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2 Statements by D.H. before the U.N
Security Council.

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Press Release SG/513
30 October 1956

STATEMENT BY SECRETARY-GENERAL DAG HAMMARSKJOLD ON THE PALESTINE QUESTION
BEFORE THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL, TUESDAY MORNING, 30 OCTOBER 1956

I am sorry that time has not permitted me to prepare a report on information received from the Chief of Staff. I have felt, however, that the Security Council might wish to be informed, orally, of the main points of certain messages received from him.

On 30 October, at 0217 local time, the Chief of Staff transmitted to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel a communication requesting the withdrawal of troops and a cease-fire. The substance of that communication is rendered in a cablegram from the Chief of Staff, as follows:

"Having received confirmation of broadcast reports that Israeli troops had crossed international frontier and were occupying positions in Sinai, I pointed out that this contravenes the General Armistice Agreement, article II, paragraph 2; also the Security Council cease-fire order of 11 August 1949. I requested the Government to withdraw the troops to Israel territory as soon as possible, the exact time to be arranged after consultation. I also requested a cease-fire to take effect at 1200 local time, the 30th of October. I also stated that I was forwarding a similar proposal to Egypt informing them of our request for withdrawal of Israeli troops."

In his message to the Foreign Minister of Egypt, the Chief of Staff stated that he had requested the withdrawal of Israeli troops and asked concurrence by Egypt to a cease-fire at 1200 local time on 30 October. The request was further made of the Government of Egypt to desist from all hostile acts, as required by article II, paragraph 2, of the General Armistice Agreement. This communication was delivered in Cairo at 0315 local time.

So far, I have no information concerning the replies, if any, made by the Governments of Israel and Egypt.

(more)

I have also received from the Chief of Staff a communication stating that he was informed on 29 October, at 1900 local time, that a United Nations military observer and a radio officer were expelled from El Auja on the same date at 1530 local time. A formal protest was lodged.

The Chief of Staff has further stated that the Chairman of the Egyptian-Israel Mixed Armistice Commission was informed that the demilitarized zone under Israel control had been mined. Obviously, access to certain observation posts in the region is not possible at present.

Finally, I should like to remind the Security Council that, in line with what has already been reported to the Council, it has not been possible for the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization to investigate any of the incidents which preceded the events of yesterday.

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Press Release SG/514
31 October 1956

STATEMENT BY SECRETARY-GENERAL DAG HAMMARSKJOLD

AT UN SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING, WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, 31 OCTOBER 1956

Yesterday morning -- on the basis of the information then available -- I would have used my right to call for an immediate meeting of the Security Council, had not the United States Government in the course of the night taken the initiative.

Yesterday afternoon -- on the basis of reports of the Anglo/French ultimatum to Egypt -- I would have acted likewise, had not the substance of the matter already been under consideration as one, new aspect of the item proposed by the United States.

This morning, under my special mandate from the Security Council which still is formally valid, I would have directed an appeal to the Governments of Israel and Egypt to the effect of the second draft resolution of yesterday, had not the most recent developments rendered my mandate and such an initiative pointless.

This afternoon I wish to make the following declaration: The principles of the Charter are, by far, greater than the Organization in which they are embodied, and the aims which they are to safeguard are holier than the policies of any single nation or people. As a servant of the Organization the Secretary-General has the duty to maintain his usefulness by avoiding public stands on conflicts between Member Nations unless and until such an action might help to resolve the conflict. However, the discretion and impartiality thus imposed on the Secretary-General by the character of his immediate task, may not degenerate into a policy of expediency. He must also be a servant of the principles of the Charter, and its aims must ultimately determine what for him is right and wrong. For that he must stand. A Secretary-General cannot serve on any other assumption than that -- within the necessary limits of human frailty and honest differences of opinion -- all Member Nations honour their pledge to observe all articles of the Charter. He should also be able to assume that those organs which are charged with the task of upholding the Charter, will be in a position to fulfill their task.

The bearing of what I have just said must be obvious to all without any elaboration from my side. Were the Members to consider that another view of the duties of the Secretary-General than the one here stated would better serve the interests of the Organization, it is their obvious right to act accordingly.

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