

# Middle East - Advisory Committee on UNEF - verbatim records of meetings: Mi...

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Middle East

20 Nov. 56 (4 p.m.)

Meeting of Advisory Committee on UNEF

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STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

## MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON UNEF

(Held in the Secretary-General's Conference Room on  
20 November 1956 at 4 p.m.)

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Since our discussion this morning, gentlemen, I have had discussions concurrently with the Foreign Minister of Egypt, Dr. Fawzi, and with the Foreign Minister of the United Kingdom, Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. I have not had time to have direct talks with any others, but I think that those who are interested have been kept informed indirectly. From that, it has emerged that the alternative I had in mind this morning -- that is to say, to cut out the second and third annexes -- if preferable on both sides, given the circumstances as they are and provided that there is a clear statement in the beginning, as I said, that the Advisory Committee, basing itself on the approval of my report, recommended that I go on; that is to say, there is no ambiguity. We certainly do not leave what has happened out of the picture, but on the other hand, there is no need to bring it into the picture because this is not a matter of public debate. Constitutionally, they consider the situation quite clear because the Advisory Committee, plus the Secretary-General, was certainly entitled to go ahead. There is no need to get a confirmation in that respect. That led, however, to a discussion of another matter, and that was the question whether or not we should say anything covering the substance in the report, or say anything covering the substance of the old Annex 2. You remember that there was a paragraph in the previous text which covered part of the substance in a kind of descriptive way. In the text now distributed to you in the second draft, there is another paragraph at the bottom of page 3 which is a redraft of the same kind.

For the same purpose, the situation, however, seems to me now to be that it is most likely that the parties would prefer, both of them, not to have that at all -- that is to say, to make this a clean report, going straight from the old Annex 1 and not saying anything of the rest. There is no misunderstanding as to the substance. Both sides know perfectly well what this is all about and what the legal situation is and what the de facto situation must be. They feel, on the whole, that any invitations to a more or less uninformed discussion of this can, in this tense and important situation, only be of doubtful value.

(The Secretary-General)

I have not had the final word from the two sides as to how they look at this final paragraph on page 3. I have said myself that, as the one responsible for the report, I can leave it out. From my point of view it does not matter. If I have it, it is only because there is an interest in it. It is not because I need it as the one reporting. That is to say, I would like you to run over it quickly because it is a short document. I should like you to run over it quickly, this main report, as it would look, remembering that there is a question mark for the final paragraph on page 3, a question mark which, I think, the parties should be left to resolve.

As to the Annex, there is one thing I would point out. There is no difficulty from either side to cut out the words "of units" in the third preambular paragraph, the suggestion made by Mr. Pearson. It is in brackets here. It can just be taken out.

Mr. MIR KHAN (Pakistan): I am ready to make an observation.

From the exchange of Communications with my Government, Mr. Secretary-General, I still feel that they might -- I am not going to object to this at all -- seek clarifications or they might have preferred a little clarification on the formulation of the advanced units of the force because the only references I find to it are on the first page. It states:

"At the end of the exchange, he (the Secretary-General) gave to the Advisory Committee a full account of the interpretations given. Approving these interpretations, the Advisory Committee recommended that the Secretary-General should proceed to start the transfer of the United Nations Emergency Force."

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Mind you, that does not involve any approval on the composition or anything. It was a note taken of the fact that we had both reserved our position on the question of principle.

Mr. MIR KHAN (Pakistan): Yes. Then I think there are two clauses in Annex 1, one reading "Having agreed on the arrival in Egypt of the United Nations Emergency Force". There is a second, reading as follows: "Noting that advance groups of UNEF have already been received by Egypt". That would be supposed to cover the initial, or is it going to be the final, components of the Force? I am reading my Government's mind that it will prefer a little more exposition of how it was formed. I am not going to press for its being included now at this stage. I am awaiting instructions and their observations. I feel, reading their minds, that they would have preferred a little more clarification of how they were formed.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: But, you see, this would really break the frame of this.

