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Middle East

Meeting of Advisory Committee on UNEF

26 Jan. 57

CONFIDENTIAL

MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON UNEF  
(Meeting held in the Secretary-General's  
Conference Room on Saturday, 26 January,  
1957, at 10.00 a.m.)

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I wonder whether we can begin with the commercial side of this. We are not only a political committee of the General Assembly, but at the same time a bank board -- and I think that, while waiting for others to arrive, we should start with the bank board aspect. I should like to ask Colonel Katzin to report on our last liabilities and commitments.

Mr. KATZIN: Mr. Secretary-General, we have been going into the final stages of the contract provisions of the agreement between the salvors and ourselves, and this week has been taken up with meetings between the principals of the two main salvage contractors with their lawyers from Rotterdam and from Denmark, and with Mr. McCloy's representatives sitting in at the last stages to check on his behalf.

The agreement has been quite a complex one because it is a post facto agreement. In fact, the salvage concerns, as you know, came to our assistance without any predetermined arrangements other than the cost of the hire of vessels, which was fixed in advance. There were a great many other provisions which, in the nature of the operation, had to be left open until we could go into the details more thoroughly.

In general terms, the financial provisions are regarded by everyone as being fair and reasonable and satisfactory. And I believe, from all that we can assess at this moment, that the operation will in fact cost less than most of the estimates that have been made to date. It is not possible at this moment to give any really fair assessment of what the size of the financial bill might be. But it looks at the moment as though it would be more favourable than we had expected.

One of the major problems, however, has been the question of covering the public and third-party liability and the war risk. This is a matter which has been of tremendous importance to the contractors. It is a type of operation which, in terms of maritime law, could be an extremely costly one for them if there is an accident during the passage of vessels through the Canal after they have cleared the first channel and are still operating as salvors to clear the

remaining wrecks for the widening of that channel for the passage of larger vessels.

In the case particularly of the Danish Company, which has put almost all of its assets in our hands and almost all of its operating staff on the managerial and executive and marine sides, and in the case of several others, there would be very dire consequences if there were to be a claim, which could run into many millions of dollars, from vessels in transit. And they have asked -- fairly and rightly, we believe -- for complete umbrella coverage to provide for these contingencies.

There is coverage already taken out, and they are responsible for the cost of coverage, in respect of their own vessels, and there is coverage also taken out by them for third-party risks. As a matter of fact, they have taken out an over-all policy for third-party risk of 10 million guilders, with a maximum of 5 million guilders in respect of any one claim. But that is a provisional coverage. The main difficulty has been that, as we have vessels of a great many nationalities involved, the insurance laws covering the use of a great many of them conflict, and it has not been certain -- because the United Nations has to underwrite the contract no matter what may happen -- whether policies in force are in fact valid.

It is a whole complex field, and the best that we have been able to do at the moment is to get the opinions of underwriting consultants. It looks as though we will be able to manage a fairly good operation from the point of view of coverage against United Nations risks, but the contingent liabilities are very large, and there seems no immediate way in which we can get over the problem except to bring the various underwriter representatives together, which we are doing next week, and finalize a plan with them after we have in fact completed all other aspects of the contract, after we have agreed on all other aspects of the contract.

It is that contingent liability which has caused us some concern -- and, of course, the contract is of some concern. But our interests are completely mutual -- there is no conflict of interests -- and we are attempting to get their interests covered simultaneously with ours. That is one big factor of liability under the contract which is almost an open-end liability and can only be covered after we have all the expert opinions. It is a very complex field. I think that that is the main concern from your point of view, Sir -- of financial risk.

The other item, which is a very expensive item -- more expensive than the third-party item to cover -- is the war risk insurance. We have managed to reduce the coverage premium on that from the 2 per cent originally quoted to 1.35 per cent. Even at that, however, it will reach \$150,000 for a three-month period, or \$300,000 for the whole estimated period. And it is a risk which we have to cover. It is covered in all salvage contracts automatically under the Anglo-French arrangements with their contractors. That is an expensive item.

