

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

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Transcript of D.H.'s press conference
held at U.N. H.Q.

TRANSCRIPT OF SECRETARY-GENERAL'S PRESS CONFERENCE
HELD AT UN HEADQUARTERS ON THURSDAY, 4 APRIL 1957

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Ladies and gentlemen, I think that the last time we met in a press conference of this type was early in November. As you know, there has been a firm tradition at the United Nations that during General Assembly time there are no press conferences given by the Secretary-General. The General Assembly ended about a month ago and, as you will remember, the first couple of weeks after the end of the General Assembly session was a time of unusual pressure -- I would not say tension but really unusual pressure. Then I had to go to Cairo, and I have just barely managed to put my little shop in order after my return from Cairo. So this really represents the first time that I could usefully, following the tradition of this house, get in touch with you again, and I welcome the opportunity. I welcome the opportunity although I am very well aware of the fact, which I think you appreciate too, that the situation is one which does present some difficulties. It does present some difficulties because, following the rather new developments of operations in this house, and for the Secretary-General, I am deeply engaged in work on behalf of Governments and as a link between Governments. What I do in such capacity is only to a limited extent my own property. If somebody confides in you and gives you his confidence as a basis for assistance that you may give him, of course you have to keep the trust. That is not diplomacy; that is even less quiet diplomacy. That is just the simple rule of the game which we all apply in our private lives, and as a matter of course I also have to apply it in my professional life. However, this has one consequence; and that is of course that sometimes, when there is a complete reply to a question which you may raise, I would consider it a breach of trust if I were to give it in that completeness. I am sure that you appreciate that, and I am sure that you will bear with me if, for such reasons under the laws which must rule my activities, as they rule the activities of all of us in our human relations, I have to be a little bit more restrained in my replies than I would hope or you would like me to be.

After having said this, I invite you to start asking your questions.

(more)

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary-General, before your very hungry press corps eats up all the time, I should like to say, first of all, on behalf of the correspondents that we are gratified to welcome you back again to a press conference. We have no illusions about the way you have been spending your time. We are happy that you can spend some of it again with us in press conferences, and we anticipate hopefully that this will again become a continuing institution.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I can assure you that that is my intention, and that is the very spirit in which this press conference is being held today. As I said, it is just a resumption as early as it proved possible for me to resume the old tradition.

QUESTION: In one of your reports during the debates last year and early this year, you referred to one of the clauses in the Armistice Agreement between Israel and Egypt and you stated, I believe, something to the effect that it assimilates into a non-aggression pact. I was wondering what progress you made along those lines during your recent discussion in Cairo with President Nasser.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: This is a point on which I can give you some hard news in the sense that on this as on other points, I have tried to follow up the plans I presented in my reports; that is to say, in the effort to get back towards an implementation of the Armistice Agreements as they were intended to function, not as they turned out to function, after years of deterioration, I have approached the Government of Egypt and the Government of Israel in particular concerning Article I, the one to which you refer. So far, I have no replies, but it happened a short while ago, and it is for that reason no source of surprise that so far there is nothing on the table.

(more)

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary-General, what at present is the precise role and, I might say, the situation of UNEF and of the United Nations as a whole in Gaza and in Sharm el-Sheikh?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: As you know, the UNEF is in Sharm el-Sheikh under the very rules and under the principles which were spelled out concerning that specific point in the report, I believe, of 24 January. I have nothing to add to what I said in that report on that score.

As regards Gaza, that is the point of concentration of the UNEF troops. The UNEF functions in Gaza for those purposes which were laid down by the General Assembly. There is a definition of the functions of UNEF, and that definition has not been changed; that definition applies in Gaza as elsewhere. That means that the UNEF has as a predominant /function^{to} safeguard peace between the two countries which recently have been in open conflict.

QUESTION: I have two questions. According to the Israel press, you intend again to go next week to the Middle East, this time including Israel in your visit. Is that correct?

Some days ago the American press told a story about the plan suggested by the United Nations to build a mined fence along the border of the Gaza Strip. This morning we learned that Israel intends to build such a fence on its own territory along the Gaza border. What have you to say on this project? Has it been suggested by the United Nations? What is the attitude of Egypt to this plan? Is it at all realistic?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: You have asked two rather different questions, and I may reply to them separately, as I hope you intend me to do.

On the first one, I just have nothing to say because I have not laid down any plans for a return or any plans excluding a return. The situation is just simply that my suitcases are, so to say, always packed in a situation like the present one. If it would serve a useful purpose, I would be happy to go, and go at once, to Egypt or Israel, whatever is called for. As you raised the point, I may mention that in these cases I must generally be guided by the immediate need. I have just returned here last week straight from Cairo. I do not think

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that there is any need for much imagination to see that there were some rather urgent matters for me to attend to, referring also to the Canal talks, and perhaps especially the Canal talks, of which you are well informed. Therefore, the information you quote from the Israel papers is premature and not based on anything said from here or on any plans laid here. But, on the other hand, quite frankly, if the situation develops so that it calls for such a direct contact I would be happy to take it.