Mr. MIR KHAN (Pakistan): That is why I am not pressing for it now.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: They were formed in an entirely free exchange of suggestions by two sides in order to arrive at something which made a reasonably balanced whole. There was no picking and choosing. It was very much like the way I sometimes have to recruit in the Secretariat. You just must build up some kind of picture. I am sure that your Government appreciates that we had to run this whole operation in only three days in order to get started, because the first and important thing was to get in. For that reason the prolonged discussions which I would have liked to have had with representatives just could not take place without loss of momentum, which I am afraid we might have had to pay for.

Mr. MIR KHAN (Pakistan): I am not really pressing for it at this stage, but as I said, I am reading my Government's mind that they might prefer this, especially when I think it involves the good faith in which prompt offers were made. They would really like to know where they stood at the time and where they stand at present.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I think we will have to introduce the classical parliamentary institution here of a question hour. In the General Assembly it would certainly add to the fun because there are many questions in this case. But certainly, Mr. Ambassador, I would be happy to give the information when your questions come. I do not think it influences this because the question is not brought out here at all.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): Perhaps I could refer to a point which I tried to make on more than one occasion, and which has something to do with the observations which have just been made.

I appreciate your practical difficulties in this matter, and that it is more important to get the practical difficulties settled than to worry too much about the theory. What I am very anxious to do, if it can be done, is to have nothing in the report that will prejudice the principle, and the principle I am thinking of, which I have already mentioned two or three times, is that, while the Egyptian Government must consent to the arrival of a United Nations ad hoc emergency force and while you must, of course, consult with them on the composition of the Force so that you yourself will be satisfied that it is a balanced force -- that is understood, and I suppose nobody should understand it any better than I now because we have had some difficulties about this already which are in process of being worked out in a practical manner -- nevertheless, I am very anxious myself that there should be nothing in the report which might cause trouble in the future. That is why I have been harping on this idea that we should not accept, or admit here, that the Egyptian Government in its discussions with you should have -- if you like to put it this way, and I hate to use the word -- a veto on contributions. That is why the word "agreement" might sometimes lead to misunderstandings. For instance, in the second paragraph on the first page of this report it is said:

"Before agreeing to the arrival of advance units".

The sentence before that reads:

"The Government of Egypt had...accepted the Force in principle by formally accepting" the resolution. Then it goes on: "Before agreeing to the arrival of advance units..."

(Mr. Pearson, Canada)

I am anxious to avoid the idea that every time a unit goes to Egypt there has to be an agreement with the Egyptian Government on its reception. And I just wonder if your point would not be met merely by saying, "prior to the arrival of advance units the Government of Egypt wished to have certain points clarified".

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: It would not. But I would say cut out the words "advance units" and have it read, "Before agreeing to the arrival of the Force". You see, there are two steps here.

Mr. BUNCHE: That would be "Before consenting". That was the word.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Yes, it would be "Before consenting to the arrival of the Force". Yes, that is perfectly all right. What worries me is that they made a legal construction which I think must be accepted. They said, "We accept such and such a decision in principle. That is all right. To say that is one thing. Another thing is to establish the fait accompli. Before we establish the fait accompli we do want certain clarifications because once we are here it is a big political affair to stage a withdrawal, and it should not be staged because of any misunderstandings. For that reason, before we can consent to the arrival, we want to have certain points clarified." I think that that does not run counter at all to your thought, Mr. Pearson, because I guess we run into the same situation: practically every country would like to have a little bit more than you get out of a resolution from somebody who is authorized or who is in a position to explain it.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): I quite agree. Maybe you could make the same change in the next paragraph to have it read: "... the Government of Egypt consented to the arrival of units of the United Nations Force in Egypt", instead of "agreed to the arrival of units". It is exactly the same.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: There is no difficulty for me at all. I know that there is no difficulty at all with the Government of Egypt.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): Then may I refer to the Annex. May I ask, more for information than anything else, so that there will be no

(Mr. Pearson, Canada)

misunderstanding. In the preambular paragraph, beginning the report, the fourth paragraph states:

"Noting that advance groups of UNEF have already been received by Egypt."

