

Speeches, statements and press conference by Dag Hammarskjöld concerning Mi...

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Statement by D.H. at U.N. Security
Council meeting.

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STATEMENT BY SECRETARY-GENERAL DAG HAMMARSKJOLD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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