The second question, concerning the fence, is, as you know, a question of very long date. It arose in the discussions last year. It has arisen again. There have been discussions between the Commander and his representatives on the one side and the authorities on the other side. I am not fully informed about how far those plans or those discussions have advanced as of the present. Personally, I believe that the fence idea has advantages but that it should, like all such ideas, be applied with some common sense. We do not solve the problems of that area by building up a fence all along the Armistice Demarcation Line, all/ ^{around} Gaza, but there are sensitive spots which in our experience present special difficulties for shepherds, marauders and what-not, and where the policing activities at the Armistice Demarcation Line by the UNEF would be facilitated by the erection of such a fence. But frankly, that seems to me to be, on the whole, a technical detail which I leave, with the greatest confidence, to the Commander.

QUESTION: Mr. Hammarskjold, I should like to ask a little more basic question. You had many long talks with Prime Minister Nasser. What can you say now, at the end of those talks, as to your impression of his willingness to co-operate with the aims and purposes of the United Nations General Assembly?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I think I can ^{speak} with confidence built on what, so to say, has emerged in practice. I should say --speaking more about what you have in your hands than about this and that for the future -- that as to the proposals we made, the Commander of the UNEF and myself in Cairo, we got full co-operation and you can draw your own conclusions from that.

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QUESTION: Mr. Secretary-General, may I ask whether the Canal talks that are now going on are, in your estimation, in line with your proposals of 24 October, including your proposals for policing and arbitration?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: The Egyptian proposals, as they were published, do not run counter to the 24 October letter but cover only part of the ground. There are points in that letter which have been, if not left aside, at least not elaborated. For that reason my reply to your first basic question must be that there is no conflict between the proposals now put forward and the proposals of 24 October, although they do not fully correspond, as the Egyptian proposals do not cover the whole distance of the 24 October proposals.

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As to the special question of arbitration, I think that the Egyptian Government goes practically the whole way on the 24 October paper.

QUESTION: In following that up, may I ask whether it is your intention to promote your 24 October proposals in more detail and more fully?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I have never abandoned that basis for my activities. That is the direction in which I try to influence the development to the best of my ability and with the somewhat meagre equipment which I necessarily have. As you know, the Secretary-General in such conditions is in a situation rather different from the situation of a Government.

QUESTION: May I ask a more general question. As Secretary-General, do you think it a propitious and wholesome development that the actual responsibility for dealing with world tensions has shifted and is shifting from the Security Council to the General Assembly?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: This is a difficult value judgment. I think we should see a little more what comes out of actual developments in the next Assembly or in the next couple of years. I must say that the constitutional development which has taken place is one which I personally feel requires very, very careful attention. The increased responsibility of the General Assembly itself I do not think is anything which should give anybody cause for concern. But it is, of course, something which at the same time calls for some serious thinking so that we do not somehow unwittingly and unwillingly get off the rails. That is to say, for me it is a development about which it is impossible to say whether it is, in your words, sound or not. It will depend on the wisdom with which we are able to fill out the framework which has been created by the shift of balance constitutionally.

In summing up, I want to say that to me it does represent a serious problem to which we must give all attention.

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QUESTION: Mr. Hammarskjold, reporters in the Gaza Strip have recently reported that fedayeen groups have begun to reorganize in the Strip and that civilians in the Strip are carrying arms -- revolvers and sub-machine guns. Has that information come to your attention? What is being done about it? May I conclude with the more general question: Who actually is in charge of the internal policing of the Gaza Strip?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: There is no report confirming the newspaper stories in this respect. The Commander has not found it necessary to draw my attention to any such developments so far.

As to the responsibility, the UNEF has a position and works under such arrangements that it should be able to see to it that in this way there is no development behind them which contradicts the purposes they are serving at the Armistice Demarcation Line.

QUESTION: In a report made in the past on the Middle East, you happened to point out one of the difficulties in implementing the Armistice Agreements between the parties as being the different interpretations they had of these Agreements. At that time, as I understood it, there was no specific machinery in mind to bridge this difficulty. Now that you have said today that you intended to go back to the implementation of the Armistice Agreements as they were intended to be implemented, I wonder whether you have any specific machinery to bridge this difficulty which you mentioned in an earlier report with regard to the interpretation of Armistice Agreements?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: You are right in referring to that problem because it is a very crucial one in the whole question of implementation. At that stage, I well remember that I said that I had drawn the attention of the Governments to certain weaknesses in the machinery. You know that quite a few things have happened since then. For that reason, they have been more engaged with other problems which seemed to them to be perhaps less academic.

I myself feel the way I felt then. I would like to bring their attention again to this problem because I believe that that is one of the directions in which we could, so to say, bolster the machinery so as to facilitate a less unharmonious development than we have seen.

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QUESTION: Assuming Mr. Jarring succeeds in finding common ground for settlement of the Kashmir question, it would seem that there would be some reason for India to be worried about the validity of any agreement with the present Government of Pakistan which has never faced a popular election. Any settlement reached could be refuted by a future elected Government. Therefore, do you think that any settlement reached in this situation will be a lasting solution to this problem?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Would you permit me on this point to wait until we have the Jarring report and to see if and when the question does arise in the form you put it now? As matters now stand, it is obviously a hypothetical question and I think it is wise for me not to engage in a discussion of it.

QUESTION: May I ask a general question? Would you give us your opinion on whether it is consistent with the Charter of the United Nations for one Member State to proclaim itself to be in a state of war with another Member State?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Let us leave aside the Charter for a moment and look at the legal facts. Let us also forget about the term "belligerency" and all that.