The impression that might be left in the mind of anyone reading that is that the Egyptian Government is receiving the units of the emergency Force in the sense that it is absorbing them, taking them over when they get there. I know you didn't have that in mind.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: No, I didn't mean that at all. What I meant by putting in that paragraph, was of course that they have gone one step beyond the mere acceptance. They had three steps. They accepted the resolution. They permitted, they consented to arrival and they received them. I had to find a third word which established, so to say, the fait accompli. There was a de facto agreement because otherwise we would not have proceeded.

I must say that on this point I am a little bit touchy because the changes in this text, which is an agreed text, if they are not essential, may give rise to the question: What is behind the change? And they will give a significance to the change which is in no way warranted by the intentions. So I would in this case say that "received" here means nothing but that they not only had accepted the arrival, but that they had arrived and then all arrangements were made for their stationing and so on.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): In that meaning, if it has no political or constitutional or military significance --

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: None, it is a description of fact. They had come.

Mr. MIR KHAN (Pakistan): Might we just say the factual thing -- that they arrived?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: You see, the trouble is that we had checked the texts. I think all of us have had experience in negotiations. If you change

(The Secretary-General)

a word, people will want to know why you changed it, and often they do not see the most natural explanation, that the other word is a better one for the same idea.

Mr. BUNCHE: It is a statement of fact. These advance units have been in Egypt now for a week, and they have not been absorbed. They are independent under our command and are moving independently, as they are moving to Port Said.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): That is right. Initially my worries in this matter -- incidentally, the Egyptian Government received the first detachment --

Mr. BUNCHE: You mean the statement the Egyptian liaison officer made on the first arrival?

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): Yes. He is reported to have made a statement which I did not think was a very tactful statement, "that I am glad to receive you, and we will tell you where to go and what to do". That is a rather crude way of putting it, but it gave that impression. You will recall the interview I am referring to. I do not want that kind of reception to be read into this particular clause.

Mr. BUNCHE: We have had a week now to test that reception.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Would you mind another change which I would make without any compunction at all in relation to President Nasser: "had already been received in Egypt", stressing the word "in".

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): That is a very useful change.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: That doesn't cause any difficulty at all.

Mr. LANGE (Norway): Might I ask for some information on the actual status of these advance units? I have been informed that there is some concern in my capital that while at the first Egyptian staging area they have been more or less under guard, or felt at least to be guarded, by the Egyptian military, and that they have not been so unquestionably under United Nations command as they had anticipated in going there. I should like to know whether the Secretary-General could give any further information on that particular point.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: All I can say is that when I passed there Colonel Moe was then in charge; he is a Norwegian colonel. He made no comments of that type at all.

Mr. BUNCHE: Nor has he since.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I should like to add that there may be a very simple explanation. It was due to various circumstances among others; it was an improvised arrangement. General Burns was here. The line of command was not established -- the line of authority -- in such a way that one could say that there was a real, a superior military authority in charge, or which in its turn, so to say, had the relations with the Egyptian authorities. In such a situation, if various arrangements in the field do not work out, or worked out in a way which gave them a feeling that the Egyptians had too much to say, it would not surprise me. But I think the basic fact is that Colonel Moe certainly would have raised an issue of that type if he had felt anything was going wrong on his level.

Mr. BUNCHE: Would you wish to mention the observations you made of the treatment of incoming planes -- I mean the freedom?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Yes. The total impression given was one of very strong co-operation and very little formality. But I think that the only reply I can give is that I would be very surprised if this matter had arisen in a way that caused concern. I had not heard about it from the very excellent officers who are in charge. For the future there are, as we know, no end of special agreements to be made. There are agreements concerning immunities; there is a kind of, as we have it here, headquarters agreement. All that has to be

negotiated. We simply haven't had the time to do it yet. I felt myself, by the way, that the curious, slim, three-paragraph agreement which I shot through myself, was what was necessary as a preamble to whatever legislation we had, because we would run into these basic questions in all those other contexts which would not make sense.

Mr. LALL (India): I have very little to say about this document now. I should like to ask a question, if it is all right. It is about Annex 2, which now is not being attached to this document. I take it that the agreement, the understanding and the agreed position regarding Annex 2 is that it remains part of the official record of this Advisory Committee.

Mr. BUNCHE: The members at this end cannot hear you.

