

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

HS L 179:125



National Library
of Sweden

Dag Hammarskjöld's saml.

L 179:126

Middle East

Meeting of Advisory Committee on UNEF

16 March 57

MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON UNEF
(Meeting held in the Secretary-General's Conference
Room on Saturday, 16 March 1957, at 12 noon)

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Last Thursday we agreed to meet again today in order to see what further developments there might be before my going to Cairo. As you know, this trip to Cairo has been postponed till Monday. I felt very strongly that for various reasons, including, of course, Mrs. Meir's arrival here, it was more useful for me to stay here for a couple of days and obtain a fuller background than I would have had without it. As to the developments in Gaza, there is in fact not very much to add by way of fresh information. I shall give you what we have -- and what we have from our own sources. I exclude -- and the gentlemen of the press must excuse me -- quite a lot of what they transmit to us as information, which is either unconfirmed or difficult to believe or for other reasons not exactly what I think we should take as a starting point for our discussion, any more than it should be a starting point for far reaching political comments in the press.

Since our last meeting two days ago, we have received the following information from Dr. Bunche and Gen. Burns. I might point out that both of them have been in Gaza since Thursday, and the information they have presented does not reflect any further contacts with high officials in Gaza beyond those reported at the last meeting. I refer, of course, especially to Dr. Bunche's conversation with President Nasser.

As for the situation in Gaza, they report that Gen. Abdel Latif, newly appointed administrative Governor of Gaza Strip, as you know, arrived along with Brigadier Helmy, who is the Liaison Officer of the Egyptian authorities accredited to the Commander of the United Nations Force, at 1640 G.M.T. on Thursday, 14 March. We have already seen the coloured stories, shall we say, about it. On Friday at two o'clock in the afternoon, Brigadier Helmy and Dr. Bunche and Gen. Burns held a conference in which the principal subject was the question of mutual accommodations for UNEF and Egyptian personnel in Gaza. It was agreed that the Egyptian officials would assist in securing new quarters for the UNEF while the Egyptian personnel would take over the building which had been occupied for several days by UNEF. The UNEF will not move to new quarters until they are properly found. The building they have used was, so to say, the administrative headquarters of the area, including all public services such as telephone, and so on.

The question of the movement into the Strip from El Arish was also taken up at the meeting yesterday, and it was agreed that joint Egyptian-UNEF posts would be created to check such movement into the area. The Egyptians would check civilian vehicles, and UNEF all the United Nations vehicles as required.

Burns and Bunche have indicated that the number of UNEF troops was spread too thinly along the armistice line, and the arrangements contemplated include measures to man the armistice line to the maximum degree in the shortest possible time. That may involve using some local population for, so to say, subordinated tasks within the area in order to liberate our own men for the task along the armistice demarcation line. However, I add this just as a side observation and not as part of the direct observation from Burns and Bunche.

The intention of our two main representatives there is to keep the situation in a low key, and naturally that means also, so to say, in a slow key.

No further information has so far been received from Bunche and Burns regarding Egyptian arrangements in the Gaza Strip.

I have only now received information from Mr. Stavropoulos, the legal counsel, who arrived in Cairo the other day and has been called up to Gaza by our representatives there for consultations on various of the legal issues continuously arising.

I think that is as complete a picture as I can give on the basis of our own reports. That, of course, does not in any way change the pattern we had to consider at our last meeting. The problem we faced then remains with us, and the problem is, of course, what balance to strike for the United Nations activities in the area in relation to Egyptian activities which have been resumed, at least on a token basis.

I remind you of the fact that Dr. Bunche, in his talk with President Nasser, received an assurance that no decisions would be taken on major issues -- in particular, not on issues covered by the statement of 22 February -- before my arrival to the area. In this context, I wish to point out that the delay in my arrival is directly in line and perfectly in order from the Egyptian point of view. That is to say, the delay has no bearing on this promise and the implementation of this promise.

I may add as a general impression that in some way the rather -- I would not use the word "tense" after having seen it used in the way it was used in one of the papers -- the situation as it was a few days ago seems to me to move in the direction of a lower temperature and more normal contact between the parties. It is, as you see, repeated in various statements that the so-called misunderstandings from the first days of the week have been brushed aside. That, I think, indicates a growing understanding among the population of the need for those arrangements and the natural character of those arrangements which were envisaged in the statement of 22 February and mentioned again in the report of the General Assembly on 8 March. For the forthcoming discussions in Cairo it is, of course, of imperative importance to have as clear a picture as possible of what may be considered to represent the considered opinion of the Assembly majority on the arrangements that should be made concerning UNEF and UNRWA in the Gaza Strip, and that is the question which was put before you last time. It is the question which remains before us and it is a question on which any clarification you might give or which might emerge from this discussion, from my point of view, would be most helpful.

Mr. LALL (India): I have first a series of questions I should like to ask. First, I think you told us last time that Governor Latif was to arrive with five members of the Egyptian administrative staff. I see that the newspapers have chosen figures which are very different from five. I think they have said -- the figures I have seen - twelve, and fifty police personnel. I was wondering whether you had information on those figures and, if the figures are higher than was first indicated, as is likely, are the additions Egyptians or are they local Palestinians?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: The information I gave you was complete, that is to say, we have nothing covering these points.

Mr. LALL (India): In the event, you do not know whether more were taken or less?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: No, we have no information. The assumption in that case should, of course, be that this report is inaccurate or at least unconfirmed by our own people.

Mr. LALL (India): Then the next thing I thought I would ask in that connexion is: has the Governor told the United Nations people when the next batch of personnel arrives.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: We have no information to that effect.

Mr. LALL (India): I note, though, that you say that the checking is to be jointly at El Arish, the Egyptians checking Egyptian vehicles --

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Civilian vehicles.

Mr. LALL (India): And the UNEF checking United Nations vehicles.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Yes.

Mr. LALL (India): If the civilian vehicles are being checked by them, does that not mean that they can bring in more personnel without any difficulty? I just asked that point, not that I am objecting to their bringing in personnel -- I want to make that quite clear -- but I just want to know the effect of that point.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I think that it may be practical if I reply right away because in that way I can cover the ground more easily. The question is quite pertinent. However, I understood this information which we got last night in a slightly different way. Arrangements on the administrative side, bringing in personnel and so on and so forth, is from my point of view to be covered by those consultations, which I at least regard as the only natural form for our co-existence. That should not have anything to do with our policing, whether we follow the lines established in such consultations or not. I understood this to mean that they did not want to have either kind of vehicles bringing in illegally people or illegally, let us say, arms or things of that kind. That was my interpretation. I have no basis for it; it is just a guess.