After all, there are quite a few situations where you know there is not a peace settlement. What word you use is mainly a question of taste in order to characterize a situation where there is no peace settlement. The fact that there is no peace settlement is obviously highly regrettable, but in itself, legally and technically speaking, it is not against any Charter provision. From that you should not conclude that I either endorse or reject any specific terminology which this or that Government uses in its political debate. What I want to point out is that the state of no peace in the technical and legal sense is something with which we regrettably have to live. For that reason, it is not something about which we need to raise the question of Charter principles.

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QUESTION: I would like to ask two questions. You said before that the position of Secretary-General does not correspond to that of a Government. I wonder whether, on your visits to various capitals, you found that it was difficult for you to negotiate since you had no point to refer back to? Have you given any thought to setting up a political department so that they can refer back to you?

My second question is: Can you comment on the Hungarian situation now?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: To my mind, the first question you raised is a rather interesting one. It is partly insufficiently understood and partly insufficiently explored. I would say this: that the Secretary-General does not suffer from the fact that he has nobody to refer back to provided that the main organs of the United Nations, the Security Council or the General Assembly, have taken clear decisions on general terms of reference, ^{short of which,} / _{of course,} the Secretary-General is forced to undertake a kind of policy-making which from the point of view of Member Governments I feel may be considered unsound, or at least not in line with the kind of procedures we should have here.

On the other hand he finds himself in a situation where he lacks not means of pressure, but the kind of weight which every Government necessarily has because it is part of the world picture, part of the whole pattern of trade, policy-making and so on and so forth. That is partly compensated for by one fact. Because he has no pressure group behind him, no territory and no parliament in the ordinary sense of the word, he can talk with much greater freedom, much greater frankness and much greater simplicity in approaching Governments than any Government representative can do. In summing up, I would say that the lack of a superior body to which to refer does not matter if there is a clear-cut policy line laid down by the main bodies here. The lack of means of "pressure" -- if the word is not misunderstood -- is in a certain sense a weakness which, however, is compensated for, and in some respects perhaps more than compensated for, by the freedom of action, the freedom of expression, which the Secretary-General can grant himself and which, I am happy to note, Governments do grant him.

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You talk about the possibility of some kind of policy-making body, a political division. I do not remember exactly what you called it. In a sense, you have it, in the Middle Eastern question at present as regards the UMET, in the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee has proved to be an extremely useful body to which I owe a great debt of gratitude for the assistance they have given to me in a free exchange of views which has clarified both the reactions of the General Assembly and my own thinking and for the support they have given to me in practice --- also in other respects. It may be that such an Advisory Committee system in particularly crucial questions may prove an avenue towards a more balanced co-operation in fields like this one between the Secretary-General and the policy-making bodies, in the first place, of course, the General Assembly.

I replied so fully to this question that I have forgotten your second question. What was it?

QUESTION: I wondered whether you had anything to report on the Hungarian situation?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: No, there is nothing today.

QUESTION: With regard to the Suez Canal problem, do you think it would help if the question was discussed in the Security Council? Or would you favour private negotiations bilaterally or multilaterally?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: In fact, various Governments have already embarked on the second road. I do not think it is a good idea to jump from one form to the other unless and until the possibilities offered by the form already chosen have been exhausted. Whether or not this is the case can best be decided by those negotiating.

QUESTION: When you were in Cairo, did you take up in your talks with President Nasser the crucial question of free passage for Israeli ships through the Suez Canal?

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The SECRETARY-GENERAL: There was not a single part of the Middle Eastern problem in which Egypt is a partner, or to which it is a party, which I did not cover in my talks in Cairo.

QUESTION: Did he promise anything or say anything on that question?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I think that I must stick to my general rule not to inform the press first about what may happen in talks of that nature. I refer to what I said a moment ago. I have considerable freedom of expression in such discussions. On the other hand, obviously I am bound to observe some simple rules of discretion.

QUESTION: Assuming that a final peace settlement in the Middle East is still a long way off, do you feel that it is in the interests of both sides for UNEF to stay indefinitely in the Gaza Strip and in Sharm el-Sheikh? Are you making plans for a long stay?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I would put my reply in this way: I would be unhappy to see the break-up of the UNEF arrangement until we had such a background change of the situation as would to my mind render the UNEF unnecessary in its present form. We are not there yet. In fact, what I say corresponds very closely to the stand which I understand to be the stand of the General Assembly -- that is to say, that as long as UNEF has the functions which were determined and decided upon by the General Assembly it should of course remain in order to fulfil those functions. That is, short of such a change in the situation as would provide us with some better means^{for the purpose;} I have nothing^{special} in mind, I just make that reservation as a matter of course.

QUESTION: Mr. Hammarskjold, if I may return to a house matter, the United Nations is going to miss within a few days a very familiar and beloved figure. I wonder if you would care to comment on the loss of this United Nations personality. I refer to Dr. Benjamin Cohen.

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The SECRETARY-GENERAL: You are a great friend of the Secretariat, but I think you may be jumping the gun a little bit here, and I believe that we should leave personal matters outside this discussion. I leave it with the greatest confidence to Ben Cohen to give you clarification on the state of his affairs.