Mr. LALL (India): I was asking a question about Annex 2 which now is not attached to this report. I take it that Annex 2 -- that it has been agreed; by that, I mean agreed with Egypt and the others concerned -- remains part of the official documentation of this Advisory Committee and as part of your crystallization of your interpretation of the resolution with the Egyptian Government.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I would reply in this way: first of all in this case, with verbatim records being made in the regular United Nations fashion, and all the substance of the previous exchange of views being recorded in the first meeting of the Advisory Committee -- and there is a verbatim record circulated -- the underlying thing which is now expressed in this very short form is already part of the United Nations record, although it is not a circulated protocol in the usual sense of the word. I mean that it is in your hands, and this is the record.

The second thing is that the very fact that we have today, in two meetings, had before us Annex 2 as a document forming part of my report that was read yesterday, forming part of my report on conversations in Cairo and not pretending to be anything more than a very naked summary of what emerged from the previous discussion, makes it likewise part of the record here. Under such circumstances, I feel that the reply to your question is yes. It is part of the United Nations record, and it is most definitely a part of the Secretary-General's record.

Mr. PEARSON: (Canada): Then our observations made here at the meeting of the Committee in respect of this Annex 2 are presumably also part of the record?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Definitely. We have never discussed procedure here because I think we all know each other very well. But my assumption has been that without formalizing the issue, the fact that we made verbatim records, and that the verbatim records were circulated, did constitute an informal United Nations record for the meetings of this Committee. As this Committee has a task of extraordinary significance, I felt that it was correct to treat it like any other of the major committees in the United Nations.

Mr. LALL (India): Thank you. So far as this draft report is concerned, three small changes have been made today, and my understanding is that the Secretary-General will show these to the Egyptian Foreign Minister.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I will. But the state of affairs between Dr. Fawzi and myself now is that the changes which are not changes in substance are from his side accepted, and will, for that reason, just be noted by him. Of course, information will be given to Cairo, but he does not in any way ask for the right to look at the editing. If we have instead of the word "agreeing", which may suppose the existence of two parties, the word "consenting", I think, if anything, he is happy because he considers that to be an expression of the fact that consent is given by one party and not agreed between two. So I think he would regard this as an improvement. He will be informed of this, of course.

Mr. LALL (India): There is the word "consenting" and the omission of the words "advance units of".

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Yes, but that does not cause any worry because it was much more important in Annex 1. Of Annex 1, which I submitted to him, he said that if I preferred it that way, he didn't care about it. Of course, the consent was a consent as to the Force, not as to specific units.

Mr. IALL (India): I see. We are still left with an open position on the last paragraph on page 3.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Yes, and on that the situation is that the Foreign Minister of Egypt says if it is seen it is all right with him. If I prefer to take it out, he does not care.

I think, by the way, that in this group it is interesting to note that he has not the slightest hesitation to have it in, because it is, as you see, a much more factual and smooth formulation of the question of those functions than any of those which have existed in previous records.

Mr. BUNCHE: Did you wish the blanks on page 3 to be filled in?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I hope that Mr. Bunche later this afternoon will fill in the blanks, but I do doubt whether it is a good idea to have an enumeration of countries at all, because what we are talking about here is really the international Force, how big it is and not its composition. I think we should avoid all those things completely. People want to know how big it is. Is it of any significance? Is it nothing? When will it be of significance? That is what they want to know -- nothing else. So I would delete one phrase there, but for the rest I would be happy if you filled it out.

Mr. BUNCHE: Fill in the numbers now?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Yes.

Mr. BUNCHE: "As of 20 November 1956 a total number of 696 were at the staging area in Egypt at Abu Soueir. At the same time a total number of 282 were at the staging area in Italy at Naples. According to the present planning a total number of 2,241 will be transferred to Egypt in the immediate future."

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Then delete the next sentence.

Mr. BUNCHE: "A further number of 1,260" -- and here I suggest a slight change in the sentence -- "are to be transferred to Naples or directly to Egypt at times still to be determined." In other words, we have no airlift arrangements for these yet.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: This includes all the Yugoslavs, I guess.

Mr. BUNCHE: Yes. That makes a total of 4,479.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: And, frankly, I think that at this stage that is quite sufficient.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): I take it that you will shortly add to that number those who are responsible for the airlifting of these people.

