

**Middle East - Suez story No  
33-35a: Middle East - Suez  
story No 33-35a - 1**

*HS L 179:115a*



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Middle East / Suez story - Nr. 33

(as put together by Dag Hammarskjöld  
and kept in his safe in his office, U.N. HQ)

7 June - 7 Aug. 56

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Middle East / Suez story - 33

7 June 56

Transcript of D. H.'s press conference  
held at U.N. HQ, New York.

L 179: 115a

TRANSCRIPT OF SECRETARY-GENERAL'S PRESS CONFERENCE  
HELD AT UN HEADQUARTERS ON THURSDAY, 7 JUNE 1956

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I have no introductory statement to make, ladies and gentlemen, and therefore I should like to invite you to proceed at once to put your questions and start the discussion.

QUESTION: By courtesy of Mr. Freuchen here, this may be designated as the \$64,000 question. When you returned from the Middle East, you intimated that on the broader issues of the Palestine case, beyond the armistice problems, you were open to the parties whenever they might be disposed to come to you. Do you feel that your position in this respect has changed following the meetings of the Security Council?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: To reply quite simply: No.

QUESTION: I wonder whether you could help to straighten out our thinking, in your capacity of Secretary-General, regarding certain tendencies that seem to have developed in the United Nations. What I am referring to specifically is this: More and more in the last two years, or perhaps two and a half, the Security Council has tended to adopt the doctrine of unanimity, evidently on the assumption that, unless a resolution which really says something is unanimous, it would be meaningless. The result, some people feel, is that the resolutions have become largely perfunctory; that they have skirted the basic issues, as this last one did when the Council seemed to have come to the brink of peace and then looked down and saw some horrible dissensions and shied away, because the doctrine of unanimity seemed to take precedence over everything else. From now on, would that affect other organs of the United Nations and would it continue to have an effect upon the Security Council itself?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Your question as to whether or not it will affect other organs is also a very easy one for me to answer, because I challenge the truth of your basic analysis. I do not think that you characterized the situation in the Security Council correctly, and therefore I do not think that there is

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a disease of any kind that can spread through the Organization. As far as the Security Council is concerned, there is no doctrine of unanimity which is so important, as you state, as to make people give up anything that they consider essential. I have seen no signs of that, and I think that any statement to that effect is unjust and unjustified. In this special case, I think you should remember that there is a time and a setting for everything. It is not necessarily true that a man does not hold a certain view because he does not express it on a particular occasion. For example, I may find it unwise to give a straight reply to a question you put, although I may have made up my mind on that point very firmly, and I may find it unwise because it is not the right time. If, in an operation like the one which you see in the Security Council, whether on this occasion or another occasion, some people feel that there is a line forward and that we should see how far we can go and other people feel that we should not go that far now, that does not necessarily mean a compromise with principle, and does not in any way necessarily mean giving up something, if the distance covered on the road is a distance which makes sense and is in the right direction.

I would say that, if you read the operative paragraphs of the Security Council resolution, you will find that it is quite a step in some respects, and definitely in the right direction. Whether or not you go one step further in the preamble is a question, if not of taste, at least of judgment. And if, in the name of unanimity, one takes, not the least common denominator, but an understanding attitude as to how far one should go in the elaboration of a thesis in a special resolution, I do not think that that is an unsound practice in any sense, or in any way a new practice.

To sum up what I am saying: I think that perhaps you should take a new look at the somewhat disturbed view which was reflected in your question and see whether there is not a more understanding and more constructive and more encouraging interpretation to be given to the phenomenon to which you have referred. At all events, I must say that I do not think that there is any doctrine of unanimity which is applied by any United Nations organ in the sense that people give up their convictions if they feel that it is definitely the right time to express those convictions.

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QUESTION: In your report to the Security Council, in Chapter VIII, "Conclusions", you stated that there is a general will to peace. Do you think that this statement still holds true after the speech of Ambassador Shukairy in which he said that the establishment of Israel, its membership in the United Nations and all other resolutions will have to be revoked?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I have no reason to comment on any specific statements made by any of the parties in the recent debates. As to my own statement I repeat it emphatically: I am firmly convinced of the will to peace of all the parties in the area. A will to peace is one thing; a will to peace-making on certain conditions, at a certain time, is necessarily another matter. Peace is a fact; peace-making is a legal process.