QUESTION: Do you feel that Egypt will permit the UNEF to stay in Gaza and at Sharm el-Sheikh indefinitely if it is not stationed also on the Israeli side? And secondly, is there any way of avoiding a possible crisis if Israel attempts to send a ship through the Suez Canal?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: On the first point, I think that we have seen, in the last five months, so many changes in the situation, so many new elements brought in, that you will understand if I consider it a little bit futile to crystal-gaze. All I can say is that there is at present full understanding between the Government of Egypt and ourselves as to deployment of the UNEF on the Egyptian side. The further developments are things which I would rather leave aside in this discussion. I think that the situation as it now stands, and as far as it goes, should be considered satisfactory, a view which, as you know, was expressed not only by the Advisory Committee, but most recently echoed by Mr. Dulles in his press conference.

Your second question referred to the situation in the Suez and the possibility of avoiding a clash there. On that point I can only refer to what has been said in public from the two sides. They speak for themselves; I do not speak for them. What the situation might be if and when we were to run into trouble because of this or that stand is something which I would rather leave aside for the moment and not comment on.

QUESTION: May I ask why you have kept the terms of the UNEF agreement with Egypt, as it relates to Gaza, in a state of secrecy, and why an operative agreement of that type as a public matter should have been secret?

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The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Because it is a stage in ^{a process} where I think the right moment for full publicity will be at a somewhat later time when things have been more fully developed in practice and the situation has become more settled. There is nothing more remarkable to it than that. You know very well from negotiations conducted by, for example, the United States that, not as any matter of secrecy or quiet or what not, but just as a part of sound procedure, one does not, so to say, bring everything out when one is still in the run. We have reached a certain stage in the developments that is a basis for further developments. I would rather reserve, as I said, any statement on these various matters until a stage when the situation is clarified more in detail and more definitely.

QUESTION: Would you suggest that the UNEF be a permanent element in United Nations operations for future emergencies? A kind of permanent force?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: We have to see a little bit what the UNEF is and how it came into being. You know well that, under the Charter, a United Nations force was envisaged in quite different terms. It was envisaged under the terms of Chapter VII -- that is to say, to be used after a decision of the Security Council, a decision which was mandatory and compulsory. The whole operation this time was an operation under the "Uniting-for-Peace" resolution -- that is to say, in the General Assembly. The Assembly has not got the rights of the Security Council, and a force set up by the Assembly is, for that reason, tied by the Charter rules in other Chapters and other parts of the Charter than Chapter VII. It is not anything that, so to say, can be used as a means of enforcement of a specific policy. That is the great difference between the UNEF and a force as envisaged in the Charter itself. I do believe that this specific form, although useful under the circumstances, valuable as to the experience it yields, is too much tied to a specific case and a specific set of circumstances to be able to serve directly as a basis for further development.

On the other hand, I think that the experiences are such and the lessons we have learned are such that it will render much easier the build-up of a kind of United Nations force, perhaps also outside Chapter VII, or within Chapter VII, which should be a lasting element in the United Nations equipment.

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To sum up, I would thus say that I scarcely see the possibility of just letting the UNEF, as it was formed and developed last fall, become the basis for a continuous organic development. I would rather see it as a kind of experimental prototype from which we learn a great deal and which, I hope, will make it easier at a later stage to renew the discussion and reach results concerning a United Nations force as a formal part of our equipment.

QUESTION: I hope you will pardon me if I repeat a question which may have been asked before; I have not heard all of them. Would you care to comment on the present status of Israel's request made to you repeatedly for a "yes" or "no" answer from Egypt as to whether it considered itself in a state of belligerency?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: The question has not been asked before. The present status is that the question which the Government of Israel asked me to transmit to Egypt was formally transmitted to Egypt in the course of my visit to Cairo. At my departure from Cairo I had so far not received a reply. As you know, I have not been home many days and quite a few things have happened. In those days I have not heard anything about it.

QUESTION: President Eisenhower said again yesterday that it should not be assumed that Egypt will bar the ships of any country when the Canal is reopened. How do you feel about that assumption?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I have no reason to comment on the statement made by the President. I think it is a wise assumption.

QUESTION: You said before that you have not so far received any reply from Egypt with regard to non-belligerency. You said also that a short time only had elapsed. What time would you consider long enough in which to expect such a reply or to say a reply was overdue?

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The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Does that not somehow depend on the circumstances? Is it possible to state a general rule when, from your point of view, it is appropriate to reply to a friend of yours, or to a foe of yours? After all, it has to be seen in the total setting. Mind you, I did not say what I said concerning the timetable in justification or defence of anything. I wanted to point out that the timetable having been what it is, there is no reason for comments in either direction on the fact that, so far, there has been no reply.