Mr. BUNCHE: That is included.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): What figure do you have for that?

Mr. BUNCHE: A figure of 500 -- ground personnel and crews.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: You see, they are integrated in the Force. That is the difference between them and those who have just been giving support from the outside.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): I should like to ask a question about paragraph 2 on page 2 of the Annex. The last part of that paragraph reads:

"... the United Nations, understanding this to correspond to the wishes of the Government of Egypt, reaffirms its willingness to maintain the UNEF until its task is completed." In what Assembly document did we affirm our willingness to do this?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: So far, none. That would be a new factor. I have assumed that, once the United Nations undertakes a task, it is reasonable to say that it wants to complete it. My reason for using the word "willingness" instead of "intention" was, of course, that I ask them, so to speak, to say "We are willing to let them stay", and we say "We are willing to stay". My intention was to stress the character of an offer, of a contribution, and to get away from the curious idea which had developed in some places that we were the party begging for something.

But, of course, the General Assembly's decision concerning paragraph 2 will be the decisive fact, because this will be a substantive interpretation of the previous resolution. We said that we should go in; on our side, we never said anything about staying. On the other hand, if you see the political problem, in order to get the balance -- in order, so to speak, to get the thing tied up with the Egyptian Government -- once the question of the extent of this function came up for debate, it was quite obvious that I could not ask them to accept the idea that we were working on the assumption that they would let it run to the end of the task unless we on our side were willing to let it run to the end of the task. As I say, it really puts the question of when the task is ended as a question which naturally will develop in consultation between the two sides, when you write it in this way, because I would not be surprised to see that at a certain moment we would feel more embarrassed by our commitment than they by theirs. That is a development that is quite possible.

Mr. LALL (India): I thought that Mr. Pearson was asking why the word "reaffirms" was used rather than the word "affirms".

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): I had two things in mind. First, there was the matter of "reaffirms". I was also glad to get the interpretation of "willingness".

Mr. LALL (India): I would have thought that "reaffirms" was right in view of our resolution 394 of 5 November, which says: "Establishes a United Nations Command for an emergency international force to secure and supervise the cessation of hostilities in accordance with all the terms of the resolution of the General Assembly of 2 November 1956." That is why I think "reaffirms" is the right word.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: That is really why I chose it. In that sense, I did not consider it a new fact -- even if it has never been made explicit.

Mr. URRUTIA (Colombia): When do you think you will send this report to the Assembly?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I still have to talk to a couple of those who are interested and get their final word on the timing -- if they need any cross-checking. As I have indicated, the discussions are concluded with Egypt. In relation to Egypt, I am free to table it even this afternoon, if I wish to.

There is one point that I should like to bring out: Even at this stage, the timing necessarily has a political bearing far beyond the walls of this house, because, the very moment we can put this on the table, we have given a kind of weight to what happens out in the field which I think will have repercussions.

For that reason, I put the question to Dr. Fawzi whether, in spite of the fact that this was to some extent a procedure which has been subject to consultations between us, I could go ahead according to my views of the situation without waiting for any further confirmation or reaction. I do not hesitate to repeat his reply here: that, in view of the significance of the whole operation, he felt that what would be natural diplomatic procedure under normal circumstances could be dispensed with.

Mr. URRUTIA (Colombia): Then, in that case, you will be able to table that -- and then are we going to have any special discussion in the Assembly?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: May I come to that at a later stage? It has to do with a third report, which is not before you -- the report on compliance -- and I should like to inform you about the steps I have taken on that report. But, with this development of the discussion, I feel at least tempted to conclude that we can put this aside, with reservations, naturally, in light of the fact that some of the current discussions have not been concluded. I think that in this case, without departing from the substance and from the principles, I should try to get to the point where the text is cleared with those who have a special reason to look at the wording with interest.

The other two points are, of course, the draft circulated this morning concerning the Canal clearing, and -- this is the third point I wanted to bring up -- the question concerning compliance. I may report on the situation in these two respects.