Mr. LALL (India): I have another question before we discuss the situation. That is this. Again the newspapers say that you had a long talk with the Israelis yesterday, with Ambassador Eban and Mr. Kidron. I was wondering if you could tell us anything about that, with reference to this situation.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Only that it was a very full restatement of the various stages in the development of the setting within which we are working as it has been understood by the Israeli side, without adding any new element but in a clear-cut way indicating that they considered whatever confusion there may be as a question primarily between them and the United States Government, not with us, or rather with me.

Mr. LALL (India): As to comments on the situation, I shall have to wait till others have asked questions, Mr. Secretary-General, and perhaps comment then, or comment now, as we all think possible.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I may add to the last point, Mr. Lall, that in this, so to say, clarification, of course, I recapitulated the steps which are official United Nations steps, which, as you know, are all documented and on the table; so I was just reviewing what we had before us as the record.

Mr. URRUTIA (Colombia): I would like to take a little time to check a little on the whole situation. I do not know what the feelings of the others are, but, as far as Gaza is concerned, when you go and speak with Nasser, I think many of us think that the important question is that the Egyptians understand that the United Nations troops cannot be used as a screen. We are there, as I said last time, under Chapter VI but we are not going to take part in any belligerency, because we are a police force. Now, on this basis I think that we must have some kind of compromise. The important thing is to have a really effective control of the situation to prevent any act of belligerency. You said a few moments ago that our people thought that our line was so thin that the only way out was to put more soldiers there and to give some of the administrative duties to some local people.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: May I interrupt at this point in order to make it clear? The basic statement on their side is that the line is so thin. They want to take over more people to the armistice demarcation line. It was my added observation in the light of all the circumstances that on the other hand we cannot permit the internal situation to get thinned out beyond a reasonable degree, that is to say, that the question certainly does arise of using the local possibilities to some extent.

Mr. URRUTIA (Colombia): Yes, I completely agree.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: But I just wanted to make clear that it is a balance.

Mr. URRUTIA (Colombia): I understand very well. But the important thing is that it is really balanced. My feeling is that it is going to be almost impossible; even with 20,000 people we would not be able to prevent the raids, if we do not have some control of the internal situation. If we have some control of the internal situation, with 1,000 people on the border, we can check the situation. If we do not have that, it is going to be almost impossible. Of course, there is an additional point. If Egypt is willing to give you assurances -- and definite assurances -- that no raids will take place, if they say they agree that no acts of this kind would be tolerated from now on, then it is much easier because then we will have a clear-cut situation. But what is very difficult is that if we do not have these assurances that no acts of belligerency will take place from now on, then the only way to control the situation is not only to have a thin line -- because we will never be able to have enough people on the border -- but to have also a strong part in the administrative obligations in Gaza.

As far as Gaza is concerned, that is the only thing on which I should like to comment. As you have asked us for ideas on the whole situation, the second point I was going to make was with regard to the Aqaba situation. In the Aqaba situation, we believe that, of course, free passage exists and must be recognized, but, as we said in the Assembly, there is no point, there is a right of control of territorial waters. I would even give an example. I saw in the newspapers two weeks ago that some Soviet ships came to the Panama Canal and they were

searched; they were controlled; they had people inside the ships, and they were delayed for three or four days. No one wants to renounce these rights. If these ships had gone to Panama near to the territorial waters of Colombia, you may be sure that we would also send some of our ships to convoy them and see what they were doing. So this right exists. What can we do in Aqaba? This is only our idea, thinking aloud on these lines. Maybe there would be a way out. It would be that both Israel and Egypt would agree not to have military forces in those regions; then perhaps what could be studied as a possibility is that this right of control -- I think that in international law they call it the droit de visite, that is, the right to visit a ship to see whether its passage is really innocent -- this right of control could be given by the parties to a third, and in that case the United Nations. We could have somebody or some ships of the United Nations take over, that is, to visit the ships and be sure that the passage is innocent. That would be one solution; perhaps there are others.

Of course, there could be recourse to the International Court on the right itself of free passage. Of course, the Court would say, "Yes, everybody has the right of free passage", but the Court will also say, "and, of course, everybody too has the right to visit the ships in territorial waters." So we are going to have --

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: May I ask an impertinent question?

Mr. URRUTIA (Colombia): Yes.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Do you think the Court will also tell us what is innocent passage?

Mr. URRUTIA (Colombia): They will not exactly, but they had some decisions on that in the old Court. They had some decisions on some ships going through the Kiel Canal and several other things in World War I. It is not quite clear. At that time, when they said they had war materials, it was

not innocent passage, but in the last war they decided that even oil was a war material; some countries decided that. So the whole issue would be difficult now.

That is one point. People are always of two categories. There are people who always find a solution for any problem, and I think you are one of those, Mr. Secretary-General; and there are people who always find a problem for any solution. Definitely, I think that this Committee backs you in wanting to find a solution for problems and not problems for solutions.

The third and most important thing is that we have a feeling -- and when I say "we" it is only a few people to whom I have spoken, because I think Mr. de Freitas Valle has done the same thing -- each of us considers we have the obligation to see what the people in our group think, and the general idea is that, if you are able to solve the main problem, the cause of the whole thing, which is the Suez Canal situation, then probably many other problems will be ironed out much more easily. If this main problem is not solved, probably we are going to have consequences in all the other matters, of such a tremendous importance that it is going to be very difficult to get anywhere. Even the Aqaba situation depends also upon that one. So we do hope that you can achieve the best you can. May I say that, even if you do not achieve 100 per cent but only 60 per cent of your aims, we will consider it a big success.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: On the raid question, as Mr. Pearson was not present last time -- you may have a report, but I would just like to mention this on the raid question -- it was said at the top level in Cairo and it is good up to a point but it leaves us with a problem in place of the solution, to use your phrase, Mr. Urrutia. It was stated flatly that there will be no more raids if the Israelis do not raid. He said he could say this confidently since the Fedayeen raids had been arranged by the Egyptian Government in reaction to Israeli retaliatory raids. That is to say, if we look at the organized raids, it is a purely political problem. I think that basic agreement is in fact in our hands, provided that we can get a mutual assurance against acts of retaliation. That is the central part of Article 1 of the Armistice Agreement in fact. However, I think that Mr. Labouisse would be much more competent than I to tell about some of the sad facts of the region. One is that the Bedouins take their herds here and

there, and demarcation lines do not exist for camels but do exist for soldiers. If the Bedouins and their camels or goats or whatever they may be are on the wrong side, the goats are likely to disappear and the Bedouins are likely to be shot at. That is the classical pattern for the beginning. Then when that has happened a few times you have a retaliation and then you have a counter-retaliation. I can state it in completely abstract terms because it happens roughly in exactly the same way, and this is the pattern. So our task would be, as I see it, a combined one: first of all, to reduce these rather innocent but sometimes rather irritating incursions to an absolute minimum -- that is a police duty -- and to get as much control over the internal situation as necessary to reduce even the possibility for raids to a minimum -- that is, of course, in ideal form, to have the population disarmed and to have the necessary check of internal security matters -- and, finally, to have it all backed by a reciprocal agreement to abstain from acts of retaliation and instead to follow normal legal procedures. I think that the three elements are all necessary in order to get a reasonable pattern but I should like, if you will permit me, to ask Mr. Labouisse, who has a much more concrete and fingertip feeling for what the situation is, to state his views. If I were to work out a formula it would include those three elements for the UNEF function in relation to the armistice line.