QUESTION: Although the Egyptian memorandum on the Suez Canal does not make any reference to the six principles of the Security Council, do you feel that all these six principles are mentioned in that memorandum in some way? Is there any one that is not mentioned in it?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: That depends largely on the interpretation of the memorandum. The principles, as you remember, were not called principles by the Security Council, but were called requirements. That is to say, they were requirements which should be met by any arrangement established for the Canal. Whether or not the Egyptian proposals do meet those requirements is a question of interpretation of the text, on the one side, and of the requirements, on the other hand. You know that the requirements have been interpreted in different ways. I should like, however, in this context to draw your attention again to my proposals of 24 October to Egypt because they are of interest just as an illustration to your question. Those proposals were said in the very letter, if satisfactorily handled, to meet my understanding of the requirements. What I feel or do not feel may not be too important or interesting in this context, but what is more important and interesting is that, later, in various capitals when this matter has been discussed publicly -- for example, in parliaments -- it has been obvious that the view ^{was accepted} that a plan developed on the lines of the 24 October letter would meet the requirements. That is a guidance at least in the interpretation of the six requirements as it has developed in the past few months. But I would leave it to others to say whether or not this proposal meets all the requirements -- if all the requirements are, so to say, covered. I have already said that the proposals elaborate only part

(more)

of what was said in the 24 October letter, leaving other matters more or less aside. That does not mean that those matters necessarily are brushed aside; it may mean that they are left to the development in practice and, for that reason, it may be wise to add that the full reply to your question necessarily will depend also upon how various points in the Egyptian proposal are put into effect.

QUESTION: May I come back for a moment to the Hungarian question? You said that there were no new developments; but do you not envisage an Assembly meeting? Before the last session of the Assembly adjourned there were some representatives who even wanted a debate on the interim report. Then we learned that the debate would take place only if and when the final report was available. What is the situation now?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I have no information concerning the reactions of the delegations. I guess that the full report of the Committee will be forthcoming fairly soon. It may be that some of you know the timetable regarding the report of the Hungarian Committee. It will be the last half of the month, Mr. Cordier says. My guess would be that delegations would like to have a look at that report and decide in the light of their impressions of it.

QUESTION: Returning to the question, when is a reply overdue, would you repeat your question to the Egyptian Government, say, within a month, or at the end of a month, if a reply is not forthcoming?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: You are formalizing the issue far too much. A question raised by me is never abandoned by me; it is kept alive.

QUESTION: On the matter of the financing of the UNEF and the Canal clearance, do you think that is a matter for the Assembly to deal with fairly soon?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I think none of those questions necessarily calls for a meeting of the Assembly soon. As to the Canal, you know there are a limited number of countries which have put up advances, and we can manage

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what is our responsibility -- or rather the responsibility we have undertaken on the basis of those advances. If the Governments are not pressing too hard for a very quick decision or very early repayment, I think the sound approach would be that the matter will be settled as early as possible during the twelfth session. But it depends on their view of it. I must say that, so far, they have not shown any impatience. They understand that the issue, although important, is not one in the front line, but that we should take it up in due time and in good order. I certainly feel that none of the Governments which have provided advances would consider the question of such significance as to warrant the reconvening of the eleventh session for special meetings.

As to the UNEF, that question, you know, is a different one. The General Assembly has given sufficient financial authority to keep the UNEF operation going well into the time of the twelfth session. However, there are some -- I would not exactly call them legal, but some questions of principle involved which are at present being discussed. I hope that, again, those who are the most interested parties in this case -- the contributing Governments -- will see their way to a solution of those questions of principle which will not render it necessary to have a meeting of the General Assembly again. Again, I would say that it is my strong impression that those Governments have a very keen sense of proportion and would not like to create any unnecessary fuss or difficulties which would force all delegations to get together again on what is not an immediately urgent matter.

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QUESTION: Could you comment on the story which appeared during Mr. McCloy's visit to Cairo to the effect that the Egyptian Government had requested a loan from the United Nations or the International Bank in connexion with the equipment of the Canal?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: There has been no such request, either directly to me or via Mr. McCloy.

QUESTION: I wonder if you would mind clearing up what may seem to be a very petty point. There were certain mumblings, apparently among some of your aides in Cairo -- mumblings which were heard back here -- to the effect that Israel had "snubbed" you by not specifically inviting you to come there. Would you care to comment on how you feel about your relationships at this point with the Government of Israel, in view of the fact that they had said that you would be welcome there?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: People really are too sensitive on my behalf. I have never considered myself "snubbed". I think that this was a good, sound business relationship, where they very kindly said that I was welcome and where I said that, as matters had developed, I really felt that my most immediate and urgent need was to take up certain talks here. That is the whole story, and those who read into it either a snub by me or a snub by Israel are just too sensitive.

QUESTION: I think that you have said that you are unaware of any revival of the fedayeen organization in the Gaza Strip. Could you tell us whether it would be possible for the UNEF, under the present arrangements, to detect such a development and perhaps act against it?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: My reply would be: Yes, under present arrangements. That does not, of course, mean that we can have a watchful eye in every corner. In general terms, however, my reply is: Yes.

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QUESTION: In this question, I am trying to establish the trend and direction of the negotiations with regard to the Suez Canal issue. At the present time, the major negotiation seems to be by way of direct talks, through the Embassies and otherwise, between Washington and Cairo. I wonder where the Washington talks and Washington's responsibilities for these negotiations begin and whether in the present talks, so far as you know, the United States also speaks for the major users.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: My reply to the first question would be this: As matters now stand, the discussion is going on between certain Embassies and the Government in Cairo. I am kept fully informed; there is no need for me, so to speak, to squeeze myself in between. To the extent that this or that Government wants to have my reaction, it gets that reaction -- and that is all. That is to say, I am, so to speak, part of the picture but am not engaged in any direct talks or negotiations.

As regards the second point, it is of course for the United States to reply. I think, however, that if you have put the question you should not find it difficult, with your knowledge of the whole development, to see what the reply is likely to be.