I later checked with Mr. Selwyn Lloyd -- I have not had a chance to talk with Mr. Pineau, but I am sure that contact has been made by the two Foreign Ministers -- and also with Dr. Fawzi concerning the changes suggested in the report on the Canal. Both sides say that they prefer the text as changed, to the text as originally drafted. Under such circumstances, we have nothing to think about in those two directions. They both felt it was an improvement to have the wider powers for this Committee and the Secretary-General. They both felt that it was in no way necessary to describe procedures which in themselves were very natural, but which could develop without any debate concerning this and that kind of procedure, which might arise quite unnecessarily.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): Do we have that new text with us?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: No, I have not had it retyped. But it is just cutting out two paragraphs. As to the rest, it was Mr. Lall's observation, which I think is valid, that you switch the order: you write the text in such a way that the steps will be: explore -- negotiate -- report on cost and sharing of cost -- authority to conclude agreement. Those will be the stages, and they will be presented in that way.

(The Secretary-General)

The third point I wanted to mention was the one concerning compliance. It is now a fortnight after the second decision -- the second demand to the three Powers to withdraw. I was asked to report promptly on this matter -- and a fortnight is certainly a liberal interpretation of "promptly". You know, however, that the reason has in no way been that we have been lax. The reason is that this has been closely tied up with other considerations which had priority. Now, however, the time seems to me to have come because, once we have on the table a report on the presence of the Force in Egypt, and the numbers which indicate that it should be considered effective for its present tasks, once we have on the table a report indicating progress -- and, I hope, considerable progress -- on the clearing of the Canal, the time seems ripe for registration of where we are on compliance.

For that reason, I addressed yesterday to the three Governments directly concerned three questions, which run roughly as follows:

Has any withdrawal taken place? (We do not know exactly the military movement.) If so, to what extent?

The second question: What are the plans for withdrawal?

The third question: What are the reasons for the delay in complying with the demand of the General Assembly?

To that is added a fourth question: Have you any observations on the compliance with the cease-fire obligation?

I had to phrase it in that way since we had not had observers in the field to make it possible for us to say what has happened under the cease-fire. As we know from both sides -- from all sides, rather -- there have been complaints of violations from the other side. None has struck me as being of a very serious nature. This fourth question is rather by way of invitation -- if there is anything they want to bring out in this context.

I said that I hope to be able to edit the report as of Wednesday -- that is, tomorrow -- and I hoped that by that time I would have replies. As to these replies, I do feel that the report can be very short, because in fact it is only a question of a covering note to the presentation given by these Governments themselves. For me to start commenting on it would be, I think, a little unnecessary. They will certainly speak for themselves, and delegations will certainly be able to draw their conclusions without my coming in as a sort of commentator.

(The Secretary-General)

However, there are two points which I think should be brought out in that very report. One is the Port Said development, where we have had continued troubles -- it is impossible to say what character they have had and how serious they have been, but there is no question that there are continuing troubles -- and where a solution, to a certain extent, is provided by the very fact, as I mentioned this morning, that the first units of the United Nations Force will come into the city, or should have already come into the city, today. That should take care of that trouble for the moment.

However, the other trouble spot to which I have had to give special attention, and which in a certain sense worries me just as much, is the Gaza Strip. The Gaza Strip is very far from where we are, and for that reason it cannot have the direct lines of communication which we will have at Port Said, which would be linked up with our own staging area by trains and roads. The Gaza area is a little bit of a lost island, and we know very little of what happens. We have the UNRWA people, who are working among the refugees, but they are not entitled to report as "Crown" witnesses. On the other hand, we still have the UNTSO team in Gaza. As you will remember, the Israelis ordered the UNTSO representatives out of Gaza, and I gave counter-orders that they must not leave Gaza. The result is that they are at present in Gaza without recognition of any rights. Of course, I cannot enforce any rights for them. On the other hand, I can create a situation in which they would be acting against instructions if they followed the Israeli orders. They simply have to follow United Nations orders. That is to say, we have created a kind of deadlock. The reason for that deadlock, of course, is that from my angle, from the point of view of the United Nations, we have not recognized a new state of affairs in Gaza, and for that reason the UNTSO still has the duty of observing what happens in the region. Due to the Israeli instructions, however, they are not in a position to make regular observations. On the other hand, they do, as a matter of course, know a lot about what happens. They are not reporting, and cannot report, in the regular sense of the word. But we have radio communications fully re-established, and thus there is a kind of substitute for full reports.