Mr. LABOUISSSE: I think that is true, as far as the official acts are concerned. The thing that has always been a great problem in the Gaza Strip is the action on the part of population as such. It is very difficult to say how much of it is influenced or encouraged by official policy or acts, but it is difficult with the huge number of people in the Gaza Strip with nothing to do. Even last summer the Governor General of Gaza, Major General Digby, said that he could not control the situation internally unless we sent all the students in Gaza to school (and much more than in any country in the world) as a security measure to keep them busy, otherwise these people are bound to go out and do things. This, to my mind, is one of the basic problems in the Gaza Strip today. I do not think that any policing along the demarcation line is going to stop those incursions. I think there are still a great many arms loose in the Gaza Strip in the hands of the population. People are considered as heroes when they go across the

line and are welcomed as heroes. This is a question of human nature. This is going to go on unless something more deeply is done to solve the basic problem. I repeat that I do not think this can be done by policing the demarcation line; I think it can be done only by internal security measures, and then they will be successful only if Cairo radio tells the people that the Egyptians are against actions of this type. In other words, instead of having the people feel that they are heroes in doing these things, they should be told that they are acting against the Egyptian interests by causing trouble which may bring about retaliation from the other side and cause the whole thing to blow up again. But these people are highly volatile; they are very emotional. If you go into Gaza, as I have, and live with these people, you know that any little spark can set them off. It is extremely important that they be led properly, and I think that today the only leadership that can calm them and bring tranquility to the Gaza Strip is from Egypt. I do not think the United Nations can do it; the people are too stirred up; they must have this tranquility brought to them and influenced by Egypt, and forcefully and openly.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: That corresponds to the second point in my programme, that is, the watch on the line should be extended to check on the internal security, as Mr. Labouisse indicated, joined also, of course, with the disarming of the population to the greatest possible extent. Finally, of course, a reciprocal assurance against retaliation as a means of policy.

Mr. URRUTIA (Colombia): Exactly, as Mr. Labouisse says, it proves one point, that the control of the armistice line is not the most important thing, but to get this assurance from Egypt. Then, I think, for the control, the United Nations must have some kind of authority. The important thing is to have some kind of authority that would prosecute the raiders, instead of having them proclaimed heroes. If those tribunals are going to be just Egyptian tribunals, we will never get out of this thing. The important thing would be to see that we have some kind of work done there on the administrative part, and then we will be able to see exactly how these legal procedures are run. Then probably we will check the situation. If not, we will see what happened last year, that

none of these cases are prosecuted. There was not a single man who was penalized for having committed a raid.

The last part in the control is that probably it would be very important that Egypt knows and makes it known to the people in Gaza that the United Nations cannot be used as a screen, that it will not be able to go on with these raids under the protection, under the umbrella, of the UNEF, because that would be very dangerous.

Mr. LALL (India): Mr. Secretary-General, I should like to offer two comments on the Gaza situation -- perhaps not on the Aqaba matter at this stage. First, I should like to note that General Latif on his arrival or soon after his arrival made, according to newspaper reports, what is to my mind a very helpful statement to the populace. He called upon them to be restrained. He said he did not want the people to act in such a way as to give the Israeli people an impression that order could not exist in the Gaza Strip. I think that is a very helpful approach, especially when that is put side by side with the statement you read to us, the assurance rather, that the Egyptian Government is totally opposed to raids. So, you see, this action on the internal side by General Latif fully supports that official position and is one of the three counter-measures which you have mentioned.

I would also observe that he has been there two days now and his presence seems to have a quieting effect on the internal situation, and I think that we should take particular note of this point. I find it difficult to agree with Ambassador Urrutia that the United Nations can take that sort of part in the administration of Gaza which would mean that the local people would be under a United Nations restraint or would be up against United Nations measures, as it were. I would request you to consider that point very carefully. There is one thing people will not agree to, and that is an outside-imposed administration. This historically, particularly in Asia, leads to far more unrest than the process of trying to encourage local administration plus a sense of local responsibility, plus all that goes with peace which people create for themselves, but an imposed order, whether it is created by the United Nations or anyone else from outside, will not be acceptable. We must not forget the immediate historical situation in which these areas exist, namely, of the recent removal

of outside, largely European, control. If there is any suggestion of the return of this, or rather any colour of the return of this sort of control, believe me, it just will not work; it will ruin the internal situation rather than help it. I suggest to you that the action of the Egyptian administrators on their return to Gaza, calling for restraint, is going to be a much more powerful force in getting quiet in the Gaza situation than anything the United Nations could do, and that fits in with what Mr. Labouisse said; there is nothing the United Nations could do which would bring peace to the area. It depends on the local populace and on Egypt. It is Egypt that must take responsibility for this matter, and I suggest that they are taking it, and taking it in the right way, and we would be making an error if we were to set up United Nations courts or anything like that which would punish raiders. I agree that raiders should be punished by the local courts, but for the United Nations to take a hand in that would lead to further eruptions rather than to the ending of the eruptions.

I think that those factors in the situation should be borne in mind. In my opinion, the UNEF can join in administrative duties only in a transitional period. Otherwise these dangerous popular reactions which I have mentioned will take place against the United Nations personnel, and once the United Nations personnel fell foul of the local populace, believe me, the whole United Nations programme to try to help in the pacification of this area will have been lost once and for all. Therefore, it is extremely important, in my view, that the United Nations in its functions should address itself to those responsibilities which can preserve the framework of peace, and that indeed is the important thing, rather than getting involved in the lives of the people in the Gaza Strip.