We believe that possibly insurance might cost the United Nations up to \$500,000 for the whole operation.

The operative provisions of the contract appear satisfactory. General Wheeler sent us his reaction this morning to the contract as a whole, which he approves with some reservations on some of the operating provisions. One of his representatives -- the auditor, as a matter of fact -- will be here tomorrow from the field to discuss those provisions with us.

Whereas we were hoping that we and the lawyers might complete the whole of the contract this weekend, for signature on Monday, it may be delayed now until Tuesday if the points raised tomorrow are substantive.

The other features of the operation, from a cost point of view, which are at the moment uncertain are the supplementary costs with respect to the lighting, telecommunications and the rehabilitation of vessels. We have, in the over-all estimates which we are attempting to provide, taken account of the lighting and telecommunications costs -- figures which General Wheeler thought to be reasonable. But they are not, of course, involved in this present contract with the salvors. This is an additional item of cost.

As of this morning, we heard from General Wheeler that, whereas he had previously hoped that we would be able to install electric lighting systems in the Canal to replace the old gas installations which were there and which have been destroyed, he was advised this morning that it would be too costly a business, and he suggests that we do no more than to rehabilitate the gas system which was in existence before. But he does indicate that the Egyptian authorities hope that we will be able to do better than that and go in for some long-term rehabilitation of the lighting.

That, I am afraid, is something which will have to be gone into as a policy matter, because it is almost an immediate necessity for us to get some decisions on it. The same factors of policy determination will govern the costs as far as the rehabilitation of vessels is concerned, once salvaged, because the degree of salvage in which we engage -- final salvage, lifting and floating -- will to some extent be governed by the intentions as to the rehabilitation of many of these vessels. In the costs which we have kept in view, we have not included rehabilitation of vessels, which could be an extremely costly business. That element, of course, is nowhere taken account of. As Mr. McCloy said last week, it is going to be an extremely expensive operation. But, from the point of view of the clearance proper, it will be less expensive than any estimates that have so far been mooted abroad. But when it comes to rehabilitation of vessels -- if that is to be included -- I am afraid we could get into a very vast sum of money.

That, in general terms, is the situation as far as we have proceeded in terms of the contract and in terms of thinking ahead so far as these additional costs are concerned on which policies will have to be reached.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Thank you. I think we can leave the latter part aside for the moment and just give some attention to the first one -- the question of the contract -- because that is really the point which I think we have to take up formally. Contracts of this type go far beyond my non-professional understanding, and I personally feel that, provided that we have the lawyers on our side and an experienced banker like Mr. McCloy and a technician like General Wheeler, with long experience in this field, I simply must trust them.

Nothing in this seems to be excessive. Everything seems to be within the necessary limits for the carrying on of this operation. I personally felt that a contract of this type, on the one hand, could not reasonably be put before the General Assembly. It must obviously be the intention of the General Assembly that contracts meeting these various requirements that are necessary in order to carry on the operation should be undertaken. On the other hand, I consider that, without at least reporting on the question to the Advisory Committee, to give you a chance for observations, if any, I would be exceeding the powers given to the Secretariat. I am afraid that you must necessarily find

yourselves in very much my position -- that is to say, with some difficulty in saying whether or not this is exactly how such a contract should be. For that reason, although your advice in a question like this cannot be advice which commits you on substance, I solicit it because it is really advice on the question of constitutional rights. However, my own feeling is that this is a responsibility which the Executive would have to take on the basis of the best possible expertise.

As to the other point, we will have to come back to it, because there is a question of principle involved -- how far we should go.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): I cannot comment on the contract because I am not expert enough. But there is an important question of principle as to what obligation the United Nations has, if any, apart from the strict obligation to clear and restore the Canal. There will be a pretty shadowy line between clearance and restoration, on the one hand, and rehabilitation and improvement, on the other. I assume that the United Nations has no obligation to improve the Canal. It may be a desirable thing to do while the work is being done -- but there is no financial obligation involved, I take it, as far as the United Nations is concerned.

