

**Middle East - Suez story No
25-26: Middle East - Suez
story No 25-26 - 9**

HS L 179:113



Dag Hammarskiöld's samt.

Middle East / Suez story - 26

6 Dec. 56 - 18 Jan. 57

Burns, E. L. M. (Gen., UNEF, Cairo, Ballah)

- 4 code cables to D.H.
- 3 code cables from D.H.
- 5 code cables to Ralph Bunche (O.N. HQ)
- 1 cable from R. Bunche

INCOMING CODE CABLE

TO: SECGEN
FROM: BURNS, CAIRO
DATE: 6 DECEMBER 1956
NUMBER: UNEF 233

I met General Dayan at Elpacish today and discussed technical matters regarding Israeli facilitation advance of UNEF up to positions presently held by Israelis. Apparently Israelis do not hold fixed positions but are patrolling up to north and south line 50 kms distant from Canal.

Yugoslav unit reports roads east from Kantanw and Ismailia mined and very severely damaged. Arrangements made to obtain full details of mine fields from Israelis. Repair of roads is going to be a heavy task beyond the capacity of limited number of engineers with UNEF and we shall therefore probably have to call on Egyptians to undertake most of the work.

I gathered from Dayan that Israel hopes that Egyptians will not replace armed forces in Sinai and to discourage if they have begun this destruction of roads and railroads. I presume you will take steps to see that no further destruction is carried out and that if possible they remove mines and repair damage in area they still occupy. However I do not think they should be asked to undertake any work to the west of their present forward positions.

Dayan hoped no Egyptian troops would come into Sinai ~~behind~~ behind UNEF. I explained that Assembly resolutions conferred no power on UN to stop this but ^{THAT} for practical reasons it seemed undesirable during UNEF advance and I _h thought it could be discouraged.

I am to meet General Amer tomorrow and from preliminary soundings by Gohar last night I believe Egyptians may not, at first at any rate, press to have troops in Sinai with exception of some medical detachments to rescue

wounded that may still be there and for burying dead. Engineer troops may also be necessary to repair roads as stated above.

Dayan enquired whether I would ~~xxx~~ be in Tel Aviv in near future and whether I would see Mr. Ben Gurion there. I made indefinite reply to this and would like your advice as to whether I should see Ben Gurion or not. I presume his object would be to find ~~xxx~~ out intended method of taking over Sinai and final distribution of troops. Actually I have no firm views regarding this as yet. Have made tentative arrangements to attach UNEF liaison officer to General Dayans headquarters and for effective radio communication.

UNDERLINED WORDS AS PER COPY.

INCOMING CODE CABLE

TO: SECRETARY GENERAL
FROM: BURNS, CAIRO
DATE: 7 DECEMBER 1956
NUMBER: UNEF 242

Further UNEF 233 second and third paragraphs Yugoslav reconnaissance parties have reached position 25 kms East of Canal on road Ismailia - Abu Aweigilia, reported that road beyond this is completely destroyed by road breaking machines and is only passable for tracked vehicles to progress past this. Egyptians claim destruction continues up to 75 kms East of Canal on this road.

On road from El Kantara to Gaza parallel to railway patrols have reached 30 kms East of Canal and road reported similarly destroyed up to 60th km.

Railway also reported destroyed by explosive charges every 50 metres. It follows that in order to advance past above points the roads must be rebuilt for about 30 kms, a task that will take many weeks even with large labour force, materials and machinery.

You will appreciate importance of taking most energetic measures ensure that Israelis do not effect a further destruction if the plan of moving UNEF to Demarcation Line is to be followed out.

Airfield at El Arish could be used for landing troops but Israelis might later destroy this if not prevented. I did not see town of EL Arish but Dayan, when asked whether there was much destruction there, said the civilian town was practically untouched but intimated many military buildings have been demolished. In light of above the statement in the third paragraph of Israeli letter (A/3410) that the Israeli Government will offer technical assistance to facilitate move of UNEF appears somewhat insincere.

INCOMING CODE CABLE

TO: SECRETARY GENERAL
FROM: BURNS, CAIRO
DATE: 11 DECEMBER 1956
NUMBER: UNEF 293

Message dated 10 December from Israel Foreign Ministry contained inter alia following request: "The Netherlands ship Fadalla arrived at Suez on 29 October 1956 on passage from Jibouti and Massawa to Haifa. The Egyptian authorities have impounded her cargo of 200 tons of frozen meat, 258,000 tins of meat and 14 ^{two} 20 tons of hides consigned to Haifa. The vessel is detained at Suez. ~~It~~ This seizure being contrary to Egypt's international obligations, the Israel Government requests you to arrange for an investigation with a view to securing the immediate release and return of the ship and her cargo."