QUESTION: I have raised this point only because, as you may be aware, a number of friends of the United Nations of long standing have privately expressed some concern -- justifiably or not -- over the possibility that in such a complicated arrangement of consultations it is possible for some Governments to fail in their negotiations, to blunder, and then to permit the United Nations to "hold the bag" and take the responsibility for their failures. I am not worried about this so long as you are in office, but I am wondering whether you are worried about it.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: No, I am not worried about it, although I cannot deny the theoretical possibility. But, you know, there are so many theoretical possibilities in the world that we just cannot afford to go around being worried about them.

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QUESTION: Could you give us any report on the progress of the negotiations concerning co-operation between the United Nations Relief and Works Agency and technical assistance agencies, on the one hand, and Egypt, on the other hand, in caring for the people in Gaza?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: This is one of the matters which I had no time to cover myself and which was, therefore, left open for further discussion between the Egyptian authorities and Mr. Labouisse as Director of UNRWA and Dr. Bunche as, let us say, personal representative of the Secretary-General. I have no recent reports on developments, but this question -- which, as you know, belongs to the last phrase in the much-discussed statement of 22 February -- is under study.

QUESTION: You helped to work out the six requirements concerning the Suez Canal. One of those requirements was that the Canal should be open to shipping of all nations, without discrimination -- overt or covert. Do you consider that this means all nations, regardless of whether Egypt may fail to recognize one of those nations?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I regard that as a direct translation into a Security Council text of the basic principle of the Constantinople Convention. The reply to your question depends upon what is the correct interpretation of the Constantinople Convention.

QUESTION: It is not always easy to tell, from your reports, whether you now enjoy your job. Can you tell us whether you do enjoy your job?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Well, it seems incredible but I do -- and I have also enjoyed this press conference. Thank you.

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INTERVIEW FOR TELEVISION AND NEWSREEL CAMERAS

QUESTION: Mr. Hammarskjold, are you optimistic that the Gaza situation will be worked out?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Speaking on another occasion before television and newsreel cameras, I expressed such optimism. That was when I left for Egypt. If anything, I feel, after having been to Cairo, more convinced about the justification for my optimism at that stage.

QUESTION: There are so many unanswered questions about the Middle Eastern situation. Would you say that it would be wise to assume that the United Nations is waiting for something to come to pass before making an announcement about your talks with General Nasser?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: On that specific point, I feel that it is never a good idea to talk too much in the middle of the run. It is more satisfactory to everybody to wait until you have more elaborate arrangements to put out. For that reason, I think that for the time being we should be satisfied with what has been achieved, which, as you know, met with the approval of the Advisory Committee. Later on we may have to revert to the matter and be more explicit about it.

As to your general question, I would say that, in my view, it would be a little bit irresponsible if the United Nations were just to sit here and wait for something to come to pass. I think that the United Nations has a responsibility for seeing to it that the right things come to pass.

QUESTION: How do you feel about Israel's use of the Suez Canal, Mr. Hammarskjold?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I have a long, and I think perfectly consistent, record on that. As to the legal issue, I hope that the situation will develop in such a way that this will not become a new source of major disturbance.

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QUESTION: Reports have it that fedayeen bands are again operating in the Gaza Strip. Do you have anything on that?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Well, I have seen the newspaper stories about it, but I have nothing from our own people in the field.

QUESTION: What provision does the UNEF have in case this is true?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: The UNEF has, under present arrangements, such authority as to be able to feel that the developments are not, so to speak, undercutting their efforts at the Armistice Demarcation Line.

QUESTION: Have you and Premier Nasser reached any decision on how long the UNEF will stay in the Middle East?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: The agreement which exists is a public one. That is an agreement to the effect that the Government of Egypt will, in its attitude to the UNEF, be guided by what was called good faith in interpreting the functions of the UNEF. If there were to be different views as to the extent of time which those functions indicate, I am sure that that would be a matter for discussion.

QUESTION: Would you say that it is advisable to assume that Israel will have no difficulty in sending ships through the Suez Canal when the Canal becomes completely navigable?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I would rather not, for the present, comment on that. You remember that the matter has been raised quite recently in a couple of press conferences in Washington, and I think that I can refer to what was said then.

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QUESTION: What is the purpose of your next trip to the Middle East? I believe that you are going to visit Mr. Ben-Gurion this time.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: No plans have been made for a new trip to the Middle East for the present. In fact, the purpose will determine when such a trip should come about. I can say for certain that I would be most happy to have a chance to have a talk with Mr. Ben-Gurion.

QUESTION: Do you feel at this time that it is necessary for you to return immediately?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: There is nothing calling for my presence there just now. But, as I said just recently in the press conference, my suitcases are, so to speak, always packed, and it depends on my own judgement of the needs and the judgement of the needs of those who are parties to the conflict in the Middle East.

QUESTION: In your talks with Colonel Nasser, did you find him co-operative?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: You know how to put the questions. One of your colleagues asked, as you may remember, the same question in the press conference. I just wish to refer to the fact that we met with co-operation on the proposals we put forward concerning the UNEF, and you can draw your own conclusions.

QUESTION: Where do we go from here?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Where do we go from here? That is part of my professional secret.