Those reports indicate that in Gaza itself -- and even more so in Rafah in the Gaza Strip -- things are anything but satisfactory. Very much as in the

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case of Port Said, there is a situation in which there is active resistance by the population and attempts at repression by the occupying Power. Short of detailed information, it would be rather unwise and unwarranted for me to make a report on it. But what I know, without being able to report on it, is enough to create a need for action.

For that reason, I asked the Israel Government yesterday to permit the United Nations Command -- not UNTSO, but the United Nations Command -- to put a reasonable number of observers into Gaza. I spoke of "observers", instead of "unit", because of the difficulty of maintaining communication with them. If some ten officers are sent in, I think that that is likely to take care of the situation, and there would be no supply difficulties -- and we would have the radio communications, which would be enough.

So far, I have not received any reply. From my point of view, the situation in Gaza is part of the question of observation of the cease-fire. I guess that from the Israeli side that will be denied. I must say that I feel that, legally and in principle, my position is correct. Wherever there is fighting going on between the occupying Power and the population in a region, the status of which, according to us, does not change the principle, we have a right to protect the interests of peace and therefore a right at least to observe, even if no agreement has so far been reached on the stationing of units.

That is what, outside the replies given in the letters, I think I should put on record in the compliance report.

Of course, the compliance report cannot but give rise to a debate -- and a debate which certainly will be of much greater extent and much hotter, than the debate on these somewhat esoteric documents. That has led me to the feeling that there is a reason to look out a little bit for the timing, if not of the tabling of the report, at least of the debate on the report, because a debate may show down an operation of withdrawal, instead of speeding it up, if it is wrongly timed. That is the only reservation I should like to make in regard to the tactics concerning this third report.

None of the same observations relate to those we have already discussed because, if they give rise to debate, it will not be a debate which influences the current developments in the area.

(The Secretary-General)

That is what I wanted to say concerning the planning and my problems in connexion with it. Excuse me for having gone into the third report. It is part of the picture that may perhaps take us back to the second one -- that is to say, the one on the Suez Canal and the clearing of the Canal -- if there are any further observations or if, as a result of afterthought, you feel that we may go ahead with the re-editing necessary in order to take care of these procedural matters.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): Is the communication you sent to the military authorities in the Gaza Strip similar to that which you sent to the military authorities in Port Said about observers coming in, which has already been acted upon?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: It is very similar. In fact, this is stronger.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): But the same principle is involved?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: In principle it is the same. That is to say, the Israelis are lagging far behind. In the first case, it was a direct request from the provisional staff of the Command to the British-French authorities in Port Said, which was accepted at once. In this case, I chose the much heavier procedure of a personal démarche to the Foreign Minister of Israel, with a request for immediate transmittal of the reply to UNTSO on my behalf. That was the strongest form I could use for it.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): Had you previously tried to do it through the military authorities?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: This was the first request. It was based on the disquieting information we had received concerning developments in the area and it was directed, in the first place, to the situation in Rafah and not in Gaza. I should have a reply either today or tomorrow. If that is negative, I will have to think over what further steps should be taken, because I think I should insist.

(The Secretary-General)

I feel that, in the case of Sinai and Gaza, it is really much more important to get people in than to get a withdrawal. That does not mean that I minimize the importance of the withdrawal -- but it does mean that God knows what repercussions there may be if we get these villages in turmoil. After all, there are very close links, as we know, within that whole world. They feel a very great inner unity, and what happens to one Arab tribe will certainly be noted by others. The experience we have had is that the mere presence of a sufficient number of United Nations officers has a very quieting influence.

Well, on the report on clearing -- should I re-edit it in substance? Or just go ahead and re-edit it? On the other one, as soon as I have the replies I will be happy to bring it up with you.

May I add one thing: As I read these various resolutions, which I think we all know by heart by now, there is one thing which is very pleasant from my point of view: that the mandate accepted in the resolution providing for this Committee is such that every responsibility in this whole Middle Eastern context that falls on me automatically falls on this Committee.

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