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QUESTION: Following that question, could we ask whether, in Syria, you heard substantially the same thing that we heard from Mr. Shukairy here?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: If you read the Middle Eastern press, if you listen to spokesmen, if you read, for example, a column by Joseph Alsop yesterday after having visited a refugee camp, I think that you will find one thing. There may be differences of expression, differences of tone and differences of choice of occasion to express views, but there are certain hard basic facts which are very much in people's minds, and those hard basic facts are very much the same as those which you get to hear about and read on all these various occasions. In that sense, I would say that substantive views expressed at the Security Council table should not be any surprise to you or any surprise to me. Basically, we have in the background the fact that we have 900,000 people at present who are outside the borders of Israel and who, until not too many years ago, were in other places. As you know, the refugees do represent the basic problem of the region in human terms and, for that reason also, necessarily partly in political terms. That basic fact is very much in everybody's mind in the region. It was very much in the air behind the words spoken here a few days ago.

QUESTION: The Security Council resolution asked you to continue your efforts. How would you envisage the continuation of your efforts?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I think you mean, first of all, in technical terms -- how I have to run it. In that respect I have nothing to add to what I said namely, that I do not think that this is a time when it would make very much sense to desert from my job here and to go to the region. On the other hand, I have a continuous contact not only with the representatives of the countries concerned here in New York, in America, in the UN, but also, to the extent necessary, with responsible people in the region. That is to say, the whole machinery necessary for the follow-up is there. You know that the previous discussions covered the ground which was not, so to say, fully mapped out in the way it should be fully mapped out. It covered the ground of full compliance with the Armistice Agreements, and there are assurances as to full compliance from all the parties concerned. What remain are questions of implementation. Such questions, in some cases, are quite complicated

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and will necessarily take some time. When I say that we covered a broader ground than was mapped out in detail it does mean that the ground is prepared for continued operation, continued discussion, continued negotiation, so as to take us closer and closer to full compliance, full implementation of the Armistice Agreements. That sets, so to say, the natural framework for the immediate efforts, and those immediate efforts have a solid basis in the preparatory work done while I was in the region.

What should be done and how things should be arranged at a somewhat later stage, when we, as I hope, reach full compliance, and when we, as we hope -- all of us, certainly, during all the time which has passed since I was in the region -- have managed to maintain quiet, is another matter which I find it a little bit difficult to go into both as to how to proceed and as to what ground to cover. I have my own ideas, but it is just one of those typical cases where I think that what I said to you about time and setting some time ago does apply. I do not think this is the time for me, nor the setting for me, in which to look beyond the area where the ground has been properly prepared already in the talks in April.

QUESTION: In your statement before the Security Council at its last meeting you spoke of certain differences which you hoped would not be permitted to harm the efforts on which the United Nations, in co-operation with the parties, had embarked. Am I to interpret this statement of yours as meaning that the meetings of the Security Council did not in any way enhance the efforts of your mission which you embarked upon in accordance with the resolution of 4 April?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: The Security Council development certainly had positive effects in a most desirable direction. I think that it could not leave any doubts in the mind of anybody who listened to the proceedings that the Security Council was behind not only the stand -- the result -- but also behind the philosophy of the report I put on the table. That is not only encouraging; it is definitely most helpful. The divergencies of views among the members of the Council which were reflected in the debate do not in any way mean reserves as to the report as such, as you may have noted. For that reason I feel that the ground which was, so to say, tentatively covered by me is now definitely covered in the sense that the Security Council has put its hallmark on the map I tried to produce. For that

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reason it has provided me with a firmer basis and background than we had before, and that definitely is helpful. It also indicates acceptance by the Security Council of -- I would say -- the expectations which are reflected in the report. I would not like to use the word "optimism" or the word "hope", and so on and so forth. They are all so faded and misused. I prefer to say "expectations" -- that is to say, the expectation that further progress can be made in the right direction, and not exactly at a turtle's pace.

