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9 Nov. 56

Aide Memoire

(D.H.'s notes on four episodes in the development
of the cease-fire)

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2. When I returned from the Press Conference, 6 November, at 1.30 p.m., after having read the British text to the journalists, I asked for the text to be cabled at once on my behalf, "to Cairo and Jerusalem". Further, I called personally Ambassador Eban and Ambassador Loutfi, informing them about the contents. I also informed both of them of the fact that I had directly, orally, to the British Ambassador confirmed their cease-fire commitments. When, soon after 6 p.m., I wanted to see the text of the outgoing cables, it was discovered that my order had never been executed,

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3. While in the General Assembly meeting the morning of 7 November, I got Burns' cable with exact text of relevant parts of Ben-Gurion's statement in the Knesset. I then called Ambassador Eban out and made a dual demarche as indicated by the attached memo. On the first point Mr. Eban asked me why I had to refer to point 2. in Mr. Ben-Gurion's statement, as that must be considered a question between Israel and Egypt. I said that, without any detailed explanation, I considered it my duty to refer to

point 2., as being in contradiction with the legal stand of the United Nations in this context. Mr. Eban then asked me how I envisaged the situation in case Israeli troops were to withdraw: would Egyptian troops then come up to the Demarcation Line? I replied that obviously Egyptian troops had freedom to move on Egyptian territory. Eban said that he felt that that would seriously complicate any acceptance on the Israeli side of withdrawal, because we might then have a renewal of incursions which would threaten Israeli lives. I considered it necessary to reply to Eban that I hoped he fully realized - and that Jerusalem fully realized - that the time was past for talks about such security problems; - What we were discussing was a question which might well decide whether "two months from now there would be any Israel at all". He could take that as an expression of my most seriously considered opinion.

Immediately before the talk with Eban I had a conversation with Mr. Lodge in the presense of Mr. Barco. I informed him about the situation and asked him to ask Mr. Eisenhower to get through with a personal message to Mr. Ben Gurion, requesting immediate withdrawal and acceptance of the United Nations Force. Mr. Lodge indicated that he shared my view as to the desirability of such a move.

All this happened between 12.30 p.m. and 1 p.m. on 7 November.

On 8 November, at about noon, Mr. Kidron asked to see me urgently. He informed me that Jerusalem had approved a text, which he and Eban had drafted, and which would meet my two requests for withdrawal and acceptance of the United Nations Force. He would give me the message officially in writing as soon as the text had been cabled over from Jerusalem. He hoped that he would have it in his hands within one hour. He told me that in the night Eban and he had sent a report through with their own views which he honestly believed to have been a document unique in diplomatic history.

Somewhat later Mr. Eban called me from Washington with the same message. He said that he had been in constant telephone contact with Jerusalem all through the night and added that as soon as Mr. Ben-Gurion saw "the world political context" he changed to this new line. Mr. Eban, at the same time asked me to use my information" with one Security Council Member" and to try to prevent activities from that side. In line with this, I immediately sent to Kusnetzov a note in which, after having told him about the Israeli message, I added "this brings the situation under full control unless unrest breaks out in the Northern part. I have had the most disturbing information on the situation in Syria. May I ask you to do what you can do in order to make us avoid renewed Fedayeen activities or anything that might disturb the extremely delicate but promising situation". I added as a post script: "Perhaps it might be good if we could talk this over". However, Mr. Kusnetzov never took any initiative for a talk.

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In the morning, 9 November, Fawzi sent a message back through Loutfi who had had a telephone talk with him, that he understood my letter but wished me to understand, on my side, that he was facing some very real difficulties. Some clarifications were necessary and the necessary questions would be sent through Burns. He hoped to give the full and definite reply in the course of the day and wished Burns to stay until the necessary agreements were reached. Loutfi added that it was partly a problem of "public reactions to Canadians, as "being under the Crown". I replied that I must insist on

Canadians. The legal objection was not valid and a refusal by Egypt on this point would be most harmful to Egypt.

5. The idea that the cease-fire should be negotiated by the Secretary-General, first came up in the course of the visit by Mr. Abdoh in my home late in the night of 2 November. The Arab/Asian Group asked me through him for intervention and in reply I pointed out that there was no scope for such intervention (see annexed text of Arab/Asian statement). Another matter was that the resolution passed did not permit me to take any initiative for its implementation. I considered that to be a weakness, and would not raise any objection against a proposal from the Arab/Asian side authorizing me to negotiate a cease-fire. The idea was later embodied in the draft resolution of the Asian Group as a "request". Contacted by the Indian delegate, I said that I had no objection, but that I wanted them to use the word "authorize" instead, so as to make it clear that I would negotiate on behalf of the General Assembly.

6. The idea of an international force which, of course, has a long history, was brought into the discussion first by Mr. Pearson in the debate 1-2 November. We discussed it somewhat more in detail but still without going into the substance at a luncheon next day, to which Mr. Pearson had invited me and Mr. Cordier. Mr. Pearson still had no clear idea at all about what kind of arrangements might be possible. He had at all events to discuss it with his Government. He seemed rather to have in mind something similar to Selwyn Lloyd's proposal from last spring. His main hope was to gain the tactical advantage of having put forward something positive which might help the British and French off the hook; his main concern was the split of the Western Bloc.

On his return from Ottawa the next day, 3 November, for the evening meeting of the General Assembly which was convened after lunch at the unexpected request of the Egyptian delegate, Mr. Pearson brought with him a first draft of his resolution. He there suggested the establishment of a Committee for exploration of the possibilities. The Americans who contacted me concerning the matter, wanted the Secretary-General to undertake the task instead of a committee. I said that I would not raise any objections. Mr. Pearson later asked me the same question, to which I then replied that, if the resolution was so to be understood as to indicate that the Secretary-General should explore the matter with delegations and elaborate what might have come out of a committee work if time had permitted, I was willing to accept the nomination. In the course of the debate 3-4 November I sent around invitations to Canada, Colombia, India and Norway for a first exploratory meeting at 11.30 on 4 November. I later consulted also Denmark, Finland and Sweden, Brazil and Mexico, New Zealand and Iran. I put before all members of this group my "first report" proposing an immediate decision on the establishment of the United Nations Command and the appointment of General Burns. I developed this idea in the course of the morning meeting with the four in reply to an observation by Mr. Cordier that the ideal would be if I should be in a position to present a report the very same day.

file marked "Private notes on early
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