Have informed Ministry would refer request to you.

Underlined as per copy.

INCOMING CODE CABLE

TO: SECRETARY GENERAL
FROM: BURNS
DATE 26 DECEMBER 1956
NUMBER: UNEF 436

Re your 97 and my 428

1. Met Dayan Lydda 0900Z. Venue changed because he had to confer Ben Gurion Tel Aviv 1100Z and I thought better avoid delay. 2. The withdrawal he proposed was much less than that given in your 97 which I told him had been agreed with Israeli representative in New York. He said he did not understand such an extensive withdrawal had been accepted by Eban and anyway his instructions did not allow him to agree without reference to Ben Gurion. 3. He proposed to withdraw by 7 January to line running 5 kilometres west of following points: El Arish - Road Junction 882890 - Road Junction 882865 - Road Junction 903769 - Road Junction near Saint Catherine Monastery (Mount Sinai) - north of El Tor 859628. Some additional unimportant areas between these road junctions would also have been vacated. I said this line was not acceptable according to my instructions. Discussion also covered following points. 4. He said he had to keep these road junctions to permit supply convoys to go overland to Sharm El Shaikh and Tirana. I said that those places could be supplied by sea. Further that line agreed to in New York was from El Arish south-eastwards to armistice demarcation line near Elamh. 5. He said they had to keep El Tor because fresh water supply for Sharm El Shaikh and Tirana came from there. I said I was instructed to occupy El Tor but could agree

to let Israelis draw water from El Tor as long as they held the two places.

6. I also said UNEF needed El Arish as advance base early as possible - El Arish airfield is south of town, not west, and he had no instructions to vacate it before the town. I said Unations expected Israelis would vacate El Arish not more than a week after "first phase" line was reached, i.e. by 13 January. 7. He said he would report all these requirements to Ben Gurion. 8. He proposed that Israelis would withdraw along El Arish road and by 31 December to Mazar Station 842928 ^{and} by noon 6 January to Masaid Station 5 kilometres west of El Arish. As this was in accordance with your 97 I accepted. 9. UNEF could also occupy road junction 880803 on Mitla Pass Road - but I did not accept this pending settlement of points mentioned in paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 above. 10. Tomorrow I will ask if he has further and more satisfactory proposals but I think some more pressure from your end will be ~~needed~~ needed before agreement set forth in your 97 is implemented by Israeli forces. Israelis may propose they be allowed to send road convoys to Sharm El Shaikh and Tirana. If you wish to agree to this I see no technical difficulty .

OUTGOING CODE CABLE

TO: BURNS CAIRO
FROM: SECRETARY GENERAL
DATE: 6 DECEMBER 1956
NUMBER: 249

Reur 233. Questions of general functions UNEF and movement Egyptian troops are outside the area of discussion between Israeli officers and yourself and should be dealt with on the diplomatic level. If Dayan resumes question position Egyptian troops, state that matter is outside your terms of reference and rests with Headquarters. In light above facts, do not see any reason to have a conference with Ben Gurion. All questions covering deployment of UN Forces in areas facing Israeli troops should be dealt with on the army level.

The Assembly did not and could not deal with this subject since any such action would have involved question Egyptian rights.

For your personal information only repeat only I have been in consultation with Fawzi on the practical aspects of the separation of Egyptian and Israeli forces.

OUTGOING CODE CABLE

TO : BURNS, BALLAH
FROM : SECRETARY GENERAL
DATE : 20 DECEMBER 1956
NUMBER :