For that reason, though I perfectly realize that the strengthening of the United Nations cordon on the armistice line cannot by itself solve the problem in Gaza, I think it is most important that that strengthening should take place and that it should be backed by sound administration in Gaza, which in my opinion would be local plus Egyptian, and these forces should bring about a complete cessation of the raids.

Regarding the raids, though it seems to me that, although I entirely agree with the three facets of the three-step formula which the Secretary-General

has suggested, a fourth is essential. That is that something must be done to resettle the refugees. As long as you have this highly overpopulated area, even if there were peace between Egypt and Israel, there would be eruptions from this population; that is inevitable. Those 250,000 people just have not enough to do, enough resources, enough industry, enough agriculture, to sustain them. If this situation existed anywhere in the world, there would be raids from such an area into neighbouring territories. Given the circumstances and the historical background, the immediate background rather, in the Gaza area, naturally the raids will all be directed toward Israel, not into Sinai. So it seems to me that the fourth facet of the formula is something on the side of the settlement of the refugees, and it is my view that it is precisely there that a stronger United Nations action is required. More concentrated and more effective United Nations action is required rather than trying to take a hand in the administration. It is in that fourth aspect of the formula for Gaza that one might hope that, by agreement with those concerned, United Nations activities can be stepped up.

The Secretary-General mentioned that, so far as the future is concerned, the agreement is that he will talk in Cairo on the basis of his statement of the twenty-second. I would like to state again, as I did the other day, on Thursday, that there is a key phrase in that statement about the transitional period, and I am stating this because I know that that sort of phrase is likely to arise in any discussion on it. When I say I know, I do not mean to say that I know as regards the Egyptian Government's mind at all; I merely use that verb on the basis of my own anticipation of what would happen. I would also like to add that we would undoubtedly say that the statement of the twenty-second must be read with the Secretary-General's special memorandum of 26 February, which stresses the point of Egyptian control.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): Perhaps I ought to say a word, especially after what Mr. Lall has said, because my approach and the approach of my Government to the problem is not the same as his, though I must say that I agree 100 per cent with him when he stressed the importance of the refugee aspect of the problem. It is a serious problem -- I am talking about the Gaza

aspect, though there are three problems, Suez, Aqaba and Gaza, all of which are interconnected -- but the seriousness of this particular problem derives, I think, to a large extent from the fact that at the Assembly we were unable to even try to bring about any sort of clean-cut solution or clean-cut agreement, so that the United Nations and particularly the Secretary-General have to operate under vague and sometimes ambiguous instructions in an explosive political situation. That is not fair to the United Nations and it is not fair to the Secretary-General particularly, but it is the best we could do, and so we have to make the best of it.

The immediate danger to the situation in Gaza, as I understand it, comes from the ambiguity of the position of the United Nations there. We assumed, or, at least, I assumed -- these days not only the Israelis are operating under assumptions but we are all operating under assumptions -- I assumed that the UNEF would move in and take on the responsibility for the take-over and for the control and administration of the whole Gaza Strip, at least initially, because there was nobody that could do it initially. Though that take-over has not gone off too well; it may not have gone off too badly. The Secretary-General, in a laudable effort to give us some comfort, said that one aspect of the situation -- I assume that this is the one he was referring to -- was good up to a point. It is like saying that an egg is good up to a point. The take-over was not painless, and it was not too satisfactory. There were mobs inspired by agitators -- no doubt about that. This has caused a very bad impression in my country because Canadians were accused of killing an Arab although no Canadian soldier has fired a shot, as far as we are aware, in Gaza. Nevertheless, it suited the purpose of those who were stirring up the trouble to put it that way. So there has been an uneasy situation. The danger arises now from the reaction of the two countries most concerned to that uneasiness. If the Israelis, taking advantage of their own assumptions and expectations, say that the situation had now deteriorated in such a way which justifies their moving in, then certainly there will be trouble, and I do not see what the United Nations Force can do in that situation except to keep out of the trouble. It certainly cannot take any part one way or another, which means that it ought to move right out as quickly as possible. That could be argued. But if, on the other hand, the Egyptian Government are suspicious of UNEF or unwilling or unable to co-operate with the

tasks which the UNEF must undertake, at least in the initial stages, then there will also be trouble because that lack of co-operation will give to the Israelis perhaps the excuse which some of them may be looking for. So, to avoid this, there has to be pressure brought to bear on both Governments; for restraint on both sides.

The UNEF will be in a hopeless position in Gaza if it has to do in Gaza exactly what the Egyptian administration tells it ^{to}/do. So far as we are concerned, we would not stay, our Forces would not stay there under those conditions. We admit the legal rights of the Egyptian Government in Gaza. We admit there must be some legal restoration -- I have had enough trouble in Ottawa in making this admission that there must be some restoration -- of Egyptian administrative control and that the activities of the United Nations must be conducted within that framework. We talked about this in our House of Commons all day yesterday, and I took a lot of criticism for going that far. I have been called a Zionist stooge down here, then I went up to Ottawa, where I am now known as Nasser's catspaw. I must be following a reasonably neutral policy. While we admit all that, we do not admit that the UNEF should not be given the full co-operation of the Government of Egypt in carrying out essential duties. If that co-operation is not forthcoming I do not see how it can function.

The effort, if it were made by Egypt, to control the UNEF in the Gaza Strip in a way which could be put forward as exercising complete domination over it, would finish the UNEF so far as we are concerned. We have one specific instance of that effort, which has been played up by the press in our country into a sort of major issue. We have heard much about it. The role of the press in these matters, I must say, is deplorable; it is awful. Nevertheless, this particular problem exists and would have existed whether the press was irresponsible or not.

We have been asked to send forward reinforcements, and we have agreed to do that -- a reconnaissance squadron. If that squadron, which is now in Naples, is not permitted to go forward because of the fact that Nasser and his Government

can veto that kind of movement, then again we would not be able to participate in the Force any longer; we would pull our whole Force out. We would hate to do that, because, I suppose, that would create almost insuperable difficulties for the rest of the Force because all the administrative and transportation arrangements and so on are Canadian. That would be an unhappy course for us to follow, but it is one which the present state of public opinion in Canada would make necessary, and that is the course we would take. I do not think this is going to happen, and I know how hard you Mr. Secretary-General have been working to avoid it. But it does illustrate not only the complexity but the explosive character of the problem. I cannot see any way out of it except to call on the Israelis, and we are doing our best -- I know other Governments are too -- to exercise restraint in interpreting what is going on in Gaza to put in at least the best possible light from their point of view until it is proven that there is a real deterioration.