On the other hand, you remember that in my own conclusions I said that a final settlement is probably far off. That specific point was not discussed by the Security Council as such, but certainly the debate between the parties, or the views expressed by the parties, did indicate that on several issues the stands are very far apart indeed. There are deep differences of view, as I said in what I stated, and I think that from that you draw the same conclusion that I draw, that is to say that with such deep differences of view held after such a long time it is necessary to recognize that the road towards acceptance on various sides of agreed solutions of some kind may be, and probably is, a long one.

Now what I wanted to say in my final words was that the fact that there may be a long road to travel in order to arrive at settlement does not in any way, and should not in any way, be permitted to discourage us in our immediate effort: nor should it be used by any party as an excuse not to co-operate with us. That is what I meant.

QUESTION: Do you feel the time has come when some effort should be made to try to find a settlement for the Korean question?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Has the time come for a settlement? Well, in the sense that I think that we should try to get away from these half-baked cakes which we have at so many points on the world map at present, I agree with you that the time certainly has come: in the sense that there is a very great urgency to come to grips with it. On the other hand, if you look at it as a practical, political proposition it is part, as you know, of a much bigger picture where other factors are, to say the least, not ripe for public debate at any rate. Under these circumstances I think

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that the concrete and practical reply to your question is that, desirable though it is, I do not see how we can consider the general setting to be such at present as to give any promise of immediate progress.

QUESTION: I was considering not a question of public debate but private negotiation such, perhaps, as has been carried on in the case of the Middle East, and I was wondering whether the controversy over the truce supervisors on one side has not tended rather to bring the urgency of the situation a little closer home.

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The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I would not venture any reply now to your question. I have no solid view on it, and under the circumstances it would not make much sense to express my views either way.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary-General, I wonder if you could tell us something now about your travel plans for the summer?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: They are still not quite settled. The firm point is that I have to be in Geneva for a fortnight in the latter half of July. On my way to Geneva I hope to sandwich in visits to a few old and a few new Members. Exactly how that will work out in detail I cannot tell. It is being discussed at present with delegations. As soon as I can give you definite information, and I guess that may be early next week, I will let you know.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary-General, could you tell us whether you believe that a settlement of the Palestine question should be on a "mutually acceptable" basis?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: There are various approaches to your terminology, Mr. Hamilton. As you well know, it lent itself to many interpretations, that very phrase. On one basis -- the interpretation given by Sir Pierson Dixon -- I think that the reply is obviously "yes". Sir Pierson Dixon, as you remember, said that he considered that it was obvious that there is no settlement unless there is an acceptance by the parties to the settlement. That was what he wanted to express. I think he himself said more or less that he considered it to be a truism, and it certainly is a truism.

Let me express it in somewhat different terms. I do not think that any settlement is lasting unless it is accepted by the parties to whom it is to apply.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary-General, I am P.G. Krishnayya of Krishnayya's Service in India. Does the information you received from United Nations observers in Kashmir indicate an increase, or possible increase, of tension along the cease-fire line? Are you satisfied with the present cease-fire arrangements in Kashmir and the co-operation of the parties, unlike in Palestine? What are the chances

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of political agreement in Kashmir on the basis of partition as suggested by our Prime Minister Pandit Nehru?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I think there is the \$64,000 question because it is a very broad one indeed. I would not like to go into the major political issue. I think that you will understand that this is one case where I must say "no comment". I think it would be improper for me at the present to do otherwise.

As to current developments, from the report of the observers and so on, there is nothing special in the picture which would give me any immediate reason for worry.