For instance, Colonel Katzin spoke of replacing some system of old-fashioned gas lighting with a modern and up-to-date electrical installation. We are going to have some trouble if we try to work out our responsibilities in that regard, especially when we do not know what is going to happen -- as I assume we do not -- with the Canal when it is cleared.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: May I say that, from my angle, this distinction has considerable political significance because, as I understand the United Nations operation, we are engaged to do that which is in the universal interests -- that is to say, to break through the Canal and get it going again. Anything beyond that has such a strong accent of Egyptian interest that it would require a development of ideas on future financing -- tolls and charges and similar things -- which may not be too far off, but concerning which we have no certainty. For that reason, in my own thinking, I am on the very restrictive side as to the interpretation of the United Nations operation.

Mr. MIR KHAN (Pakistan): I find myself, Mr. Secretary-General, in the same difficulty as you -- that is, it is very hard to comment on the technical nature of the contract. You have the best advisors -- and if the Advisory Committee, and I as a member of it, have to give an opinion, I go along with them.

However, as the Foreign Minister of Canada has pointed out, there are certain political implications in it. We are perhaps actually taking up two points concurrently. While we are hurrying with the clearance of the Canal, which, as you have very rightly said, is in the universal interest, we have the other point on which to make a recommendation to the General Assembly, the ultimate liability to bear this expense. I think we should do our best not to let the second point lag too far behind the first.

In the matter of the clearance, as you have said, there are two things involved -- and I do not want to dilate on it. One is the Egyptian interest, on which you have so rightly said that the Egyptian Government should really come into the discussion and take some interest and responsibility for it. But as to what you called the universal interest, I should very much like to endorse it -- that it is in the universal interest to have the passage cleared up for international trade. But then, if we are to share in that universal interest and the expense that follows, I think it is only right that, either through the Assembly or through the users of the Canal, there should be some indication that that interest, which has the corollary of responsibility for expense and all that, has some permanence and has some stability, some future, to it.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): I take it that, when you use the word "universal" you do not mean the Universal Suez Canal Company.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Language has become so dangerous. In the letter of the 24th, I spoke about "police action" -- and I did not mean certain actions taken later.

I think we will have to get back to the points raised --

Mr. ENGEN (Norway): May I ask one question? I am wondering whether this report by General Wheeler on the conditions in the Canal -- the reopening of it -- will be available soon. Is there any information --

Mr. KATZIN: Which report?

Mr. ENGEN (Norway): We spoke a couple of weeks ago about it --

Mr. KATZIN: The resumption of traffic?

Mr. ENGEN (Norway): Yes, the conditions in the Canal.

Mr. KATZIN: General Wheeler has cabled to say that it will be delayed a little, but he will produce it as rapidly as possible. He believes, in fact, that the eventual report will be better than we are anticipating in terms of the passage of only 25-foot-draught vessels. It is a little early for him to give a definite view on that. But the general indication is that he might be able to do better in the first stage than the purely 25-foot-draught vessels. We expect that report momentarily, but he has not indicated exactly when.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): I saw him quoted this morning as saying that the Canal would be opened to 25-foot-draught vessels on 20 February.

Mr. KATZIN: I think that is a report which came from his headquarters but not from him. We have no confirmation of that.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Let us guess that it is the hope and ambition of those extremely ambitious subalterns, while General Wheeler is wise enough not to give any promise yet.

But on the question of financing, which is linked up with the question of how far the United Nations should go, we will have the cost estimates very soon indeed, and I think that is the proper occasion for us to take up seriously the discussion of the plan of financing. On that, without any commitment on their

part, I can say that the idea of a system including surtax or sur-toll -- or whatever it may be -- is a system which obviously would not meet resistance from the Egyptian side, whatever general political considerations they may have in mind.

