

**Middle East - Suez story No
27-32: Middle East - Suez
story No 27-32 - 80**

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Middle East / Suez story - 32

20-31 Dec. 56 - 15 Feb. 57

Cordier, Andrew W. (Exec. Assist. to D.H.)

- 1 letter to G. Gripenberg (Represent of Finland to U.N.)
- 1 letter to G. Jarring (Represent of Sweden to U.N.)
- 4 code cables to D.H.
- 1 interoffice memorandum to Dir. of Personnel (U.N.)

same letter written to Mr. Jarring,
Permanent Representative of Sweden.

20 December 1956

Dear Mr. Gripenberg,

In connection with the United Nations responsibility for the clearance of the Suez Canal, it has become clear that it will be necessary to provide a small corps of civilian police to work with and supplement the Egyptian responsibility for the maintenance of security in connection with the clearance operation.

Since this has become a matter of great urgency, as it appears likely that United Nations clearance operations will begin Sunday, it would seem necessary to secure the initial personnel for the civilian police from the United Nations Emergency Force contingents. The Secretary-General feels that the two units that might most readily be in a position to provide such personnel would be the Swedish and Finnish units, since in the one case, they are exclusively volunteers, and in the other case, volunteers are included in the unit.

The Secretary-General would appreciate urgent communication with your Government securing its concurrence to an arrangement whereby a small number of the members of your Force in Egypt might volunteer for this service. They would be placed on the payroll of the United Nations with salaries corresponding to our Field Service Security personnel. They would be armed but would be dressed in civilian clothes, using a United Nations arm band, and finally, they would be re-transferred to their respective positions in the United Nations Emergency Force upon the completion of their service in the Canal clearance operation.

The Secretary-General would appreciate it if you would give your urgent attention to this matter.

Very sincerely yours,

His Excellency,
Mr. George de Gripenberg,
Permanent Representative of Finland to
the United Nations,
41 East 50th Street,
New York 22, N.Y.

Andrew W. Cordier,
Executive Assistant to
the Secretary-General

INCOMING CODE CABLE.

Received Uye.
9 40

47 12.

TO: SECRETARY GENERAL
FROM: GORDIER, CAIRO
DATE: 30 DECEMBER, 1956
NUMBER: UNEFCA 28

Must inform you in connexion with Katzins UNEFCA 27 that situation re British ships is not settled as described. Have difficulty just now in contacting parties. Katzin on way to Port Said. Meantime Wheeler has called me from there to say that government green light clearance is based upon acceptance 6 British ships, 1 to be phased out seven days, the second ten days and the other four thirteen days. This is deep contradiction with schedule mentioned cable 27. Last night Younis left word Katzin myself that OK was granted clearance. Katzin had every reason to believe clearance arrangements were is basis cable 27 which had already been cleared with Younis and was basis for discussion with President last night. A second message was sent from Younis office this morning confirming green light and Cairo newspapers carry headlines of beginning clearance. Younis unavailable. Is on way to Ismailia. Am arranging immediate meeting Wheeler Katzin and Younis at Port Said. I will take this matter up with President later today. If unable resolve question in detail hope nevertheless fgther clearance arrangements can continue.

You will have received copy Wheeler announcement which will be made at 1500 GMT today.

Underlined word as per copy received

INCOMING CODE CABLE

TO: SECRETARY GENERAL
FROM: CORDIER CAIRO
DATE: 30 DECEMBER 1956
NUMBER: UNEFCA 30

MY meeting with President arranged for 7 PM today.

INCOMING CODE CABLE.

TO: SECRETARY GENERAL
FROM: GORDIER, CAIRO
DATE: 31 DECEMBER 1956
NUMBER: UNIFCA 31

Have just returned from 4 hour conversation with the President, none others present. Conversation covered very wide field including all topics requested by you.

Talked over canal clearance questions in detail. He confirmed formally use of British ships which we will transmit to you in detail. He rechecked with me precise number of ships present at various intervals in January and agreed to the program of phaseout. In course conversation question arose regarding use 6 ships down canal. I told him that we would adhere to principle of the free use of equipment but in practice would not invoke it since in any case we are using the 4 German ships for that purpose. Very anxious have us get started and promised to look into the question of mine clearance south of El Cap. That task should have been completed either today or will be tomorrow.