They have no right to assume a deterioration yet, because in the first two or three weeks there was bound to be difficulty and confusion. At the same time, it is necessary to bring all the pressure we can on the Egyptian Government to co-operate to the maximum extent with UNEF and to reserve for future consideration all these problems that we have been talking about today. Surely their needs are met if they get a Governor in there and an Egyptian flag and a mission, and let UNEF do the practical work until other arrangements can be made by the Secretary-General. That, I am sure, can be done by the Egyptian Government. It can call off some of its publicists, some of its wilder men, and tell them that this is the time to write with restraint and to act with restraint -- which is not an easy thing to do in any country, particularly in the Middle East.

I have not been able to put forward anything positive I'm afraid, but I wish to underline the difficulties, particularly about participating in UNEF, unless this problem of the relationship of the United Nations to Egypt in the administration of Gaza is solved in a way which is satisfactory to our Government.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I have just received a couple of cables which add rather important information to our discussion. One of them comes as an expression to give some consolation to Canadian opinion, and it has arrived at exactly the right moment. Helmy's agreement to the arrival of Canadians has been received. Helmy is the Liaison Officer. The order has been given.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): That, if I may interrupt, will be a great help to us, but not if it means that our reinforcements have gone forward now because the Egyptian Government has agreed to allow them to. While major changes of composition and any change of the function and that sort of thing might require the consent of the Government of Egypt, if it got out that 122 Canadians who had been requested by the United Nations to be added to the force could not go to that force without the formal agreement of the Egyptian Government, that would be almost as bad as keeping them out all together. I take it that you do not mean that.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL; As you know, it has always been part of the general plan of long standing, and the snag which developed was a purely temporary thing which might happen at any time. My view of all this question which is in itself important is that I agree perfectly with this consultation along general lines. Only the major changes and the moves brought up in such a form should really require discussion, and we are past that stage. On the other hand, if we run into a situation like this one, my way of acting is that of course I insist on our position -- there is no Egyptian veto. If an Egyptian "no" were to be maintained, they would activate it as a major question and as a major question it would have to be handled by me. On the other hand, at times when they say "We don't wish it now", or whatever they might say, I feel that the right way to handle it is to enter into discussion and state that we don't accept this, that it is not a good idea. We should follow through with the plans; so long as there is not a "no" to such a demarche, I do not regard it as an attempt to veto -- it is a snag. We have to make that distinction.

The other piece of information that we have here runs roughly as follows -- I shall not take it in full. Despite the presence of the Governor since Thursday, there has been no significant change thus far in the role and activities of UNEF in the Strip, which is carrying on in the same way as in the pre-Governor period. Then there is something which has a slightly amusing touch: "However, we plan to turn over the prison on Sunday".

Well, so far so good. Thus, about two-thirds of the force in the Strip is at present engaged in internal security duties. Then it goes on to point out the relative importance for needs determined by the over-all situation, the potential dangers, and on that basis he draws attention to just the problem that we have in mind: how to provide for internal security if the positions along the Armistice Demarcation Line are to be strengthened. What he is aiming at is a distribution of about two-thirds of the troops along the demarcation line and one-third for internal security duties and in reserve. However, from that would follow such a weakening on the inside as to require acceptance from our

side of the use of local guards. That is not the decision on their side, but it is a problem which is raised. It is a problem which I think does require very serious attention from the points of view raised here -- it is a problem which certainly also requires very prompt attention.

However, there is another question which also requires consideration here and which, in a certain sense, is much more delicate; in fact, it is contradictory to something which has been said here. "It should be made known" -- of course on condition of approval from here -- "that UNEF understands its mandate from the General Assembly to require it to oppose by force any attempted military or para-military incursion across the line from either direction." That is to say, they assume here that they have the right to shoot in case of a breach of article 2 of the Armistice Agreement -- military or para-military incursions. It is not only assuming a duty under the Armistice Agreement, but also assuming it in a form which of course is extreme. This is certainly a question for consideration by this Committee.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): I shall be glad to give you my view on that. If it means that if the Israeli Government felt, for good or bad reasons, that the situation was such that they had to carry out their threat -- because it has been a threat -- to move into Gaza again, and that in that contingency the UN force should resist them by military force, I could not agree. In the reverse situation, there might be a situation -- this is less likely, of course -- where the Egyptian army had been ordered to infringe the clause of the Armistice Agreement by sending more than three battalions into Gaza.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: They have never had that many there.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): I say that this is not likely at this time. But by the same reasoning UNEF might have to resist that kind of movement. In either case I think it would be quite impossible for UNEF to resist a military move by either side. To think otherwise is certainly not our understanding of the functions of their role as a police force.

Mr. ENGEN (Norway): I should like to support that view. I should like to ask who assumed these things? That was not clear to me.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: General Burns and Dr. Bunche.

Mr. ENGEN (Norway): In what context?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: As a question to us, or to you.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): It is a difficult problem for them on the spot, because there might be isolated people going back and forth across the frontier and, as a police force, they will have to try to stop that. But that is not a military movement.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I would like to add a few observations here on the situation. I am quite in agreement that to use UNEF as a fighting force is entirely beyond the mandate. It has been explicitly said that it is not a military force for such purposes. On the other hand, as Mr. Pearson has just pointed out, police functions may require some use of force. I would consider it highly doubtful whether it would be a wise policy for UNEF to use force and to shoot even in case of raids. Warning shots, yes; that is one thing. But to shoot in order to stop them is an entirely different matter. However, that is a weakness in the whole construction, if we are to assume these extended functions under the Armistice Agreement. I stress again, the functions under the Armistice Agreement. I can see the possibility that both sides might agree to using force for police purposes on the Armistice Demarcation Line. That, I think, would create an entirely different situation. If we had a ten-mile neutral zone astride the demarcation line, I would definitely say that such a zone could be neutralized and that within that zone we could have far-reaching functions. But we are not yet there at all.

I want to point out that there is first of all the distinction between the two kinds of operation, resisting a military move and exerting police functions with force, and that there is further in the second case the possibility to qualify or elaborate the functions if it is done in agreement with both parties. How the parties would agree to it when they both reserve their right to retaliation strikes me as somewhat dark. However, I just wanted to mention that.

Mr. LALL (India): Since we also have forces there, I do want to say that we would entirely agree with the view that UNEF cannot take on direct military functions. I should have thought that the answer to the question put to you would be to refer to the functions of UNEF as accepted by the Assembly in your report, document A/3302, paragraph 15. But at the same time UNEF, by its mere presence there, does act as a deterrent. I think it is relevant to recollect in this connexion what is reported to have been said by Mr. Ben-Gurion, that one reason that would make it difficult for the Israelis to go back to Gaza is that they would have to cross this line of UNEF. I would say, in parenthesis, that it is possible that this question has arisen because Ben-Gurion has said this, and they wanted some clarification. However, the mere presence of the force there is a deterrent. Of course it would have police functions because it has been agreed that it is more than a mere observer corps. That has been agreed by the General Assembly.