QUESTION: Mr. Hammarskjold, in your report on the cease-fire, there is a reservation on the question of self-defence which has disturbed quite a number of observers as to the exact definition of self-defence. I wonder if you would care to comment on this phase of self-defence; whether you would accept as self-defence a defensive method in keeping infiltrators from entering one land or the other and in driving them back to their borders -- whether driving them back to their borders would also be within the scope of self-defence, or whether they should limit themselves to keeping infiltrators and marauders out?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: As you know, the question you raise is one of the most delicate ones in international law. That is the reason why I have not gone beyond a few negative statements in the report. One of them is that retaliation is most certainly not self-defence in the technical sense of the word. Whether a certain action is justified as self-defence or not is something which under United Nations legislation can only be decided by the Security Council. I may have my views on the concrete cases, but they would not be binding on anybody. They would just be my private views, and from that point of view they may be of interest but not of significance.

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QUESTION: Mr. Secretary-General, may I come back to your answer to a previous question. You said there is no agreement possible unless both parties agree. That is a truism, as you said, but it is a far cry from both parties being satisfied. An agreement satisfactory to both parties is not necessarily -- let me put it the other way -- an agreement accepted by both parties is not necessarily satisfactory to both parties, so we come to this point which was raised before: Do you think it is necessary to have a peace settlement where both parties are actually satisfied?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I should like to broaden that question into a much wider field in human life. In your own agreements with your landlord or whoever it may be I guess it quite often happens after all to you, as it does happen everywhere, that you cannot reach the ideal, you cannot get what you really want. Social life is a life of compromise in the sense that you have to accept what is reasonable as an outcome of the balance of interests. In that sense, I think that the word "accepted", as I used it, is a proper term. If it is agreeable and is exactly what we want, then it is certainly most satisfactory. But I do not believe in that kind of settlement, practically ever, because we never get it that way.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary-General, do you think there would be any usefulness in bringing the Algerian situation to the Security Council? Would that be useful to any solution of the problem?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Please excuse me for not making any comments on it as matters are being discussed among representatives. At present I think my views should be kept in my pocket.

QUESTION: Sir, have there been any developments on your suggestion in Canada recently for a sort of high-level international civil service in technical assistance?

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The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I heard something about Mr. Lester Pearson's going into the matter in some statement, but I have not seen it. On that score let me be very frank and say that I am happy you brought it up because it happens to be my favourite child at present. I do believe in it strongly, and in fact I have been turning this thing over for half a year, just waiting for the time when I felt that I would be certain about my conclusions, and the time when I also felt that it might make sense to bring it out. You can conclude from what I say that it is something in which I really do believe and which I would like to see brought forward. But frankly, all I can say in reply to your question is that there seems to have been some kind of statement in Ottawa which I haven't seen yet.

QUESTION: Could I add one thing on this. Has there been any movement to bring more money into Technical Assistance through the United Nations? In other words, is there any trend towards channeling more through the United Nations and less through individual countries?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I could not speak about any trend, but I must say that there are quite a few persons of real significance in world politics at present who privately and directly have expressed their conviction that an increase in internationalization would represent a move in a very wise direction as matters stand.

QUESTION: May I go back to Palestine for one moment. Your report is based on the doctrine, endorsed I think by the Security Council, that the cease-fire is unconditional with only one exception, self-defence, and that is the definition of the Charter. In the Council meeting the representative of Syria introduced another exception, continuation of the work of the Israelis on the Jordan river. Do you consider this unilateral statement as endangering your doctrine?

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The SECRETARY-GENERAL: No, it does not; it is entirely covered by the report in fact. He did not introduce a new condition. He gave an interpretation to what he considered to be legitimate self-defence. Let us look at a hypothetical case, I hope purely hypothetical in all respects. A situation arises which one considers to be a situation which entitles him to action. That action must be considered then as self-defense but the matter necessarily is automatically brought to the Security Council under Article 51. The Security Council may say, "this is not self-defence", and then their word counts.

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Then if action is continued, they are up against a binding decision under Chapter VII. If, on the other hand, it is considered to be self-defence, then it is self-defence. That is to say, what was said by the representative in question did not introduce any new condition. It introduced a one-sided unilateral interpretation of the reserve of self-defence in a given hypothetical situation. That is what happened.

QUESTION: Mr. Hammarskjold, do you intend to visit Spain on your next trip to Europe?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: That would probably be impossible. I would not find any time for it. But I hope to do it later.

