

C O P Y

14 October 1953

Dear General,

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of to-day's date with the enclosed memorandum.

With regard to our offer to suspend the work for a brief period so as to enable you to clarify the points at issue, I am a little surprised to discover that until the receipt of my letter of 13 October you had not been aware of our readiness to do so. Such readiness clearly emerged from my discussion with you and with members of your staff, and from a statement officially released to and published in the daily press. Our willingness to accept a temporary interruption of the work in the Demilitarized Zone was, quite naturally, expressed during our conversation of 28 September in exploratory terms, such as might elicit an immediate response on your part, and I was at the time disappointed that no such response was forthcoming. But I never thought that the meaning of our attitude on this point had remained unclear.

I now understand that you no longer consider a suspension necessary for the purpose of elucidating doubtful facts, and I take it I may expect to hear from you at our meeting to-morrow for what other object, if for any at all, you still consider it necessary that the work be interrupted.

As for the four Arab plots cited in the Memorandum, I am satisfied that they have not been affected by the work in question. If machinery has been carried over one of these plots, and old track, commonly used by everybody, was employed. The actual work in damming the western arm of the Jordan was done not on privately owned land but on the strip of soil along the stream which on the cadastral map is comprised within the area of the Jordan river. If any stones were inadvertently thrown on Arab land in the process of digging, they were subsequently removed. In short, nothing at all was done to that land which might be considered to have "affected" it.

A. Far from riding roughshod over Arab land, special care was taken, at the cost of considerable sacrifice, not to involve it in the project. By all relevant topographical and engineering considerations, the digging of the diversion canal should have been started at a higher spot, well north of where the actual start was made. But since in that event the canal would have cut through the Arab-owned plots, the original project was abandoned and the diversion point pushed down south, to an altitude  $3\frac{1}{2}$  metres lower than the former point. You will realize what permanent loss is thereby entailed for the power-generating capacity of the future waterfall.

I hope to clear up other issues at our meeting to-morrow, but I thought an immediate mise à point on the above two subjects was called for.

Yours sincerely,

Moshe Sharett  
Minister for Foreign Affairs

Major General Vagn Bennike  
Chief of Staff  
United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation,  
Jerusalem.

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Minister for Foreign Affairs

Major General Vagn Bennike  
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United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation,  
J e r u s a l e m .

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