May I make some very brief comments on three points mentioned by Mr. Pearson. He said that it is a pity that the Assembly was not more clear cut in its directives on this matter relating to Gaza. Of course, if it could have been more clear cut, so much the better. But wouldn't the effort to be more clear cut have really meant that we would have tried to rewrite the Armistice Agreement in the Assembly, and that is something which the Assembly could not have done. By upholding the Armistice Agreement, which it did very firmly in its second resolution of 22 February, it has been clear cut so far as this problem is concerned up to a point. It has been clear cut in this respect, that it has firmly upheld the Armistice Agreement and all the terms of the Agreement. I think that one must remember that.

My comment on Mr. Pearson's remarks relating to the impossibility of UNEF acting under direct Egyptian control and domination would be this: Egypt has entered into agreement with the United Nations regarding some aspects of UNEF, more directly as to the functions which might be performed by UNEF in Gaza. These are to be discussed, we understand, by the Secretary-General with the Egyptians in the very near future. Now if there is an agreement between the Secretary-General and the Egyptian Government, then the question of domination or control would not seem to me to arise, and I think we ought to be able to get to a satisfactory position by the fact of getting an agreement which would undoubtedly define more clearly and perhaps more satisfactorily for Mr. Pearson than the General Assembly resolutions what UNEF could do in this area. This may be a purely temporary problem pending these consultations in Egypt, which we hope will go well.

Finally, may I say that Mr. Pearson suggested that at least for the present Egypt could be content with leaving the practical work to UNEF and having its own flag and a Governor and a mission in the Strip, and that surely that would be the best thing. Personally, I doubt very much whether that would work so far as the populace was concerned. That is the trouble with that approach. It might be possible theoretically, but I don't think it would work with the 250,000 people of Gaza, unless the Egyptian Government was able to reach agreement along those lines with the Secretary-General and could blare forth that agreement and make it well known in Gaza. But I doubt very much whether that is the sort of picture that will emerge; I do think something will emerge by agreement.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): It might work if they were left alone.

Mr. LALL (India): If who were left alone?

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): The people of Gaza.

Mr. LALL (India): That is where I disagree. The assumption you make is that the people will take an outside imposed rule.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): The people of Gaza have been taking that for about a thousand years. Since when have the people of Gaza governed themselves?

Mr. LALL (India): People are people, and people want to govern themselves. The whole movement in Palestine against the mandate, and so forth, is all part of this desire to govern themselves. I just suggest to you that it wouldn't work because there are too many forces not only in Gaza but all around in Asia and Africa which would make that sort of approach absolutely impossible.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): It wouldn't work permanently, but I am thinking of it for the time being -- leave them alone for the time being. The United Nations is not an imperialist power.

Mr. LALL (India): I know, but it mustn't become one. I agree that the United Nations is not one, but if it does anything to become one it will be a sad day for the UN. The UN authority in Gaza will disappear if it does. We must not isolate the problem of Gaza from the historical events behind it and the whole upsurge of the area.

Mr. ENGEN (Norway): I might suggest that in the context of our discussion it is natural to make a separation between two fields of administration in which the UN could play a role in Gaza. The one is where we must have something which is acceptable not only to Egypt but also to the UN, and that is in the field of internal security. That is the only field which matters, because with respect to practically all other fields of administration in Gaza, such as social welfare, the care of refugees, hospitals, and other functions, I am sure there will be no major obstacles in any degree in which the United Nations would like to function in those particular fields. At any rate, the question of internal security is the crucial field, in which the relationship between

Egypt and the UN is certainly of extreme importance. I do not want to go into the details of how that could be arranged, but I think it is obvious that two considerations must be taken care of. The arrangements made must be satisfactory and acceptable to the population. Without that, the arrangements will not be effective no matter how many people we put in there. On the other hand, of equal or greater importance is that the Government in Cairo must do its full share to solve the problem of internal security, and that is to impress upon the population the need for tranquility in the area and the need for the best possible relationship between the population and the UN organ there. In fact, there must be 100 per cent acceptance by the Egyptian Government of the functions of the UN in the area, with all the implications of that acceptance. I think that the yardstick to be applied in discussing with the Egyptian authorities the administrative setup in this particular field would be the one which also decides whether or not we actually succeed in the transfer.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: In that context I think we should note carefully the fact that the Egyptians, in spite of this so-called take-over, have not even raised the question of internal security. It has come from our side because it absorbs two-thirds of our force. It doesn't say anything definite concerning the arrangements but, on the other hand, it indicates that obviously the Egyptian side does not attach a high symbolic value on their side to this specific problem, which gives me a feeling that it might be easier to solve it if one isolates that as the main part of administration which must be under our control. Then if we continue to talk about administration in the broadest sense, which is bound to irritate just for the reasons indicated by Mr. Lall -- just thinking aloud in the way we are permitted to do here -- I have a certain inclination, therefore, to aim at that point and take the rest. It is just a question of what seems to make sense, a balance which is between Egyptian possibilities and our own possibilities.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): I think that the most important part of the administration is internal security. If we get that cleared up we won't have to worry too much about the post office...

Mr. URRUTIA (Colombia): ... and the prison.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: What I mean is that there is a certain danger tactically in the approach of the type prevalent in some quarters, that is to ask for all with the obvious possible outcome that we don't get a thing.

Mr. URRUTIA (Colombia): I should like to make a remark on Mr. Lall's statement. I agree with him, of course, that it is not the UN that can take over the administration. I agree that it would be best if the local administration could handle the whole situation. But as Mr. Pearson said, there is a transitional period and in this transitional period we have the fact that Egypt last year said that they were not in a position to control the situation. My feeling is that this transitional period will end as soon as we see that the local authorities are in a position to give us all the necessary assurance that no belligerent acts will be committed. As soon as Egypt convinces the population that raids are forbidden, then they can take over the whole thing. In the meantime, in the transitional period, I agree with the Secretary-General.

As regards the military functions, I agree completely with what has been said here. They are police functions and not military functions. I was very glad to see that the Secretary-General went even further and said that even in police action they should try to avoid any shooting. I am quite concerned. I would not like to be called in the Security Council in a few months and have it stated that one of our soldiers had provoked an incident. It can turn out like that.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): The best police forces in the world carry only truncheons.