RE YOUR 369 ISRAELI PROPOSALS FOR THE WITHDRAWAL UNACCEPTABLE STOP
HAVE MET WITH THE ISRAELI REPRESENTATIVE AND INFORMED HIM THAT THE
PROPOSED ISRAELI SCHEDULE OF WITHDRAWAL WHICH THUS FAR HAS NO COMPLETION
DATE IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE INTENTION OF THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND IS UNSATISFACTORY STOP THE ISRAELI REPRESENTATIVE
HAS INFORMED HIS GOVERNMENT TO THIS EFFECT STOP CONCERNING YOUR
POINT SEVEN I DRAW YOUR ATTENTION TO THE WISH THAT COMMA SINCE THE
ISRAELIS MUST BE PRESSED TO WITHDRAW WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY TO THE
ARMISTICE LINE COMMA IT MAY BE INADVISABLE TO MENTION ANY LIMITED
WITHDRAWAL LINES EVEN WITH TIME MARGIN STOP I HAVE ASSURED HERE
(ON YOUR BEHALF) THAT DESPITE THE DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY UNEF IN ITS
ADVANCE INTO THE SINAI PENINSULA COMMA RESULTING FROM MINEFIELDS AND
DESTROYED ROADS COMMA SOME LIMITATION IN COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPORT
COMMA AND THE NATURE OF THE TERRAIN COMMA THE FORCE IS PREPARED TO
MOVE FORWARD AT WHATEVER PACE MAY BE REQUIRED BY/ A RAPID ISRAELI
WITHDRAWAL BEHIND THE ARMISTICE LINES STOP I HOPE YOU WILL INJECT
THIS SPIRIT IN YOUR TROOPS STOP

OUTGOING CODE CABLE

HIGHEST PRIORITY

TO: Burns
 FROM: Secretary-General
 DATE: 27 December 1956
 NUMBER:

One Israeli Representative today informed us that Dayan contends that withdrawal proposal presented by him to you on 26 December meets condition of withdrawal from "greater part of Sinai" and nothing in Israeli hands west of El Arish promised in arrangement described to you in our 97. We are further informed that Dayan will communicate with you for confirmation of the accuracy his contention. On purely mathematical basis, Dayan's contention is true in sense that slightly more than half of Sinai will have been evacuated. But this is very much less than the clear indication given to us by the Israeli Representative in his interpretation of the proposal who made such statements as following: by early days of January the Israelis "would dot dot dot be holding the El Arish - Aghalla line and presumably the places down south. (By which he meant Sharm al Shaikh and Tirana.) The actual position does not go longitudinally." Again, "It does leave a part, but not a great part, of Sinai still unaffected."

Two. In sum, the Israeli Representative gave clear indication that by end of first week in January Israelis would remain in Sinai only in northeast area between El Arish and Gaza Strip and in the two strategic points in south. Suggestion that Israelis in Sharm al Shaikh and Tirana be supplied by sea rather than overland came from Israeli Representative and not from us.

Three. El Tor, in any case, being west of El Arish must be evacuated under their commitment. Must point out with reference to para. 5 your 436 that for obvious reasons UNEF cannot be in position of affording any repeat any service to forces in occupation of Egyptian territory.

Four. Reference para. 3 your 436 are lines between road junctions cited straight lines or are there eastward indentations? In this regard what is significance your reference this paragraph to "additional unimportant areas" being vacated?

Five. Line to be followed in response to Dayan is to insist on fulfillment in both letter and spirit of proposal submitted to us by Israeli Representative as conveyed to you in our 97, which at minimum in first week of January should allow UNEF entrance into central-eastern Sinai up to Armistice line.

INCOMING CODE CABLE

TO: BUNCHE
FROM: BURNS CAIRO
DATE: 11 DECEMBER 1956
NUMBER: UNEF 290

Reur 283. I have following comments. 1. I hope Israelis will give assurance they will not damage any repeat any roads in Sinai not only the two roads in the North. 2. Israeli military have now given apparently complete information regarding mines laid in areas West of their present positions, i.e. line 50 kms East of Canal.

New subject. Reur 267. I have proposed to Israeli military the sending of an advance party to El Arish. I am informed by British that formation of beach at El Arish is such that vehicles cannot be landed from landing craft. Am making further enquiries regarding possibility of supply of stores from sea.

New subject. Re UNEF-203. After long delay Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs replied yesterday that they are willing to have an observer visit oilfield at Aas Sudr taking him there in Israeli plane. I am making arrangements for this. As to El Balayim they say they think it unnecessary to send observer there as Italians owning oilfield have stationed their armed guards there by arrangement and place has been visited by member Italian Embassy. In my reply I am requesting that arrangements also be made for our observer visit El Balayim.