QUESTION: In a very recent speech of yours, you made some reference to SUNFED without directly mentioning the name. Would you care to clarify your views on the subject?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: It will take us very, very far. I think that SUNFED is one essential part in the system of the pattern of approaches which must be established. For that reason, of course, I hope for solid progress. But I do not believe it is any kind of panacea, any kind of clue to the whole problem. I repeat what I said: I believe it is a part, and a necessary part, of the pattern of organization, an organizational approach which we must establish. The one to which Mr. Carpenter referred, that is, my suggestion concerning an international civil service of a new type, is to my mind also such a part, although much less ripe for debate than SUNFED.

QUESTION: On the internationalization of economic aid, and so forth, is it not true that because of inconvertible currencies you do not necessarily get automatic internationalization by trying to put it through the United Nations? Do you not have a practical problem of inconvertible currencies which is perhaps more of a deterrent to the internationalization of aid than simply a decision of whether or not to try to put it through the United Nations?

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The SECRETARY-GENERAL: You are quite right. You see, I used the term "internationalization". I did not say we should have it. I meant the substance of internationalization when I talked about it. I will put it in this way: I think that we should aim at a development where both politically and financially the specific ties between such and such a country and such and such another country are not broken -- because they may very well exist and may likely prove quite useful -- but subordinated to a common aim, to get a little bit out of the donor-receiver relationship and the tie between one and another, which in a sense sometimes introduces irritating factors which are quite harmful. I mean "internationalization" in this very broad sense. Organizationally, I think that the United Nations can provide it in many cases, but you are quite right that the organizational solution is not a full reply if there are financial ties left, which just means that in the international club you have bilateral relationships.

QUESTION: And is it not likely that if you do get things put through the United Nations which are bilateral because of currency problems, you might transfer certain political problems to the economic field as it is being operated through the United Nations?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Yes, if you do not look out. But that is a problem, a complication, of which we are very well aware in the United Nations, and I think you can take it for granted that we are working consistently in the direction away from such bilateral elements introduced, so to say, through the back door. Partly they are very difficult to avoid, because we live in a world of rather inconvertible currencies, and dollars are a very scarce commodity, and so are Swiss francs and other international currencies, but we are working in that direction, and consistently.

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QUESTION: Mr. Hammarskjold, I am asking this question in full regard of your sensitiveness to commenting on the statements of national leaders. But this seems to me important and I will gamble on the question. The President of the United States yesterday, it seems to me, made some very far-reaching statements in regard to two areas which are of great interest to the United Nations, and that is the right of some nations to maintain what is known as an independent foreign policy and also the expansion implied in the exchange of personal diplomacy between two nations which are the pivotal nations in the United Nations. My question to you, if I can word it so as to gamble on a reply, would be this: Do you feel that this statement of the President of the United States is a heartening statement in the confines of the United Nations and that it may have far-reaching effects on the healthy progress of the United Nations in the future?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: You mean the two statements?

QUESTION: Since you have used the word "philosophy" in regard to your Armistice Agreements, I would use the words "the philosophy" behind these statements, rather than the national aspect of the statements; the international philosophy implied in it.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I think that the basic international philosophy reflected in it, first of all, could not have been any surprise to anybody who knows the general approach of the President. It was inspired by the very great respect for the judgement of a country as to what is the best for that country. I consider such an attitude as reflected in what he said to be basic to the whole United Nations approach, and for that reason there is very deep harmony between what the President said and what is the recognition of every country's right and every people's right to choose its own way, which is, I think, the very cornerstone of United Nations operations.

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QUESTION: I would like to press this point in regard to its impact upon the future thinking of the United Nations. Do you feel that the United Nations might well regard this statement with optimism as to the future, after a decade of great pessimism, in the very opposite philosophy?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Should we not let it be at what I said, that is to say, that it certainly is in deep harmony with what I understand to be United Nations philosophy, and I would not go into any further judgement.