Mr. de FREITAS-VALLE (Brazil): I shall be very brief, as we are approaching the important period of lunch time. I want to express my agreement that UNEF is not a fighting force. It is a police force, and we must really try to avoid the use of arms of war. But I think that there is something that has not been mentioned here. UNEF has been established to help Egypt, and Egypt is forgetting this a little bit too much. I heard a word from my friend Mr. Lall that UNEF was outside rule for Gaza. I do not like very much the idea that we are now going to give that building over and that they are going to move us some place perhaps outside of Gaza. It seems to me that everything that has been done by Egypt has been to minimize the importance of UNEF in the Strip. If Egypt is not prepared to maintain order, as has been said, then I think that we are going in a very wrong direction, and perhaps in a very dangerous direction.

At today's special session of disagreements, I would like to disagree with both Mr. Urrutia and Mr. Lall. Mr. Urrutia said that the main question was the Suez Canal, and Mr. Lall said that the main question was the resettlement of one million men. I don't think so. I think that the main problem is for the United Nations to convince Egypt to make peace with Israel. They can arrange things very much better. That is something which, although it is difficult, we must always attempt, because Israel was practically founded by the United Nations. If the situation exists in which Egypt ignores the State of Israel, it will always be impossible to settle or even to make arrangements for the Suez Canal or for Aqaba.

Mr. MIR KHAN (Pakistan): I have very little to say. I would only be repeating what I said before, that is that a great deal depends on your forthcoming conversations with the Egyptian Government, in which I would like to say again I feel there are two things which should be of chief consideration. One is the planning of the Egyptian element taking over part or all or in a progressive manner the administration of Gaza; secondly, and I consider this to be just as important, is the evidence that there is enough liaison, discussion and collaboration between UNEF or UN authorities and the Egyptian Government.

I have once or twice when I have asked questions shown my anxiety and concern even about small matters which perhaps need not go to the Press, but when they come out in the Press with the colour that certain things have happened without proper liaison or even without formal or courteous information to the UN, they take on an unnecessary importance. That is what I would suggest you might consider when you have discussions with Egypt -- setting up a system by which whatever collaboration there is, and I am sure that there will be enough collaboration, between the Egyptian Government and the UN authorities there and yourself here, that whatever appears should appear as if it were in full discussion, collaboration and liaison between the two parties.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: There is one point I should like to make concerning internal security. You remember that is also a question put to us in this cable -- it is their own suggestion and not an Egyptian one for a certain deployment and to use local security guards. It must be perfectly clear, as I see it, that internal security is an either/or, as far as responsibility goes. I cannot see the house divided on that score; that is to say, if local police were to be used, it seems to me that they must be under UN orders. If they are not under UN orders, if they are under local or Egyptian orders, I fail to see how we could assume any responsibility at all for internal security. That is to say, we must put it up to the Egyptians before accepting the arrangements here that they agree to these people being under UN orders, whatever legal construction is given to it.

I would say one thing more: that they make that stand in public. Short of having such a thing said in public, we will have an operation which I think would be extremely messy in relation to the population. That is to say, my suggested reply to this would be, "Yes, by all means, provided that you establish an agreement with the Egyptians first that they are under your authority and that that is made known and endorsed publicly by Egypt. If that is so, all right, go ahead. If not, you will have to raise the question with us again."

To postpone for that purpose by twenty-four hours the strengthening of the demarcation line may be a bit worrying, but I think it is less dangerous for the future than to let loose some vague arrangement concerning internal security now. That is my reaction to the situation. I do not know how you look at it.

Mr. LALL (India): May I ask a question about that? These remarks you made, Mr. Secretary-General, I take it refer to the present transitional period.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Of course. It belongs to the last phrase in the famous statement. It belongs to the last part of the 22 February statement; that is to say, it is covered by your phrase "transitional".

Mr. LALL (India): Secondly, you, I take it, then hold the view that during the transitional period the responsibility for security in Gaza must rest with the UN.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Not necessarily, but we have it at present de facto, without Egyptian objection. If we move out of that, as we do in effect, and if we start using local police, we should move in a situation which is not ambiguous. That is to say, with facts being

what they are, we are exerting the police functions. We have the internal security responsibility at present. I would not take this suggested step without having tried to get Egyptian agreement. If the Egyptians refuse agreement, that would create a new situation which we would have to consider.

Mr. LALL (India): Yes, but I do interpret your remarks to mean that you do not see the possibility of turning over completely to the Egyptians or to the local police under the Egyptians certain aspects of security arrangements.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I have no reason to consider it at this stage, as we are in charge. If the Egyptians were to say "no", your question would arise: Should we make this an issue or should we accept it, and if so, under what conditions can we accept it?

I should like to add one observation there which has quite a bearing from my point of view, and I think it is a good argument in relation to the Egyptians. If UNEF is deployed along the Armistice Demarcation Line, which UNEF has to safeguard against things which may have their origin within the Strip, it would be completely absurd for UNEF, with Egyptian consent, to guard against raids across the Armistice Demarcation Line. Such raids are organized on the inside. That is to say, from my point of view, the function given to UNEF at the Armistice Demarcation Line and approved by Egypt necessarily leads to a clear-cut agreement with Egypt as to what happens within the Strip, because we cannot work at cross purposes. There could be a reasonable degree of checking from the UNEF side on what happens, not in distrust of the Egyptians but in view of the fact that it might be somewhat difficult to control. For that reason, it seems to me that certain internal security functions derive naturally from the functions

at the Armistice Demarcation Line and can be presented to the Egyptians as a logical consequence of their acceptance of no raids, with UNEF guarding against raids. For that reason, I cannot see, let us say, unconditional handing over of internal security to the local police and the Egyptians. If it reached that stage, it must be at least on an understanding as to what we can request from their internal security measures, so as to be safe against operations back of UNEF contrary to the very purposes of UNEF.

That, I think, is a perfectly reasonable stand from the Egyptian point of view, which has nothing to do with rights or sovereignty or anything of the kind. It is extremely logical and in line with their stated policy. For that reason, it is a minimum line from my point of view. It doesn't arise at present, because at present the question seems to me to be another one. We retain responsibility for internal security but we want to have certain co-operation and certain help, and we want to have it made clearer that in taking such help short of an agreement of the other type we also have the right to give the necessary orders.

Mr. LALL (India): May I say this, Mr. Secretary-General, that we are now really getting on to the things that you will be discussing in Cairo, and I don't suppose you want us to do that just at this moment.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I do want you to do that.