Many other questions regarding canal including Younis Wheeler relationships, financing canal, workshops, communications and lighting and permanent settlement were discussed.

On question of civilian police he accepted principle of watch on ships under Wheelers direction but we agreed that such personnel should be integrated with crewyfs he made special point of complete separation UNIF from this form security which of course I fully endorsed as principle to which you strongly adhered. Personally believe^e that practical value watch might fade out within

month.

I presented strong case for Brazilian contingent and came back to subject repeatedly. He indicated that he would confer with his colleagues tomorrow and cable Fawzi. I keep fingers crossed but hope that his answer will be affirmative. Engaged in detailed discussion role UNEF in Sinai and Gaza. Also question future Palestine problem.

On question British French and Egyptian Jewish nationals had thorough discussion in which he recognized value of moderation.

He spoke repeatedly with high appreciation your work. He is strongly convinced of value of working through UN on all pending questions.

He analyzed American role during past two months in spirit of deep appreciation.

Will report much more fully upon return. Alf and I keep fingers crossed. Feel satisfied with results our mission. Plan leave Cairo Leary plane tomorrow afternoon. In Beirut overnight, leaving PAA for New York Tuesday morning. Warm regards.

* Underlined word as per copy

Chiffertelegram från UD till FN-representationen i New York
den 30 december 1956.

Dnr. 135. Edert chiffer 115. Urgent. Top secret från Cordier
to Hammarskjöld.

"Returned to Port Said last night to deal with your special request and other matters relating to beginning clearance. On special request Wheeler had ordered British to close down all wireless at moment when placed under his command and he had so informed Younis. However, he was also aware of the exception mentioned by you. This morning he is asking that this wireless also be closed down at once. New subject. Wheeler more pleased hour by hour with lifting power and strength his fleet. Seems surprised that fleet actually turned up in force. In light this strength and present still excessive British ships in Port Said have advised Wheeler and Katzin to cancel out two British lifting craft and two small French craft for use down stream. In any case two British craft one day out of Malta are now arriving and in my judgement special circumstances French offer do not present political problems. Wheeler deeply impressed low morale British crews and high morale salvors. He further indicated British ships generally manned by about three times too many crew members and seriously deficient in divers who are most needed. He believes British unwilling to present daily reports progress due mainly UN absence progress. Elimination Darlympe Fort Auquesne reduces crews by 300 to 750. Remaining rather evenly divided between salvage and supply crews. Visik Pol El Ballah very helpful. Will report upon return. Most urgent attention be given to supply clerical staff and code clerks both in El Ballah and Port Said. Attention should be given to quality and training. Much impressed with achievements of UNEF under most difficult circumstances. Think we can be proud of both operations UNEF and salvage. Now in Cairo with Stavropoulos Martineq-Cabanas and Robles. Latter two came with me this morning from Port Said. All of us including Wheeler

and Katzin have discussed question amendments resulting from Stavropoulos discussions and feel we can easily leave with them. Your 347 to Stavropoulos just received confirms our impression. Have requested meeting top level here. I am awaiting confirmation." - Detta telegram avsänt från Kairo 29/12 kl. 20.48.

Cabinet

c/o Swedish Mission.

Coded message for Cordier, Cairo

27 December 1956

From questions to British today it appears that Admiralty has on salvage fleet as liaison man one Mr. Podger who is said to communicate by "his personal radio" with Admiralty. They said he was fully briefed by Wheeler and was thought to report in agreement with him. I said to British that if such communication was maintained I feared the correct thing would be to ask them to leave tomorrow: Radio communication on ships under UN orders without UN control inconceivable especially in present context and for this use. However, I asked them not now to raise matter with Admiralty. British felt attempt to cut direct communication between ships "in Her Majesty's Navy" and Admiralty would create very strong reaction especially if coming on top of cutting down on anticipated use of British ships. Please find out from Wheeler exact situation and consult Stavropoulos Robles on international law aspect. I consider personally situation extremely embarrassing in relation Egyptians now that we know about it. Has not Wheeler undertaken to seal all ship radios? Does it not follow already for this reason that private transmitter cannot be used this way? Matter probably dynamite in both directions and we must somehow have it put in shape discreetly. Best way may be to try straighten it out through Wheeler as within his sphere of competence. Situation for national units in UNEF may provide argument and indication possible arrangement.

c/o Swedish Mission.