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TRANSCRIPT OF SECRETARY-GENERAL'S PRESS CONFERENCE
HELD AT UN HEADQUARTERS ON THURSDAY, 4 APRIL 1957

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Ladies and gentlemen, I think that the last time we met in a press conference of this type was early in November. As you know, there has been a firm tradition at the United Nations that during General Assembly time there are no press conferences given by the Secretary-General. The General Assembly ended about a month ago and, as you will remember, the first couple of weeks after the end of the General Assembly session was a time of unusual pressure -- I would not say tension but really unusual pressure. Then I had to go to Cairo, and I have just barely managed to put my little shop in order after my return from Cairo. So this really represents the first time that I could usefully, following the tradition of this house, get in touch with you again, and I welcome the opportunity. I welcome the opportunity although I am very well aware of the fact, which I think you appreciate too, that the situation is one which does present some difficulties. It does present some difficulties because, following the rather new developments of operations in this house, and for the Secretary-General, I am deeply engaged in work on behalf of Governments and as a link between Governments. What I do in such capacity is only to a limited extent my own property. If somebody confides in you and gives you his confidence as a basis for assistance that you may give him, of course you have to keep the trust. That is not diplomacy; that is even less quiet diplomacy. That is just the simple rule of the game which we all apply in our private lives, and as a matter of course I also have to apply it in my professional life. However, this has one consequence; and that is of course that sometimes, when there is a complete reply to a question which you may raise, I would consider it a breach of trust if I were to give it in that completeness. I am sure that you appreciate that, and I am sure that you will bear with me if, for such reasons under the laws which must rule my activities, as they rule the activities of all of us in our human relations, I have to be a little bit more restrained in my replies than I would hope or you would like me to be.

After having said this, I invite you to start asking your questions.

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QUESTION: Mr. Secretary-General, before your very hungry press corps eats up all the time, I should like to say, first of all, on behalf of the correspondents that we are gratified to welcome you back again to a press conference. We have no illusions about the way you have been spending your time. We are happy that you can spend some of it again with us in press conferences, and we anticipate hopefully that this will again become a continuing institution.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I can assure you that that is my intention, and that is the very spirit in which this press conference is being held today. As I said, it is just a resumption as early as it proved possible for me to resume the old tradition.

QUESTION: In one of your reports during the debates last year and early this year, you referred to one of the clauses in the Armistice Agreement between Israel and Egypt and you stated, I believe, something to the effect that it assimilates into a non-aggression pact. I was wondering what progress you made along those lines during your recent discussion in Cairo with President Nasser.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: This is a point on which I can give you some hard news in the sense that on this as on other points, I have tried to follow up the plans I presented in my reports; that is to say, in the effort to get back towards an implementation of the Armistice Agreements as they were intended to function, not as they turned out to function, after years of deterioration, I have approached the Government of Egypt and the Government of Israel in particular concerning Article I, the one to which you refer. So far, I have no replies, but it happened a short while ago, and it is for that reason no source of surprise that so far there is nothing on the table.

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QUESTION: Mr. Secretary-General, what at present is the precise role and, I might say, the situation of UNEF and of the United Nations as a whole in Gaza and in Sharm el-Sheikh?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: As you know, the UNEF is in Sharm el-Sheikh under the very rules and under the principles which were spelled out concerning that specific point in the report, I believe, of 24 January. I have nothing to add to what I said in that report on that score.

As regards Gaza, that is the point of concentration of the UNEF troops. The UNEF functions in Gaza for those purposes which were laid down by the General Assembly. There is a definition of the functions of UNEF, and that definition has not been changed; that definition applies in Gaza as elsewhere. That means that the UNEF has as a predominant ^{function} to safeguard peace between the two countries which recently have been in open conflict.

QUESTION: I have two questions. According to the Israel press, you intend again to go next week to the Middle East, this time including Israel in your visit. Is that correct?

Some days ago the American press told a story about the plan suggested by the United Nations to build a mined fence along the border of the Gaza Strip. This morning we learned that Israel intends to build such a fence on its own territory along the Gaza border. What have you to say on this project? Has it been suggested by the United Nations? What is the attitude of Egypt to this plan? Is it at all realistic?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: You have asked two rather different questions, and I may reply to them separately, as I hope you intend me to do.

On the first one, I just have nothing to say because I have not laid down any plans for a return or any plans excluding a return. The situation is just simply that my suitcases are, so to say, always packed in a situation like the present one. If it would serve a useful purpose, I would be happy to go, and go at once, to Egypt or Israel, whatever is called for. As you raised the point, I may mention that in these cases I must generally be guided by the immediate need. I have just returned here last week straight from Cairo. I do not think

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that there is any need for much imagination to see that there were some rather urgent matters for me to attend to, referring also to the Canal talks, and perhaps especially the Canal talks, of which you are well informed. Therefore, the information you quote from the Israel papers is premature and not based on anything said from here or on any plans laid here. But, on the other hand, quite frankly, if the situation develops so that it calls for such a direct contact I would be happy to take it.

The second question, concerning the fence, is, as you know, a question of very long date. It arose in the discussions last year. It has arisen again. There have been discussions between the Commander and his representatives on the one side and the authorities on the other side. I am not fully informed about how far those plans or those discussions have advanced as of the present. Personally, I believe that the fence idea has advantages but that it should, like all such ideas, be applied with some common sense. We do not solve the problems of that area by building up a fence all along the Armistice Demarcation Line, all ^{around} Gaza, but there are sensitive spots which in our experience present special difficulties for shepherds, marauders and what-not, and where the policing activities at the Armistice Demarcation Line by the UNEF would be facilitated by the erection of such a fence. But frankly, that seems to me to be, on the whole, a technical detail which I leave, with the greatest confidence, to the Commander.