I am still just as undetermined as I was before, politically. Technically, I still believe that something in that direction is the most possible approach. But may I reserve time for a discussion of that as soon as we can present the cost estimates. I do not know whether Mr. Cordier can say when we will have that. I know he is pressing for them very hard.

Mr. CORDIER: Yes -- the work that is being done by Mr. Katzin and the group here working with him, in conjunction with General Wheeler in the field, will provide the basis of a report on the cost estimates very soon. The Comptroller's office is also engaged in studies both in relation to UNEF financing and in relation to the Suez Canal clearance, and those should be available next week. --

Mr. KATZIN: Toward the end of next week, I should hope.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: That is the very latest that we ought to have them. The report to the General Assembly should have come next week, if possible. Then it will be the week after next. We may have a discussion even on the basis of preliminary data.

Mr. CORDIER: Quite a bit of progress has been made on it, and I think it can be tidied up by the middle of the week.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): How much money is available by way of advances for financing the operation?

Mr. CORDIER: Only \$5 million, at the moment. But we hope that some other funds will be available very soon. About \$12 to \$13 million is pledged, and we do feel that some of that should be available in the very near future indeed. Then there will be the second stage, of course -- working out ways and means of getting another X millions of dollars to cover the gap between this first round and the estimate. As Mr. Katzin has said, the estimates appear a little bit lower than the calculations that had been made at an earlier date.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): How long can the work go on with the existing funds?

Mr. CORDIER: I do not think the work will stop at all on the basis of the present financial situation, because some additional funds will be available from other quarters. But it is very important that we do get the additional funds beyond the \$5 million just as quickly as possible.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): Our Parliament approved \$1 million the day before yesterday.

Mr. CORDIER: And Norway, I presume --

Mr. ENGEN (Norway): Yes.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: The same with the Swedish Parliament. There is no snag on the question of conditions or formalities between us and those pledged. It is in all cases, I think, the constitutional processes which have explained some delays. But for that reason, as soon as we have the cost estimates, we will have them circulated, and we will have discussion then as to how best to meet them.

Mr. MIR KHAN (Pakistan): May I raise another point in this respect? I thought we did discuss the possibility of the Secretariat's perhaps attempting a technical paper on the ships which could go through the narrowed Canal, so that those who have that universal interest -- at least, part of that universal interest -- could start thinking about attempting some priorities on the basis of hardships and the possibility of shipping. Do we expect that soon?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Yes, it was mentioned, and Colonel Katzin referred to it as a paper which we will have shortly.

Mr. MIR KHAN (Pakistan): Because, as we see, the Canal would be cleared for some restricted traffic from the beginning of March.

Mr. KATZIN: Yes, General Wheeler has cabled that such a paper is now in the course of preparation.

Mr. MIR KHAN (Pakistan): Studied either jointly by the users or at least separately by other --

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Certainly. That is another matter on which we will have to see to it that you get proper information as soon as we ourselves have it. But it is in process and under pressure, so that I think we will have it soon.

We may now perhaps turn to the immediate political problems facing us. In spite of the fact that the text is very condensed, I do hope that the report is self-explanatory. But I should like to go beyond the report and speak in terms of action, not in terms of law.

First of all, I should like to draw to your attention that, in the report on negotiations in April, the following is found concerning Articles VII and VIII:

"I have specific assurances from both sides of their willingness to establish full compliance with Articles VII and VIII, within the framework of a full return to the state of affairs envisaged in the Armistice Agreement. A plan for the re-establishment of compliance with the two Articles has been prepared by the Chief of Staff...

"I have found that I should give a high priority to the implementation of the two Articles both because of their immediate significance and because of my conviction that a return to the state of affairs they envisage would be a major contribution in allaying fears of attack now to be found on both sides. I note, however, the view that such implementation has to find its place in relation to other steps in fulfilment of the aims of the Armistice Agreement."