QUESTION: I gather that your aim now is for full implementation of the Armistice Agreements. Would that include what I would call corollary points that were not covered because they were not foreseen at that time, like the blockade of the Suez or other things which we may call irritants? Would you aim at solving those problems too as part of the stabilization of the situation in the Middle East?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I think that in a long haul operation of this type it is obvious that nobody starts out with excluding anything which is essential to the solution of the problem. Another thing is that you must always argue and plan in stages, and to what stage, and what special time in the long haul operation, points to which you refer belong is something I would not like to take up or to decide here and now. I think it is a little bit sterile because there is so much that has to be done in this tidying up operation, which is close at hand, which is duly prepared, and so on. For that reason I stick to what I can see, what is, so to say, within reach, within the grasp. That is my reply. Beyond that, however, I repeat what I said: nobody approaching this problem is, in my view, entitled to exclude any of the causes of friction from his thinking as to the future.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary-General, you say that there is so much to be done, and certainly there is. We have heard so much about politics and amendments and explanations of vote, and so on. But 900,000 refugees are sitting there and suffering every day. They seem to be forgotten and we never hear anybody in the Press say anything about it. Why is it that they are not put forward before anything else. We are handling people there. The Suez Canal and all those things represent money, but those are people. (more)

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I happen to feel very much the way you do, Dr. Freuchen. The reason why they are not put forward is that they are tied up with the so-called main issues, and you know that all the parties, when they come to the main issues in this conflict, are inclined, and for good reason, to take an approach which is determined by long-term political considerations; that is to say, the humanitarian aspect may be quite as close to their hearts as it is to yours, and certainly to mine, and all the same they may find that they cannot bring this issue up for public debate, or with any kind of pressure, without bringing up other issues at the same time, because they would not get anywhere and they do not find that this is the time to bring them up. It is a long story, but really it is one of those cases where a clash between the humanitarian viewpoint and political planning is obvious, and I would not exculpate any of us or any of those concerned, certainly not myself. I feel unhappy about the fact that we cannot in the United Nations do more for them either practically -- partly because of a shortage of funds -- and politically, because of the way in which this question is linked up with other problems which we must have just as much in view in the attempt to get somewhere, on the whole, in the region.

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QUESTION: Recently a group of citizens of Connecticut wrote a letter to Mr. Mao Tse-tung requesting his efforts to release Mr. Downey. I wonder if you have any comment upon that letter and if you have heard anything from Peiping since we had our last seance on 11 May?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: No, I have not.

QUESTION: May I refer you to this statement made by Mr. Shukairy:

"When sovereignty is claimed, a reminder becomes imperative.

It is common knowledge that Palestine is nothing but southern Syria."

Do you feel that this and other statements made before the Security Council -- the question of Israeli sovereignty and the question of territorial borders and of the territory itself -- were widened and broadened as an issue?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I think that we should be a little bit careful in our analysis and comments on statements which are made in the course of debate. That does not in any way mean that I either wish, by implication, to approve of or pass any judgement in the opposite direction on those statements. It is not, from my point of view, something which I feel that I should go into in that way. However, if we look at the question from the point of view of substance, I think you know the legislative history of this problem; you know the character of the Armistice demarcation lines; you know the legal implications of the settlements on roads, and so on. Whether, in the light of that, a statement of the kind made broadened the issues or not is a long story. In some respects it did -- in the respect, for example, that it might be read as implying certain substantive claims; they certainly go beyond the Armistice Agreements because there are no such things in them.

In other respects, as to the legal character of this and that kind of settlement in the past, they may not go beyond what is, so to say, warranted by legislative history. However, I would not like to make those distinctions here and now. It would take me too far and I think it would be fruitless.

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QUESTION: You appointed just recently a number of new observers for Palestine -- I think they came from the Scandinavian countries and Australia. Is there any rule with regard to where these observers come from? Are certain areas of the world excluded in the provision of these observers?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: No, there is no area excluded at all. Partly it has developed along more or less traditional lines; partly, as in this case, it seemed obvious that it was sensible to address, in the first place, countries which were, so to say, as disconnected as possible from the controversial issues in the region in the general sense of the word, and that is the reason why they were chosen from countries which were as far away from the burning issues as any country could possibly be.

