *Knesset* on Oct. 17 Mr. Eshkol accused Syria of being responsible for the terrorist raids on Israel; offered to conclude a non-aggression pact with Syria to alleviate any false suspicions of Israeli aggressive intentions on Syria's part; but gave a warning that Israel would take appropriate measures in self-defence if the outrages against her territory continued.

Mr. Eshkol accused Syria of training saboteurs for work in Israeli territory; helping *Al Fatah* with arms, equipment, finance, and propaganda; and training units within the framework of the Syrian Army for the purpose of carrying out operations in Israel and

other Arab countries. Whereas in Syria and the Middle East, however, the Damascus authorities made no attempt to conceal their ties with *Al Fatah*, or, the international scene they used another kind of language “founded on three falsehoods”—that Syria had no hand in the wrongdoing, that Israel was planning to attack Syria, and that Israel had joined with “imperialist forces” in a conspiracy to overthrow the Damascus regime.

The first falsehood, Sir. Eshkol went on, was refuted by Damascus's own boasts. In order to refute the second, Israel had agreed that a U.N. investigation should be carried out to make it plain that there were no Israeli troop concentrations on the border. In reply to “the third Syrian falsehood,” Mr. Eshkol said:

“I once again emphasize to Syria and its rulers: It is not our way to interfere in the regimes and internal affairs of our neighbours. It is nonsense for you to say that we are acting as the agents of any foreign factor whatsoever. If you indeed labour under any false suspicion that Israel is planning an attack against you, Israel is prepared immediately to sign a mutual non-aggression pact with you. In any case, you are called upon to respect the cease-fire agreement to which you set your hands. If, despite our warnings and our proposals, you intend to continue the outrages, we have already shown that we have the strength to defend the rights and lives of our citizens. There is a limit to our patience. If the acts of sabotage and murder continue, we shall take measures to restrain them, choosing the appropriate timing and methods, in accordance with the right of self-defence which is reserved to every State and recognized in the U.N. Charter.”

In conclusion, Mr. Eshkol expressed regret that the Soviet Union was giving international currency to the “foolish charge” that Israel was planning an attack against Syria as part of an international plot against the Damascus regime.

The investigation into Syrian and Soviet charges that Israel was massing troops for an attack on Syria, to which Mr. Eshkol had referred, was carried out on Oct. 18 by observers of the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization. According to Israeli sources, their report, which was submitted on Oct. 21 to the U.N. Secretary-General, U Thant, found no violations of the limitations in force in the demilitarized zone.

The Damascus Press and radio gave prominence on Oct. 20 to a speech by the Syrian Minister of the Interior, Mr. Ashawi, in which he declared that “the battle with Israel is coming, and we are ready for that battle at any time”—a statement which was regarded as the Syrian Government's reply to the Israeli offer of a non-aggression pact. Mr. Ashawi alleged that King Hussein had ordered the Jordanian intelligence services to “act in full co-operation with Israeli intelligence against the rights of the Arab peoples.”

The Israeli Foreign Minister, Mr. Abba Eban, discussed the nature of the Arab guerrilla movement and the attitude of the Arab countries towards it in an interview with the editor of *The Guardian* on Nov. 16.

“The complexity of the situation,” Mr. Eban said, “arises from the fact that the chief instigator of the terrorist movement is the Government of Syria. . . . On the other hand, the territory and the population through which the terrorist bands work are often in Jordan. It might be the case that Syria will make a special effort to ensure that these activities take place through Jordanian territory, both in order to prevent a reaction against herself and in order to embroil Israel and Jordan in armed clashes. . . . There are groups of people who are trained in camps in Syria—in Daharan, in Kuneltru, and elsewhere. Having received their training they operate within Israeli territory, either through Syria, sometimes through Lebanon, but mainly through Jordan, because these are mainly people of Palestinian origin, who know the terrain. . . .”

“I have never had the impression that *Al Fatah* or the Liberation Army are rigidly defined groups like political parties. What has happened is that an atmosphere has been created in the Arab world in favour of what is called ‘a popular war.’ This is a concept of war of limited liability; how do you get the maximum results with the minimal risks? And these Governments, especially Syria’s, would probably like to avoid frontal conflict between regular forces. They discuss this quite openly in their speeches. They say that the recent history of the world has shown the fantastic results that can be achieved by relatively small guerrilla groups, who make life intolerable and thereby achieve a political effect perhaps even greater than would be achieved by regular forces, without inviting the interaction of armed forces, in which I think Syria and Jordan would come off badly. That is their logic. This is an easy, cheap way of running a kind of war against Israel. Now this ideology has spread, and it is a source of danger because the fact is that the answer, the technical answer, to that kind of warfare has not been found. . . .”