(S/3596, page 20)

It follows, as you see, that the proposal -- which may have surprised you -- that, as part of the plan on which we should now embark, implementation of Articles VII and VIII would take a prominent place, is in fact something which is firmly anchored in previous discussions, and both parties have declared that under certain conditions -- and I will revert to the question of conditions -- they would be perfectly willing to implement those Articles.

That means that the limited but nevertheless significant degree of demilitarization that an implementation of Articles VII and VIII should involve was not rejected, in the course of the discussions last year, as in any sense unreasonable. Of course, this is an important element in the political evaluation of this proposal, which here is brought out in the report in a naked form -- I had no reason to dig into history here -- but which all the same has this history.

Articles VII and VIII, from my point of view, have a significance which goes far beyond the immediate implications. It is hinted at in the two phrases I quoted. Full compliance is promised by the two parties "within the framework of a full return to the state of affairs" -- and I repeat -- "the state of affairs envisaged in the Armistice Agreement". And, later: "...implementation has to find its place in relation to other steps in fulfilment of the aims" -- and I repeat -- "the aims of the Armistice Agreement".

Back of this phraseology lies the fact that it was obvious, in the discussions in April and May, that the two parties accepted this demilitarization as part of a general effort to pacify the area and part of a general effort to establish an armistice regime -- which of course, means more than just implementation of the Armistice Agreements. An armistice regime, in the minds of the Israelis at that stage -- and, certainly, still -- implied also freedom of passage because of the absence of belligerent rights; and, de facto, there was no objection to that view from the Egyptian side, as I then understood it.

Further, if we are ever to go in the direction of what some people believe is a right solution -- that is to say, some kind of neutralized area between the two fighting groups -- we must start with what is already, so to speak, in hand, what has already been studied and, for military and political reasons, found possible.

I myself felt that from my angle, whatever I may feel about it, it would be premature and even incorrect to make any proposals out of the blue concerning neutralized areas supervised by the United Nations, while, on the other hand, basing ourselves on history, law and the latest negotiations, it would be perfectly reasonable to introduce such points as might serve as a springboard, so to speak, for a policy leading to a wider neutralization. That is to say, the other implication of this proposal to implement Articles VII and VIII is that, in that way, those who feel that one should go further and have a neutralized zone have at least a point from which such a development might be started.

To sum up what I have said: first of all, the proposal for implementation of articles VII and VIII is a proposal under certain general conditions already accepted by the two parties; secondly, it would be a very important element in the straightening out of the controversial position concerning shipping; and thirdly it is a reasonable basis for consideration of how pacification of the borderline areas might come about, if any Government would believe that that is the direction in which we should move.

With this explanation of a special point, I have already touched upon what I should like to say concerning action. This report necessarily has to be framed in a very restrictive terms. I have had for good reasons to base myself on law. I have not found that it was right for me here to indicate the line of negotiation, but all the same there is an idea about how negotiations could be conducted. Personally I think that that line emerges from the legal situation. It is confirmed by the experience we have had here in the UN from our previous contacts with the parties.

What I have in mind as the natural line and the natural time sequence is roughly this: first stage, withdrawal; second stage, de facto pacification of the Gulf of Aqaba and the Strait of Tiran -- but I stress de facto; third stage, formalization of the assurance that there would be complete abstention from raids; fourth stage, simultaneous assurances concerning immediate withdrawal from the defensive areas and the military zone on the Israel side and similar assurances from the Egyptian side, those assurances being given on the basis of what I have said in the report, that with such implementation we should ask for assurances concerning freedom of shipping. Once we have reached that stage, I should for my part consider it natural to ask both parties for reaffirmations of article I of the Armistice Agreement as a general non-aggression pact.

There is, as I see it, nothing impossible in this approach. It is contrary to recent arguments from both the Israeli and the Egyptian side. It is very much in line with previous thinking and I guess that both parties should show the constructive spirit of embarking upon a line of this type without letting it be bogged down in quarrels concerning the latest events.