INCOMING CODE CABLE

TO: BUNCHE
FROM: BURNS, BALLAH
DATE: 18 JANUARY 1957 1011 EST
NUMBER: UNEF 157

1. Reur 97. Met Dayan 0800Z today Lydda. Line to which he proposes to withdraw, defining Sharm El Shaikh area and strip on the Western Coast of Gulf of Aqaba is as follows: MR 895586 repeat 895586 (no change) to 920618 to 085755 (Palestine Grid) to 097862 to 120896 to 137906 (on International Frontier). This retains the strip of territory roughly 25 Kms wide parallel to coast of the Gulf of Aqaba and is necessary according to Dayan in order to keep road communication between Elath and Sharm El Shaikh. I pointed out that this did not repeat not appear to be in accord with the statement of Representative of Israel as given para 1 your 97. He said as far as he knew it had never been intended to relinquish road communication with Sharm El Shaikh and in any case he could not withdraw beyond the line indicated without further instructions from his Government.

2. From MR/^{last} mentioned Israel forces would withdraw beyond International Frontier as far as Rafah. Here there was a complication introduced by fact that large Egyptian Army Camp extended both sides of Frontier. He stated no troops would be West of Frontier except a checkpoint at road junction 075070.

3. He said he thought Israeli troops should remain in this camp East of Frontier until disposition of Gaza Strip was settled. If the settlement were that UNEF forces would occupy strip "There would be no question". This implied that if Egyptian forces were likely to return Israelis would destroy the camp. He said if withdrawal East of the Frontier were enforced now he would be obliged to give orders for destruction of the camp. In view of what took place in El Arish, concerning

which separate message follows, I thought it very likely he would carry out this threat. As it would be most important for UNEF to have this accomodation I did not press the matter further but said I would report to Secretary General and at same time pointed out that demolitions of barracks had been carried out at El Arish just before withdrawal contrary to Israeli Governments assurances. More of this message in UNEF 158.

INCOMING CODE CABLE

TO: BUNCHE
FROM: BURNS, BALLAH
DATE: 18 JANUARY 1957, 1014EST
NUMBER: UNEF 158

UNEF 157 continued.

4. What happened El Arish indicates gulf between what Eban promises and what Dayan does. As I read verbatim conversations from 12 to 20 December, Eban was evasive as to whether his promise of cessation of destruction included "Installations". Can you think of any sanctions that will prevent further destruction of barracks and military buildings?

5. The withdrawal of Israeli Forces and advance of UNEF to take effect 1000Z on 22 January.

INCOMING CODE CABLE

TO: BUNCHE
FROM: BURNS, BALLAH
DATE: 18 JANUARY 1957 1039EST
NUMBER: UNEF 159

1. Reur 97 para 3 and UNEF 118 para 7, following is report received from advance HQS UNEF EL Arish 1730Z 16 January.

2. 2 UNMOS heard many explosions on 14 January and when they passed camp area South of EL Arish on 16 January they found buildings levelled. Local inhabitants reported to UNMOS demolitions took place during last 4 to 5 days a engineer officer reports that while on 9 January he saw certain amount of damage in camp area, on 18 January he found the area 90 percent destroyed. He also reports that since the earlier reconnaissance there has been some demolitions including water tower and some buildings in area which was intended for UNEF Headquarters.

3. I am having a more complete report on the demolitions in the EL Arish area prepared and will forward it as soon as available.

INCOMING CODE CABLE

TO: BUNCHE
FROM: BURNS, BALLAH
DATE: 22 JANUARY 1957 1549EST
NUMBER: UNEF 205

1. Reur 158. In El Arish there are 150 regular police and 200 reserve police plus an additional 100 police for later depòoyment in Bir El Hasana repeat Bir El Hasana and El Nakhl repeat El Nakhl areas ; also 22 Army transport vehicles with 30 drivers placed there for conveying prisoners of war ; also 20 engineers for mine clearing.

2. Estimated about 250 engineers employed on repair of road and railway between El Qantara and El Arish.

3. 50 police at El Tor plus smaller detachment at Wadi Firan. Also police camel corps of about 100 believed encamped in vicinity Abu Rudeis. About 1 company of engineers each working Ismailia - El Auja road and Mitla Pass road.

4. Above gives to best of our knowledge the total of Egyptian Military Force East of the Canal, and it will be seen that they are keeping to the policy agreed upon i.e. only to return police normal to the area before hostilities plus the engineers required to work on repair of roads and communications.