Mr. LALL (India): Then I would say this: I think that this approach -- and I don't contest the logic of it or the abstract reasonableness of it -- will raise two direct questions at once. One is: Will the Israelis agree to the same thing on the other side in their territory?

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): What do you mean by the same thing in their territory?

Mr. LALL (India): UNEF participation in the Security arrangements in the Negev. After all, the status of Israel in the Negev is not a whit different from the status of Egypt in Gaza under the Armistice Agreement. So you will immediately get this reaction: Will they agree to the same thing in the Negev where their position is precisely similar to the Egyptian position under the Armistice Agreement in Gaza?

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): There is a difference, though, in regard to the action we have taken at the recent session of the General Assembly. Surely we have in our resolutions and reports dealt with Gaza; we certainly have not dealt with the Negev in any way.

Mr. LALL (India): The whole business of getting UNEF on both sides of the Armistice Line is because that is regarded as a fair proposition, and that would lead us to have these tentacles on both sides of the Armistice Line, in the Negev as well as in Gaza. I am merely anticipating questions which will arise.

Secondly, there is another very reasonable approach, to get a complete oneness of the picture from the Armistice Line itself to the internal situation in Gaza, and that is the Egyptians might well say: "No, we will run the internal security of Gaza, but we do agree that it is absolutely essential for you to know what is going on in Gaza internally, because you are protecting the Armistice Line, and for that reason we would be glad to let you have the liaison personnel with our security personnel." That is also reasonable.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: But that belongs to the next stage when and if they turn it down. There is another difference between the two cases you raised, Mr. Lall. On the Israeli side it is not a question of raids which can be checked by internal security measures. Because the raids from the Israeli side have, as it is now on record, always been, so to say, ordered raids -- they have been retaliatory raids by military units. On the Israeli side, it is not a question of having police control; it is a question of having clear assurances from the Israeli Government. It is a somewhat different thing. The Israeli situation is similar to the Egyptian governmental situation, and we all know that if the Egyptians wanted to stage real raids, that would not be a question for our internal security. It is also a question for political settlement.

Mr. LALL (India): Yes, but I don't want to argue the point further. It could be argued that the fedayeen raids were controlled by the Egyptian Government.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Those controlled by the Egyptian Government, I think, statistically were very rare. I take the Egyptian and not the Israeli stand on that question.

Mr. ENGEN (Norway): I do not know what the Egyptians are going to suggest to you, but I must confess that my impression is slightly more optimistic than Mr. Lall's in connexion with claims of equal arrangements.

I would like to ask you this question, in view of the question raised by Mr. Lall. The question of the deployment of the force on the armistice line, a kind of buffer zone on the line -- how do you feel about approaching this whole question? That might create different conditions not only on which to negotiate but also with respect to what arrangements are not only necessary but possible without taking up that matter.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: The matter has been kept alive, as you know, the whole time. It has not been pressed by us because I felt that other matters had a kind of priority. But I have a very strong feeling that we are running short of time, because the Cairo talks undoubtedly would give much more satisfactory results if we had at least an acceptance of the idea without having worked it out in any detail on the Israeli side. So far I have not been able to convince them of this, nor do I think others who have tried have been more successful. I regret it because it does mean that we will probably have arrangements less satisfactory in Gaza than we could have had, and then to turn the clock back, once we perhaps succeed on the Israeli side, will prove, of course, ever so much more difficult than to work in another setting now.

However, may I return for a moment to the other question, that of internal security and what I mentioned in that context, which in fact was a vague indication of the reply I would like to give now, that is a counter question to these representatives. That question requires a reply this very afternoon, and for that reason the discussion here has immediate significance. I repeat what I said: I do feel that we should not run into this because of our need to get people up to the Armistice Demarcation Line. It is better to try to reach an agreement now on the authority and on the responsibility concerning internal security, although that in a certain sense, of course, anticipates what should be discussed in Cairo. But that would be my reply. And, as a matter of course, if we can go ahead and things are all right, then I wouldn't bother you with it again at this stage. On the other hand, in case of difficulties and an Egyptian "no", I consider it just as obvious that we should discuss the matter again, because then the question would arise in a very acute form of who will have the responsibility for the internal security and in what conditions.

From the early part of our discussion here today I think we can conclude that this is a key question if not the key question.

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): If the Egyptian Government should bring up the relationship between internal security in Gaza and the Negev, and they might well do that, it might be worthwhile mentioning, if it needed mentioning, that there are 250,000 refugees in Gaza and that problem does not exist in the Negev. Also there is the question of the security of the UN forces themselves in a densely populated explosive area like Gaza. There is no question of security, in so far as the security of the UN forces is concerned, in the Negev. Perhaps that is a point that might be made.

One other question: What would happen if the situation deteriorated very badly and very quickly? I take it that the General Assembly could be called together equally quickly to deal with it.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Within twenty-four hours. With the present decision, I would not consider that difficult at all, because the meeting of the General Committee would be purely formal -- it would be from one afternoon to the next morning, in fact.

Mr. LABOUISSSE: May I say a word on this question of security. I think that I must do so because of the UNRWA interest in it. I don't thank that Mr. Pearson meant to leave UNRWA out, but you know that we have in the Strip in addition to UNEF international servants of the General Assembly working with the refugees. These people are in greater danger, I think, than is UNEF. The other day, as a matter of fact, we had to withdraw a man because he was doing his duty, and twice local people tried to get into his house. The last one was caught by one of the UNEF guards and was a man who had on him a tommy gun, a pistol and two grenades. This is the sort of life that these UN officials are living in the Middle East today, and particularly in the Gaza Strip.

Therefore, when we talk of internal security, I have very much in mind not only the security of UNEF but the security of the refugees themselves and the security of my staff in particular. I think this is something which none of us in the UN should forget -- none of the countries should forget that these people are out there doing that work today.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: May I add on that point that when we come to the next stage, that is to say the stage which develops in case we are not responsible for and in control of the internal security, I consider it an obvious condition from our side that we remain the guardians of the UNRWA people and installations. That is our own property and they are our own people, and we can under no circumstances give up on that. That is an issue of very grave significance. It does not necessarily give rise to a question of principle.

Mr. URRUTIA (Colombia): Your plan is to leave when?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Monday afternoon. I would be very happy if you would reserve time on Monday morning for another meeting. Just as we wish to keep you informed step by step of the developments, we are rather anxious also to get your advice. For that reason, before I leave I certainly would appreciate having another chance to meet with you.

Mr. URRUTIA (Colombia): At approximately what time?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Let us make it at 11 o'clock, if that is satisfactory.