QUESTION: There are no Asian observers, are there?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: For the present, no; but there is no limit in principle at all.

QUESTION: May I ask another extensive question? On what do you think a Palestine settlement might be based? Frankly, do you think that it would be on the 1947 partition resolution?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Your question is certainly very pertinent, but it may be a very good case for me to say: Let us discuss that problem on the day that we have to discuss it.

QUESTION: May I inquire whether you feel that the UN observation stations at the Gaza frontier are sufficient to cope with the present situation, and also whether they have already been manned?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: General Burns' and my conclusion was that they are sufficient in number at present. There are a few gaps left. I do not think that the Australians have come yet, but elsewhere they are manned.

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QUESTION: In your report you stated that the solution for some outstanding problems should be found in unilateral actions by either party. Would you care to elaborate on this point?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I would not care to elaborate because I think that would be more embarrassing than helpful to the Governments concerned, but I think I may say one very general thing, and that is that I think it would be a very good idea if we could get a somewhat lower tone in the public approach to these problems. It is also a question of unilateral action. It does not raise any question of principle, but it certainly would be more helpful as a demonstration of the peaceful intentions -- I think that was my phrase in the report -- of which I am convinced.

QUESTION: Do you consider it likely that, in the forthcoming meetings of the Economic and Social Council, some resolution might materialize which would enhance the prospects for a new world economic agency on the lines suggested by Mr. Pinaud and/or one for international civil service?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: You know that ECOSOC is a very prudent organ. It does not jump; it makes more solid progress. For that reason I am sure that it will take a careful look at the Pinaud proposals, and possibly also this other proposal. I would, however, be very surprised if it were to jump to any conclusions. It is difficult to anticipate, but it may be that if it feels that the debate itself does not give a full picture of what is at stake and what can be done, it would ask for some kind of study to be made by the Secretariat or some other people. At any rate, I do not think that there is any reason to expect progress beyond such a point. These are long stories. After all, you know the time it has taken from the first 8 December proposal of President Eisenhower to reach the point where we now are with regard to atomic energy, and these other agencies being discussed by Mr. Pinaud and, in slightly different terms in some respects, by me, certainly are just as difficult to envisage and develop. For that reason, the first stage is obviously one of exploration, and I do not think that we are likely to go beyond that, if we find time to go into it.

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QUESTION: How soon do you expect to make your first report to the Security Council on your continuing good offices?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I did not quite get your point.

QUESTION: The resolution adopted the other day says that you should continue your good offices and report to the Council as appropriate. How soon do you think you will be making your report?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: That depends on the progress -- or the lack of progress -- because failure and success may call for an appropriate report.

QUESTION: This is a question that relates to the very serious business of keeping track of money. The General Assembly and, I think, other organs outside the General Assembly have talked in terms of a contribution to an international economic development fund from the savings in the reduction of armaments. I believe the Soviet Union has announced an enormous cut in its military budget, and Congress here is contemplating an enormous cut. Who is going to keep track of the money they save, and how is the UN going to collect this amount which has been set aside by a moral recommendation of the General Assembly of the United Nations? It seems to me that somebody owes this Organization an awful lot of money. I do not insist that it be paid now, but there should be some sort of accounting. For instance, you, as the Secretary-General, might demand or might request that you be notified, under that resolution, as to when these people are putting away some money that morally does not belong to them any more. The tone is not intended to conceal the seriousness of my question. I know that the money will come here eventually, but I am wondering what mental processes are being engaged in collecting that money.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Well, you know it is for the legislators to live up to their own commitments, and it is for them to keep track of where and how they spend money inside the budget. It will require decisions by legislative bodies in all sorts of countries and by the Governments in all sorts

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of countries in implementation of what moral undertakings they may consider themselves as having given here. I do not think it is for me to be a watchdog in that respect, but I guess that the countries in question may be reminded by those who expect to get the money.

The Press Conference rose at 11.50 a.m.

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