“Egypt, for reasons of her own related to her economic crisis, her Yemenite crisis, her intra-Arab crisis, does not seem to put Israel high on her list of preoccupations. Lebanon, again, because of the structure of the State, its smallness, its almost inherent need for peace, its lack of will to sustain a military posture, also preserves a peaceful frontier with Israel. In Jordan the situation is more complex, because even if we assumed that the Jordanian policy is closer to that of Egypt than Lebanon than that of Syria, Jordan does not have the same homogeneity of structure, and therefore perhaps not the same degree of centralized control. The question, therefore, with Jordan is not merely Jordanian will but Jordanian capacity and the degree of vigilance involved. But when we deal with Jordan we are not dealing only with the Government. We are also dealing with localities which have different policies of good or bad neighbourliness with Israel. That is the complexity of

the situation with Jordan, although if I had to make a classification I would say that the Jordanian Government, although hostile to Israel (as are all the Arab Governments), is probably closer to the Egyptian-Lebanese view—namely, that one should not invite a premature confrontation...

“What I think is lacking on the Syrian side is the ideology of non-confrontation. What we have not been able to do—and when I say ‘we’ I mean the entire peace-loving international community—we have not been able to inculcate in Syria even that minimum degree of prudence, caution, discretion that seems to exist in the others....”

Mr. Eban, who was then in New York, lodged a complaint on Oct. 10, 1966, with U Thant and Lord Caradon (current president of the security Council) about the two incidents on Oct. 7–8 [see above]. In his letter to Lord Caradon, Mr. Eban asked that the security Council should impress on Syria “the need to call an immediate, complete, and final halt to these attacks, lest the border situation deteriorates sharply.” He told the Press that he had neither requested nor excluded a security Council meeting; Israel wanted “action rather than a long debate,” and hoped to persuade all non-Arab members of the Council to bring home to Syria the dangers of “committing itself to a guerrilla war against a neighbouring State.”

U Thant called in Dr. Georges Tomeh, the Syrian delegate at the U.N., for consultations on Oct. 11. The Israeli delegate, Mr. Comay, met Dr. Nikolai Fedorenko, the Soviet delegate, on the same day, whilst Mr. Eban had meetings on Oct. 12 with Mr. Goldberg, the U.S. delegate, and Mr. George Brown, the British Foreign Secretary, then in New York. In Jerusalem Mr. Eshkol had consultations with foreign Ambassadors on Oct. 11–12.

Mr. Comay requested on Oct. 12 an urgent meeting of the security Council to consider acts of aggression against Israel committed by armed groups operating from Syrian territory, Syrian threats against Israel's territorial integrity and independence, and open Syrian incitement to war against Israel. These charges were denied by Syria on the following day. The debate on the Israeli complaint opened on Oct. 14.

**Mr. Comay** referred to the incidents on Oct. 7–8, and said that since January 1965 there had been 61 acts of murder, sabotage, and mine-laying carried out by armed infiltrators. There was no mystery about who incited and organized these actions. Damascus Radio had broadcast on Oct. 9 a communique by the “general staff of *El Asefa*” giving a detailed and accurate account of the explosions on Oct. 7, and Dr. Zeayen had announced his support for these activities in his broadcast of Oct. 11. Syria was committed by the U.N. Charter to abstain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity and independence of Israel, and by the 1949 armistice

agreement not to permit hostile acts against Israel or Israeli civilians. After denying that Israel was planning to overthrow the Syrian regime, Mr. Comay proposed that Syria and Israel should reaffirm their intention to abstain from the use or threat of force against each other, and their determination to prevent the conducting of hostile acts from their territory against the other party.

After further investigations by the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization at the Council's request, U Thant on Nov. 3 submitted reports on the inability of the Israeli-Syrian Mixed Armistice Commission to function, and on the status of the demilitarized zone on the Israel-Syrian border. The first report stated that since 1951 Israel had taken the position that the commission was not competent to deal with issues pertaining to the demilitarized zone, and had refused to attend meetings dealing with such issues. No meetings had therefore taken place since 1960, and the report expressed the view that the commission's inability to function weakened the efforts to maintain quiet along the border. The second report stated that although both Israel and Syria had made complaints that the other had encroached on the demilitarized zone, there had been no investigations by U.N. military observers; Israel had not requested investigation of its complaints, and had denied access to certain areas to U.N. observers seeking to investigate Syrian complaints.

