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## ISRAEL ANNOUNCES READINESS TO MEET EGYPT FOR PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF NEGEV BATTLE

TEL AVIV, Oct. 18. (JTA) -- The Israeli Government tonight announced its readiness to meet with Egyptian representatives "any time at such a place as may be agreed upon in order to settle peacefully all differences that have arisen between Egypt and Israel in the Negev."

The government offer was made in response to an inquiry by the United Nations as to whether Israel is prepared to order an immediate and unconditional four-day cease-fire so as to provide time for the peaceful settlement of the Negev difficulties regarding the maintenance of the truce there. The United Nations proposed that a meeting of the parties involved be held in Government House in Jerusalem.

Asked whether the Israeli authorities will in the meantime issue a cease-fire order, a government spokesman said: "Judging from past experiences during the first and second truce, we don't feel prepared to order any cease-fire until we have proper guarantees that the Egyptian undertakings will be kept and the road to the Negev will be kept open."

## Israeli Forces Consolidating Negev Positions; Route to Settlements Opened

Meanwhile, Israeli forces in the Negev were today actively consolidating positions gained in yesterday's intense fighting and were pressing on to eliminate whatever Egyptian positions continued to menace Israeli communications to the Negev settlements.

Late yesterday the Jews succeeded in capturing a number of heights along the Majdal-Faluja-Beit Jibrin road, finally freeing the supply road to the more than a score of Jewish settlements in the desert. An official communique this morning revealed that the Israeli air force was active again during the night, bombing enemy concentrations at Gaza, Beerseba, Majdal, Faluja and the El Arish airfield.

As a result of the fighting, an Israeli striking force seized complete control of a six-mile-wide corridor through the Egyptian lines and immediately began to send supply trucks rolling through to the isolated Jewish outposts which have been depending on their provisions for the past few months on the "Israeli air lift."

The Iraqi front in central Palestine became active today when the Arabs shelled the Jewish settlement of Kfar Yavitz for a half-hour. Kfar Yavitz faces the Tulkarm-Nablus leg of the Arab triangle of Tulkarm-Nablus-Jenin.

## Arabs Fire on Jewish Positions in Jerusalem; Shell Hits Greek Consulate

JERUSALEM, Oct. 18. (JTA) -- Israeli positions in the Musrara area and in the southern sector of Jerusalem were subjected to intermittent Arab mortar fire last night, an Israeli communique reported today. One Jewish soldier was slightly wounded. A six-pound Arab anti-tank shell struck the Greek consulate, without causing any casualties.

U.N. SECURITY COUNCIL MEETS TODAY TO DISCUSS NEGEV FIGHTING; ISRAEL SUBMITS STATEMENT

PARIS, Oct. 18. (JTA) -- Warren R. Austin, American member of the Security Council and this month's Council president, today called a meeting of the Council for tomorrow to discuss the Negev fighting. Austin's decision was made following a meeting this morning with acting mediator Dr. Ralph Bunche.

The first item on the agenda tomorrow will be a report by Dr. Bunche on the present situation in the Palestine desert as well as the reaction of the Israeli and Egyptian Governments to his demand for an immediate cease-fire with both belligerents holding the positions which they occupy at the moment of the cease-fire.

During the latter part of today the members of the Israeli delegation met to plan the Israeli position at tomorrow's Council session. Meanwhile, Aubrey S. Eban, Israeli representative to the United Nations, today submitted a letter to the President of the Council outlining the situation which led to the outbreak of fighting in the Negev as well as the guarantees which the Jewish state requires before it can call off its offensive to safeguard communications to the more than a score of settlements in the desert.

Eban's communication drew attention to the truce violations of the Egyptian forces in the Negev. It contended that obstruction of Jewish convoys heading for the settlements constitute a violation of the truce in that a U.N. truce commission ruling of Sept. 11 implied free passage for Jewish supply trains six hours each day.

Continuing to describe the events which led to the Egyptian attack on an Israeli convoy Oct. 15, touching off the present combat, Eban's letter underlined the political nature of the Egyptian action. It charged that simultaneously with the Arab attack on the Jewish convoy, the Egyptians laid claim to the area in order to create the "illusion" that the Arab invaders control communications in the Negev. The Egyptian strategy was aimed at acquiring a political advantage from a truce violation, the letter stressed.

Israel's Position Regarding Suspension of Military Operations Outlined

The communication further clarified Israel's position concerning a return to the status quo in the Negev. It pointed out that the Israeli Government informed representatives of the mediator that it will not order a suspension of military operations until full guarantees are received that all Egyptian attacks against Israeli positions, communications and convoys will cease completely. Eban concluded by stating that at the time of writing the letter the Government of Israel had received no information on Egyptian intentions concerning such guarantees.

It was learned here today that the latest outbreak in the Negev is alarming Egyptian Government leaders and has resulted in consultations between Egyptian delegation members and the American and British delegations. The cost of the war is of paramount concern to the Egyptian Government. Egypt has expended in the five-month war and the armed truce a total of 80 million pounds (\$320,000,000), or four-fifths of its scheduled revenue for this year.

The Cairo Government's first estimate was that the war would cost 30 million pounds (\$120,000,000), and this was the amount which Premier Nokrashi Pasha asked in a secret meeting of the Egyptian Senate on May 14, on the eve of the war against Israel. The money was to be drawn from Egypt's budgetary reserves. At that session of the Senate the Premier told the Senators that the war against Israel would be over in two weeks, and that he received assurances that neither Britain nor the Security Council would intervene during that period.