At all events -- and this is something I think I would like to stress here, with some of you being in close contact with the Egyptians and all of you certainly feeling strongly for the legal side of the matter -- there would in such negotiation be nothing in the nature of a concession based on Israeli aggression, nothing which they have bought by it. It would in that respect be a perfectly clean solution, although it would in fact lead to the state of affairs about which they have been talking and have used somewhat unusual measures to achieve.

This much, I think, may be helpful as a comment to the presentation. It does show you that this is much more than an analysis, that it is in fact also, I hope, a reasonably well argued plan for negotiation. Of course, I could not present it in the report in that form; even less could I introduce the time plan which I had in mind. I do not think it would be useful to discuss it in any broader group, but it seemed to me very natural and appropriate to mention it here as a personal comment to the presentation.

I should add that if there is any sense in this way of thinking and if it should have any influence on how the matter is to be handled here, it would be most unfortunate indeed if these constructive possibilities were wrecked by either premature pressure for what belongs to later stages in the negotiation or undue pressures leading to clashes concerning what belongs to the first stage of this development.

Mr. LALL (India): Mr. Secretary-General, I think that the way which emerges from your report is one which has the possibilities you indicate, but there are, of course, various very stubborn difficulties. There is the stubborn fact that if it appears to one side that this is a method of letting the other side reap the harvest of aggression, or whatever they want to call it, that that might create a political tension in the situation, which might in fact make further development impossible. So too, if I might add, would the feeling that this is all the Israelis have been asking for and this is one way in which they might get it.

My own feeling is that what can emerge from the sort of approach -- and the very constructive approach which is in the report -- is not all that the Israelis have been asking for, if I might say so, but is what flows from a bona fide application of the terms of the Armistice Agreement, which is by no means everything that is wanted in the area but which might meet the basic necessities of the situation today. Therefore it seems to me most desirable in working towards a solution, while keeping in the back of our minds that it will resolve this issue, to put in the forefront not that factor, but the factor that this tremendous breakdown of the peace of the area which we saw at the end of October must be remedied by strict adherence to the Armistice Agreement. Strict adherence to the Armistice Agreement is obviously a position to which we must get back when there has been such a serious violation of it. If we work it in that way, we ought to be wise enough to let the desirable consequences flow indirectly from the strict adherence to the Armistice Agreement.

Therefore it seems to me that in the negotiation of this matter, primary emphasis should be put on adherence on the part of both sides to articles I, II, VII and VIII particularly of the Armistice Agreement. If that were accepted unanimously, let us hope, or very nearly unanimously, by the General Assembly, that there must be this strict adherence, then I think it would be possible for you, or for whatever other processes that could assist you in this matter, to negotiate the stages which you announced a while ago in your statement. I think we could get there that way. But I do think that if we try to put those stages down frontally now instead of via the Armistice Agreement and negotiation of adherence to the Armistice Agreement by both sides, we might then wreck the thing by creating political tensions.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Mr. Lall, I do not think there is any misunderstanding. You see that in fact I have two presentations: one which is very closely related to what you say and which I think is the right one of the present stage, namely the one of simple law. We cannot, as I say in the report, bypass the Armistice Agreement. The first stage in the development towards peace must necessarily be that one, especially as it includes so very many sound elements.

Another matter is that frontally, as you put it, in this closed group where we try to work out solutions, I wanted to point out to you how this basic stand, which is a must, can be translated into terms of action where we cannot get all in advance but must have a time sequence. I agree with you that nothing would be worse than to have such a time sequence presented -- it has to be played by ear. The outline I gave was only an indication of the logic of the situation.

Mr. URRUTIA (Colombia): I think that what you have said is very good. The time sequence you have proposed could well be adopted only if we focus it the way you do, that is to focus it not as making concessions to Israel aggression but only as coming back to the Armistice Agreement, and on that I agree completely with Mr. Lall.

Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): I fully agree with the steps that you intend taking. Mr. Lall rightly emphasized that it would create a great deal of political tension if we show any indication that Israel is to get any benefit of aggression. We have to be very careful in handling it in the General Assembly, for political reasons. But as for the general attitude, I feel really much more hopeful of the general attitude after the recent talks I have had. Once you seek equity, you must come with clean hands. That is an accepted axiom. The first thing then would be for Israel to clear herself of the consequences of the aggression. Thereafter the atmosphere will be quite clear. I think there is a reasonable atmosphere now and it is clearly well recognized that there are certain equitable considerations that must be weighed. For myself, I certainly believe in free navigation. I certainly believe that the State of Israel must be given some assurance of existence. All those considerations must be taken into account after an atmosphere of peace is arrived at. The first step then is insistence on articles I, II, VII and VIII as far as possible. I think if something could be done by the Secretary-General in that direction it would certainly be good.

Mr. LALL (India): By way of explanation may I say this, because I am afraid that I created some misunderstanding. I never suggested or intended to suggest that you would think of approaching this matter frontally. I did not suggest that. I knew that you would not for a moment have that in view. I was really thinking aloud in saying that the frontal approach would not be a good one. But I did not for a moment suggest or want it to be suggested that you might do that.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I did not feel there was any misunderstanding, but I felt it was good to have it on the table and to have a look at it.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): I think this is a very constructive and helpful report. I think also that you are wise in suggesting in it that our future action apart from the immediate problem of withdrawal should be based on strict adherence to the Armistice, particularly the clauses which you single out in the report. I also agree with the suggestion, and it is only a suggestion, that the UN Emergency Force should be used, if the Assembly decides, because it will require an Assembly decision, to secure and supervise such strict adherence to the Armistice.

If something is not done in this regard, I do not know whether we have any more reason to believe that the Armistice will be carried out in the future than it has been in the past. Our experience over the last years has not given us any cause for optimism that in default of some more effective action than we took in the past it will be carried out.

The use of UNEF in this form, if it is decided by the Assembly to use it, presents of course some problems, and you have gone into detail on these here. I wonder whether I could ask a few questions for clarification. I find it extraordinarily difficult to understand the Armistice. I can understand your reports perfectly, but on the Armistice Agreement the main basis of my lack of understanding is the lack of a map.

Mr. BUNCHE: I always come up against the same difficulty. As to the map, I might explain that in the Egyptian-Israeli Armistice Agreement alone there is no map. There was no map because if there had been a map there would not have been an Armistice Agreement. The Egyptians opposed a map for political reasons.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): I would sooner have an agreement than a map, but I'd like to have a map to understand the agreement. In paragraphs 16, 17, etc., where you talk about UNEF taking over the functions of the Truce Supervisory Organization, replacing the organization in certain areas which are defined, I'd like to ask the following questions: Would there be other areas outside those which are defined here where, if some further action was not taken to interpose the United Nations Force, the Egyptian and Israeli forces would return to a position where they would be facing each other without anything between them. I have another question: You say at the bottom of page 4 -- a statement which is entirely accurate -- "that although the United Nations General Assembly would be entitled to recommend the establishment of a United Nations administration" -- you are talking about Gaza in this paragraph -- "and to request negotiations in order to implement such an arrangement, it would lack authority in that recommendation, unilaterally, to require compliance." I take it that the lack of authority is not specifically related to this problem but that it is a general lack of authority for the United Nations General Assembly to endorse any of its recommendations.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Yes, it is in fact. On the other hand, if I may add, the weight of requesting negotiation for such and such a name is of course very great. It is just that we cannot either in this or in other similar cases dictate what should be the outcome of negotiations.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): Yes, that is right. I have one final observation at this time. This report of course is full of very valuable suggestions and ideas of action. There are not, and I am not suggesting that there should have been, formal recommendations and proposals as such. Now would it be your feeling that some Assembly resolution which merely asks you to implement the recommendations and proposals of your report would be practicable?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: It will give the Secretary-General far too wide powers, in one sense.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): And far too narrow powers in another sense.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Exactly; that is the paradox of the situation. May I explain why there are no recommendations. It is not because either I or my collaborators have been unduly coy. It is only because this is one of the stages where to bring out something too early might wreck it. If we bring out recommendations in anticipation of withdrawal, we risk resistance to those recommendations which would not appear if the withdrawal was an established and assured fact. After withdrawal, I would have felt it possible to formalize various recommendations, for example, concerning Gaza and other matters of a similar type which I now have to leave aside.