Two draft resolutions were placed before the Council on Nov. 3. One, sponsored by Argentina, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, and Uganda, deplored the recent incidents; invited Syria to strengthen its measures for preventing incidents that violated the armistice agreement; invited Israel to co-operate fully with the Mixed Armistice Commission; called on Syria and Israel to facilitate the work of the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization; and urged Syria and Israel to refrain from any action that might increase tension in the area. The other resolution, proposed by Britain and the United States, noted that the *Al Fatah* or *El Asefa* organization had been responsible for a series of raids into Israel; deplored the incidents which had taken place; reminded Syria of her obligations to prevent the use of her territory as a base for violations of the armistice agreement; and called on Syria and Israel to co-operate fully with the Mixed Armistice Commission and to facilitate the work of the Truce Supervision Organization.

The Soviet Union used its veto on Nov. 4, 1966, to defeat the six-Power resolution—the 104th time that it had done so. The voting was 10 in favour (Britain, France, the United States, Uruguay, and the six sponsors) to four against (Bulgaria, Jordan, Mali, and the Soviet Union), with Nationalist China abstaining. Dr. Fedorenko justified Israel's use of the veto on the ground that the resolution was “one-sided,” as the clause inviting Syria to strengthen its measures for preventing incidents implied that Syria was to blame for the tension on the Israeli border; the Soviet delegate maintained that peace was threatened by Israel's “aggressive

policies” and by “the desire of imperialist circles to prevent Arab development in peace.” the Anglo-American resolution was withdrawn.

In a report presented to the Israeli Cabinet on Nov. 6, Mr. Eban commented that everyone in the security Council admitted in effect that the majority proposal was meant to impose the responsibility on Syria. The new fact indicated by the Council's proceedings was the recognition accorded by influential world factors to Israel's view of the position on the borders and Syria's responsibility for stopping infiltration and sabotage.

Three Israeli soldiers were killed and six wounded on Nov. 12, 1966, when their vehicle ran over a recently planted mine in the Hebron area, near the Jordanian border. On the following day Israeli troops carried out one of the biggest reprisal raids yet mounted by Israel, and the first to take place in daylight.

About 6 a.m. on Nov. 13 a large Israeli force, including tanks and armoured cars, crossed the border near the scene of the previous day's incident and silenced a Jordanian police post by tank fire. The main attack was directed against Samu, a large village of about 4,000 people, the inhabitants of which were alleged to have harboured and abetted Arab terrorists. Israeli official sources stated that about 40 houses in Samu were blown up, after being examined to make certain that no one was left inside and everyone had been brought to safety, while another column had blown up houses in two neighbouring villages which had also sheltered marauders. U Thant, however, informed the security Council on Nov. 16 that 125 houses, a school, and a clinic had been totally destroyed at Samu and 15 houses in another village, whilst inhabitants of Samu alleged to reporters that the Israelis had “shot down everyone who appeared” without giving any warning.

When reinforcements from the Arab Legion reached Samu there was an exchange of fire, in which Israeli sources claimed that 15 Jordanian lorries were destroyed; the Jordanians claimed to have destroyed at least 10 Israeli tanks and 12 armoured cars and troop carriers. An air battle also took place, in which a Jordanian Hawker *Hunter* was shot down; Jordanian sources claimed that two Israeli *Mirage* fighters were also shot down and that a third was hit and was believed to have crashed, but Israel denied that any of its planes had been hit. The attacking force returned to Israeli territory at 9.45 a.m.

The Israeli Government stated that one Israeli officer had been killed in the action and 10 soldiers wounded; a Jordanian military spokesman, however, claimed that the Israelis had lost over 50 killed and wounded. The U.N. Truce Supervision Organization reported that 15 Jordanian soldiers and three civilians had been killed, including a woman, and 37 soldiers and 17 civilians wounded.

Commenting on the raid, the *Financial Times* said on Nov. 14: “The Israelis must have had several reasons—apart from any evidence that saboteurs were using the Hebron villages—far sending a battalion against Jordan rather than Syria. They probably decided that another sortie against the Syrians (there had been two major incidents in August) would have been too much for the military rulers in Damascus to swallow, and would have certainly led to war. In the first place, it is not Israeli policy to provoke a real war—these retaliatory operations are meant as a deterrent. In the second place, a move against Syria would have put President Nasser into an intolerable position. President Nasser clearly does not want a war with Israel, but last week he signed a defence agreement with the Syrians which committed him to go to Syria's aid in the event of an Israeli attack [see 21710 C]. On the other hand, the Israelis probably hope that the Syrians will be more likely to learn a lesson effected on Jordan rather than on themselves....”