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UNITED NATIONS  NATIONS UNIES

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. J. A. C. Robertson,
Director of Personnel

FROM: Andrew W. Cordier,
Executive Assistant to the Secretary-General

SUBJECT: Arrangements for the United Nations Civilian
Watch in the Suez Canal

Date: 15 February 1957

FILE NO.: _____

SENDER'S TELEPHONE EXTENSION: _____

Pursuant to our conversation I wish to place on record the main outline of the arrangements established by the Secretary-General for the purpose of providing special security in connection with the United Nations responsibility for the clearance of the Suez Canal.

The Civilian Watch grew out of one aspect of a very long and extremely complex series of negotiations with the British Delegation and Government, on the one side, and the Egyptian Delegation and Government on the other. In the tense relations that existed pursuant to military action between the British and the Egyptians, the question of security for whatever participation there would be by British and French salvage ships serving under the UN flag became a critical issue. The Secretary-General finally arrived at a compromise solution by suggesting the setting up of a civilian watch on British and French ships, more limited in function than the British desired and more extensive than corresponded to the Egyptian wish. The principle of the civilian watch having been established, it was necessary to move with great dispatch toward the creation of such a unit.

The only available resource for personnel for the unit was, of course, the personnel of the United Nations Emergency Force. These men, however, were operating under arrangements in their own military establishments which were satisfactory to themselves and since there could be no question of compulsory assignment to the Civilian Watch, it was necessary to create conditions for their brief service of one month in the Watch which would be roughly comparable, at least financially, to their service in their own military units.

I might add that while the two governments approached on this matter, Sweden and Finland, agreed to the use of their personnel on a purely personal voluntary basis, top military leaders in each country felt that the arrangement was exceptional and showed some reluctance to carry through the arrangement. It was therefore proper and necessary to state urgently the conditions under which they would serve. These negotiations were carried on in the field between General Wheeler and General Burns on the one side and the Swedish and Finnish contingents on the other, and at Headquarters between the Secretary-General and the Executive Office on the one side and the Swedish and Finnish delegations on the other.

General Wheeler advised the Secretary-General as to the existing salary scales of the officers and men in the Swedish and Finnish contingents and recommended to the Secretary-General the salary scale that he felt would be desirable and necessary under the circumstances -- a salary scale comparable to the rates in their military contingents. After consultation with the Controller's Office, the Office of General Services, the Office of Personnel and Colonel Katzin's office, the Secretary-General agreed with General Wheeler's recommendations as to the salary scale.

The leader of the Watch was a Finnish major whose monthly salary and per diem from the Finnish Government while serving in UNEF totalled \$635.25. His overseas allowance from UNEF amounted to \$26.66, or a grand total of \$661.91 as compared to a total of \$700 for one month of service with the Civilian Watch.

The pay for the other officer and the three non-commissioned officers while serving with the Civilian Watch corresponded to the amounts they would have received had they remained in UNEF to the same approximate extent as in the case of the leader.

So far as the 60 men in the Watch were concerned, the Finns received per diem and overseas allowances from their Governments and UNEF totalling \$232.91; the Swedes received in total for service in UNEF an amount of \$213.40. Under the circumstances a monthly rate of \$225 per man was considered fair and equitable.

Since the officers and men would have received food and lodging without cost to themselves had they remained in the service of UNEF, it seemed necessary and appropriate, lacking these advantages, to provide them with a modest per diem as members of the Civilian Watch. A per diem was provided comparable to the per diem which had been approved for UN staff, including the Field Service staff serving in Egypt.

Volunteers were then secured on a personal basis. They were put in civilian clothes and placed under the direction of several officers of their corresponding units, who, likewise, were transferred to the Civilian Watch.

The plan had to be put into effect during the last several days of December and the first few days of January if it was to have any significance at all in meeting the needs, not only of the international political requirements, which were of a tense character, but also of the delicate practical requirements on the spot. The situation thus was completely sui generis and cannot be said to correspond to any other service in the United Nations establishment.

The Civilian Watch performed its mission successfully and was dissolved on 10 February.

cc. Mr. Turner
Mr. Vaughan
Mr. Katzin