That is the explanation of why what you ask, Mr. Pearson, puts me in a rather curious position. It is on the one side too wide, because I have not been explicit; it is on the other hand a little bit too narrow, because I have not fully explained what lines I would like to follow.

Mr. GUNWARDENE (Ceylon): I think it would be extremely unwise to make any recommendations now.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: My feeling, therefore, would be that something in the nature of an endorsement, if there is basic approval, of the aims of this analysis and these general proposals, is possible. I would think also that it is possible to say that efforts to pursue those aims can be taken up having regard for this presentation. Beyond that, at the present stage I see quite a few difficulties partly tactical and partly formal.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): I wonder whether Mr. Bunche could give me some information on the other question about the nature of the area referred to in these paragraphs -- the defensive area.

Mr. BUNCHE: Anticipating the question, Mr. Pearson, I have had a map prepared. As I explained earlier, none of this could be put on a map in the course of the negotiations at Rhodes with regard to this particular agreement. That was made explicit by the Egyptian delegation, and there was a good reason for it. There was this question of the international frontier, and they felt that putting this on a map as part of the Agreement would have relationship to a question of frontier which they were not recognizing. This negotiation has to do with an Armistice Agreement dealing exclusively with a military situation as it was at the time of the negotiations. Therefore in this Agreement there was no map. This map, therefore, is not an official map. It is intended merely for internal purposes to show the dispositions arising from the provisions of that Agreement.

There is reference in the Agreement to eastern front and western front, which sometimes puzzles people. The negotiations between the Egyptians and the Israelis were the first of four negotiations. There was an eastern front because it was the front between Jordan and Israel. Jordan was not at Rhodes at that time, so there was constant reference to the eastern front, which refers to the Jordan-Israel conflict. The western front dealt with the Egyptian-Israel conflict. On this map you have the Armistice Demarcation Line, the limitation of the Gaza strip, a cross hatch which defines the areas in which defensive forces only, according to the terms of the Agreement, may be stationed. The diagonal lines show areas in which there may be no defensive forces on either side, Israeli or Egyptian. There is another line south of which no Israeli forces other than defensive forces based on the settlements may be permitted, because you have not only on the east and west but on the north and south areas with which to deal. There are lines demarcating the western front and the eastern front, and another line showing the demilitarized zone in the El Auja area.

(Copies of map were distributed)

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: The whole southern Negev line is a line which on the Egyptian side will require this or that kind of arrangement. That is obvious. But on principle we have UNEF down the whole line, so there is already a de facto buffer; but articles VII and VIII do not represent the last word at all. On the other hand, the really extensive area is the area down to

El Quesima and south of El Auja. That area will be fully taken care of. As to Gaza, the prescriptions are strong and it is a question of how we interpret them. I believe that with UNEF in Gaza the implementation would be such as to reduce defensive positions to practically nil, that is to say it will be a demilitarization of Gaza de facto.

Mr. BUNCHE: It would render them unnecessary.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Yes.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): Is it permissible to keep this map?

Mr. BUNCHE: With the understanding, Mr. Pearson, that it has no official significance whatever. It is purely an internal working paper.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: This is our best effort, Mr. Pearson, to jot down on a map what we have said in so many words. Perhaps we should give you a different map showing the same thing but without any authoritative stamp on it.

On the basis of that and on the basis of your question, Mr. Pearson, you see what is meant by reference to these defensive areas, in VII and VIII, as an initial step, which is stressed several times.

(The remainder of the discussion was  
off the record)