In a letter to the president of the security Council the Jordanian delegate, Dr. Muhammad al Farra, accused Israel on Nov. 14, 1966, of a “naked act of aggression,” and said that unless the Council took deterrent action forthwith such “acts of international banditry are likely to continue and may lead to serious consequences.” On the following day he asked for an urgent meeting of the Council, which accordingly met on Nov. 16 to consider the Jordanian complaint.

**Dr. Farra** asked the Council to condemn Israel for “this reckless and wanton act of aggression,” and to consider further measures under Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter [which provides for economic sanctions].

Mr. Comay said that Israel had lived under “the unremitting threat of armed aggression,” while the U.A.R. had trained a para-military force of 12,000 men in Gaza, and Syria had trained thousands of others for the Palestine Liberation Army. His Government's hopes that raids would stop had been shattered when the Army vehicle was blown up on Nov. 12, and it was then that Israel had decided to carry out a limited local action as “a warning and a deterrent” to inhabitants of the villages involved and others along Israel's borders. It had been “a defensive action carried out by a relatively small force,” and had been undertaken; “most reluctantly and only as a last resort.”

Lord Caradon (United Kingdom) said that he could find no justification for the “calculated, admitted, and wholly disproportionate attack against Jordan.”

Mr. Goldberg declared that only nine days after the last security Council meeting on Israeli-Arab tensions, Israel had carried out a raid “whose consequences in human lives and in destruction far surpass the cumulative total of the various acts of terrorism conducted against the frontiers of Israel.” Although these earlier incidents had been

deplorable, “this deliberate governmental decision must be judged as the conscious act of responsible leaders of a member-State, and therefore on an entirely different level from the earlier incidents.”

M. Seydoux (France) said that his Government unequivocally condemned the Israeli action. **Dr. Fedorenko** called the attack “a serious crime,” and expressed the hope that “the condemnation we have heard from the representatives of Washington and London will not remain mere words.”

When the debate was resumed on Nov. 21, **Dr. Farra** asked the Council to decide that the raid constituted aggression under the provisions of the Charter, and to appeal to member-States to “adopt necessary measures for applying economic sanctions against Israel.” Expressing alarm at reports about U.S. policy, he alleged that 46 *Patton* tanks recently supplied to Israel by the United States for defensive purposes had been used in the raid. This was immediately denied by **Mr. Comay**, who said that only 10 tanks had been used, none of them American-built.

The security Council adopted on Nov. 25 a resolution sponsored by Malt and Nigeria by 14 votes to nil, with New Zealand abstaining. The resolution deplored the loss of life and heavy damage to property resulting from the Israeli Government's action; censured Israel for this violation of the Charter and the Israeli-Jordanian armistice agreement; emphasized that military reprisals could not be tolerated, and that if they were repeated the Council “will have to consider further and more effective steps as envisaged in the Charter”; and requested the Secretary-General to keep the situation under review and report to the Council as appropriate. Mr. Frank Corner (New Zealand) said that he would abstain because his Government felt that the censure of Israel should be accompanied by “a fair acknowledgement of all the facts of the underlying situation.”

In a statement to the Israeli Cabinet on Nov. 27, Mr. Eshkol described the resolution as “one-sided,” and added: “The majority in the security Council ignored the causes of the tension that exists on Israel's borders and dealt unilaterally with the results of one incident alone. It must be remembered that the reason for the tension is the policy of hostility and aggression which the Arab Governments conduct against Israel.... So long as the security Council has not adopted effective measures to stop the aggressor, it is the duty and the right of an attacked State to defend itself....”

Firing broke out on the Israeli-Syrian border on Nov. 13, 1966, shortly after the attack on Samu, and continued sporadically until Nov. 16; no casualties were reported. Terrorist activities, however, showed a marked decrease after the raid; the first such incident since Nov. 12 occurred on Nov. 26, when an Israeli motorist was wounded by automatic fire near Jerusalem.

Two Egyptian *Mig-19* jet lighters were shot down by an Israeli *Mirage* in a clash over the Sinai border on Nov. 29. Israeli spokesmen stated that the pilot of the *Mirage* had shot down the first *Mig* with a French *Matra* air-to-air missile, and the second by conventional fire.

Following the raid on Samu, the Jordanian authorities refused to allow supplies for troops in the Israeli enclave on Mount Scopus, near Jerusalem, to pass through Jordanian territory. An agreement was reached on Dec. 2, however, whereby supplies were transported to the enclave in U.N. instead of Israeli vehicles.

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