5. "Police" referred to above are called "Frontier Force" by Egyptians but their functions and armament are those of police.

10 Dec. 56

RJ Buncha

3853

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UNEP
CAIRO

TO BURNS FROM BUNCHE STOP ~~YOUR LETTER TO YOUR UNEP 242~~ FOLLOWING IS FOR YOUR
 INFORMATION STOP *your of 7 December*
 ONE STOP ON BASIS ~~REPORT~~ *same date* SECRETARY GENERAL PRESENTED STRONG DEMARCHE
 TO ISRAELIS ON ~~THE~~ COMMA TO WHICH EBAN HAS REPLIED BY LETTER OF 10
 DECEMBER TO SECRETARY GENERAL READING ~~SEMI~~ COLON QUOTE I HAVE CONSULTED MY
 GOVERNMENT ON YOUR LETTER OF 7 DECEMBER COMMA 1956 COMMA AND AM NOW IN POSITION
 TO GIVE YOU THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ON OUR POLICY WITH RESPECT TO THE
 MATTERS WHICH YOU RAISE ~~SEMI~~ COLON ONE INSTRUCTIONS HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO AVOID
 ANY DAMAGE TO THE TWO ROADS IN THE NORTH OF THE PENINSULA WHICH GENERAL BURNS
 DESIGNATED TO GENERAL DAYAN AS THE NECESSARY LINE OF COMMUNICATION FOR THE
 EMERGENCY FORCE STOP YOU WILL APPRECIATE THAT IT IS NOT FEASIBLE FOR US TO
 REPAIR DAMAGE CAUSED DURING THE RECENT MILITARY OPERATIONS STOP TWO AT THE
 NEXT MEETING WITH GENERAL BURNS COMMA THE CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ISRAEL DEFENCE
 FORCES WILL BE IN A POSITION TO DISCUSS THE OTHER QUESTIONS RAISED IN YOUR
 LETTER COMMA INCLUDING THAT OF MINE STOP PARA IN THIS CONNECTION COMMA I MUST ADD
 THAT NO ACTS HAVE BEEN COMMITTED BY MY GOVERNMENT IN CONTRAVENTION OF THE
 CEASEFIRE PROVISIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S RESOLUTION OF 2 NOVEMBER COMMA
 1956 STOP UNQUOTE STOP
 TWO STOP IN PURSUANCE OF SECRETARY GENERAL'S INSTRUCTIONS I SAW EBAN ON TENTH
 ABOUT UNSATISFACTORY NATURE HIS REPLY AND FOLLOWING IS TEXT MY NOTE TO SECRETARY
 GENERAL ON MEETING WITH EBAN ~~SEMI~~ COLON QUOTE ONE I HAVE TALKED WITH EBAN STOP

..//..

- 2 -

HE STARTED OFF BY SAYING THAT HE WAS COMING TO SEE ME IN ANY CASE COMMA TO ASK ME TO INFORM YOU THAT HE WAS AWAITING TODAY A MESSAGE FROM BG ON THE NEXT PHASE OF THE WITHDRAWAL STOP ON THE STRENGTH OF THIS MESSAGE COMMA THE ISRAELIS WOULD WISH TO HAVE A MEETING WITH YOU TOMORROW COMMA TUESDAY THE 11TH STOP EBAN WOULD PREFER SOME TIME AFTER FOUR TOMORROW AFTERNOON COMMA SINCE HE HAS A NOON ENGAGEMENT IN WASHINGTON STOP TWO STOP ON THE QUESTION OF HIS LETTER TO YOU OF 10 DECEMBER COMMA EBAN FULLY AGREED THAT IT WAS GREATLY INADEQUATE AND THAT IT WOULD BE UNDESIRABLE FOR SUCH A LETTER TO REACH THE ASSEMBLY STOP HE ASSERTED THAT NO MORE MINING OR ROAD DESTRUCTION WAS NOW GOING ON AND THAT THEY HAD NO INTENTION OF IMPEDING THE ADVANCE OF UNEF STOP HE READILY ADMITTED THAT HIS LETTER FELL FAR SHORT OF SAYING THIS COMMA AND PROMISED TO HAVE A SUPPLEMENTAL LETTER TO THIS EFFECT WHEN HE COMES TO THE MEETING WITH YOU TOMORROW STOP UNQUOTE MESSAGE ENDS

BUNCHE