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Middle East / Suez story - 27

12 - 18 March 57

- Statement by a spokesman for the Sec.-Gen.
on the Advisory Committee on UNEF meeting
- Notes for Advisory Committee meeting.

A spokesman for the Secretary-General made the following statement today:

"At a meeting of The Advisory Committee on UNEF held 12 March, members of The Committee drew attention to a report in a New York newspaper purporting to be an account of discussions at The Committee's meeting on 11 March.

Rel the *considered*
Members of The Committee ~~agreed~~ that this account was inaccurate and misleading, and authorized the Secretary-General to have this press communique issued, including a statement to the effect that there was no disagreement ⁱⁿ between members of The Advisory Committee regarding ~~the~~ questions which had been discussed ~~on~~ ^{on 11 March.}

"The spokesman for the Secretary-General added that the meetings of The Advisory Committee are closed meetings.

^{were}
"If at any time it ~~was~~ thought to be desirable for a statement to be made on the proceedings of an Advisory Committee meeting it will, by agreement with the Committee's members, be made by or on behalf of the Secretary-General."

Notes for Advisory Committee

Meeting

16 March 1957

Since our last meeting two days ago, we have received the following information from Dr. Bunche and General Burns. I might point out that Dr. Bunche and General Burns have been in Gaza since Thursday and the information they have presented does not reflect any further contacts with high officials in Cairo beyond those reported at the last meeting.

As for the situation in Gaza, they report that General Abdel Latif, newly appointed administrative Governor of Gaza Strip, arrived along with Brigadier Helmy at 16.40Z on Thursday 14 March. On Friday at 1400Z, Brigadier Helmy and Dr. Bunche and General Burns held a conference in which the principal subject was the question of mutual accommodations for UNEF and Egyptian personnel in Gaza. It was agreed that the Egyptian officials would assist in securing new quarters for the UNEF while the Egyptian personnel would take over the building which had been occupied for several days by UNEF.

The question of the movement into the Strip from El Arish was also taken up, and it was agreed that joint Egyptian-UNEF posts would be created to check such movement. The Egyptians would check civilian vehicles and UNEF all the UN vehicles as required.

Burns and Bunche have indicated that the number of UNEF troops was spread too thinly along the Armistice Line, and the arrangements contemplated include measures to man the Armistice Line to the maximum degree in the shortest possible time.

Bunche and Burns are aiming to keep the situation in low key.

FURTHER
No information has so far been received from Bunche and Burns regarding Egyptian arrangements in the Gaza Strip.

18 March 1957

Since our last meeting Saturday I have received further information from Dr. Bunche and General Burns regarding the situation in the Gaza Strip. They indicate that General Latif has appointed Major Wahab as "Governor of the Gaza City area" and that Major Wahab, in a meeting with District Officers yesterday, requested that all unlicensed arms be collected from the populace and turned into police stations by Tuesday. UNEF, in its first days in Gaza, confiscated some arms found on civilians but has attempted no general police actions of this kind. UNEF internal security activities have been confined to guard and check post duty and patrolling, with a view mainly to prevention of mob disorders, incitement to violence and looting. UNEF has not exercised police authority in a broad and general sense. Since entry of UNEF latter function has been performed in a spotty fashion as among the several communities by Palestine police.

They estimate that General Latif's administrative staff consists of seven or eight Colonels, Lieutenant Colonels, and Majors. Helmy's liaison staff consists of five or six officers. The Mixed Armistice Commission has two officers. Egyptian military police, clerks, and signal personnel seem to total between fifty and one hundred

I have informed Dr. Bunche and General Burns regarding our views on the question of internal security. They have replied that in their joint view this is a matter for discussion between General Nasser and myself.

Dr. Bunche has also reported to me on a meeting that he has had with Brigadier Gohar which turned on some of the questions on which the Egyptian Government would seek clarification during my talks. These questions

include:

- a. UNEF deployment on both repeat both sides of the demarcation line;
- b. Function of the UNEF along the line and specifically questions of authority of UNEF to fire and make arrests in instances of illegal crossings of the line.
- b. Observance of articles 7 and 8 of the General Armistice Agreement;
- d. Relation between UNTSO and UNEF involving supposition that General Burns would have a dual function;
- e. Where the armistice line ends and the Egyptian-Israeli frontier begins.

Brigadier Gohar also indicated that, subject to a joint desire, the question of UN assistance to the economic development of the Strip could be discussed, as well as such questions as the closed banks, and so forth.