QUESTION: Mr. Hammarskjold, I should like to ask a little more basic question. You had many long talks with Prime Minister Nasser. What can you say now, at the end of those talks, as to your impression of his willingness to co-operate with the aims and purposes of the United Nations General Assembly?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I think I can ^{speak} with confidence built on what, so to say, has emerged in practice. I should say --speaking more about what you have in your hands than about this and that for the future -- that as to the proposals we made, the Commander of the UNEF and myself in Cairo, we got full co-operation and you can draw your own conclusions from that.

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QUESTION: Mr. Secretary-General, may I ask whether the Canal talks that are now going on are, in your estimation, in line with your proposals of 24 October, including your proposals for policing and arbitration?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: The Egyptian proposals, as they were published, do not run counter to the 24 October letter but cover only part of the ground. There are points in that letter which have been, if not left aside, at least not elaborated. For that reason my reply to your first basic question must be that there is no conflict between the proposals now put forward and the proposals of 24 October, although they do not fully correspond, as the Egyptian proposals do not cover the whole distance of the 24 October proposals.

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As to the special question of arbitration, I think that the Egyptian Government goes practically the whole way on the 24 October paper.

QUESTION: In following that up, may I ask whether it is your intention to promote your 24 October proposals in more detail and more fully?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I have never abandoned that basis for my activities. That is the direction in which I try to influence the development to the best of my ability and with the somewhat meagre equipment which I necessarily have. As you know, the Secretary-General in such conditions is in a situation rather different from the situation of a Government.

QUESTION: May I ask a more general question. As Secretary-General, do you think it a propitious and wholesome development that the actual responsibility for dealing with world tensions has shifted and is shifting from the Security Council to the General Assembly?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: This is a difficult value judgment. I think we should see a little more what comes out of actual developments in the next Assembly or in the next couple of years. I must say that the constitutional development which has taken place is one which I personally feel requires very, very careful attention. The increased responsibility of the General Assembly itself I do not think is anything which should give anybody cause for concern. But it is, of course, something which at the same time calls for some serious thinking so that we do not somehow unwittingly and unwillingly get off the rails. That is to say, for me it is a development about which it is impossible to say whether it is, in your words, sound or not. It will depend on the wisdom with which we are able to fill out the framework which has been created by the shift of balance constitutionally.

In summing up, I want to say that to me it does represent a serious problem to which we must give all attention.

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QUESTION: Mr. Hammarskjold, reporters in the Gaza Strip have recently reported that fedayeen groups have begun to reorganize in the Strip and that civilians in the Strip are carrying arms -- revolvers and sub-machine guns. Has that information come to your attention? What is being done about it? May I conclude with the more general question: Who actually is in charge of the internal policing of the Gaza Strip?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: There is no report confirming the newspaper stories in this respect. The Commander has not found it necessary to draw my attention to any such developments so far.

As to the responsibility, the UNEF has a position and works under such arrangements that it should be able to see to it that in this way there is no development behind them which contradicts the purposes they are serving at the Armistice Demarcation Line.

QUESTION: In a report made in the past on the Middle East, you happened to point out one of the difficulties in implementing the Armistice Agreements between the parties as being the different interpretations they had of these Agreements. At that time, as I understood it, there was no specific machinery in mind to bridge this difficulty. Now that you have said today that you intended to go back to the implementation of the Armistice Agreements as they were intended to be implemented, I wonder whether you have any specific machinery to bridge this difficulty which you mentioned in an earlier report with regard to the interpretation of Armistice Agreements?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: You are right in referring to that problem because it is a very crucial one in the whole question of implementation. At that stage, I well remember that I said that I had drawn the attention of the Governments to certain weaknesses in the machinery. You know that quite a few things have happened since then. For that reason, they have been more engaged with other problems which seemed to them to be perhaps less academic.

I myself feel the way I felt then. I would like to bring their attention again to this problem because I believe that that is one of the directions in which we could, so to say, bolster the machinery so as to facilitate a less unharmonious development than we have seen.

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QUESTION: Assuming Mr. Jarring succeeds in finding common ground for settlement of the Kashmir question, it would seem that there would be some reason for India to be worried about the validity of any agreement with the present Government of Pakistan which has never faced a popular election. Any settlement reached could be refuted by a future elected Government. Therefore, do you think that any settlement reached in this situation will be a lasting solution to this problem?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Would you permit me on this point to wait until we have the Jarring report and to see if and when the question does arise in the form you put it now? As matters now stand, it is obviously a hypothetical question and I think it is wise for me not to engage in a discussion of it.

QUESTION: May I ask a general question? Would you give us your opinion on whether it is consistent with the Charter of the United Nations for one Member State to proclaim itself to be in a state of war with another Member State?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Let us leave aside the Charter for a moment and look at the legal facts. Let us also forget about the term "belligerency" and all that.

After all, there are quite a few situations where you know there is not a peace settlement. What word you use is mainly a question of taste in order to characterize a situation where there is no peace settlement. The fact that there is no peace settlement is obviously highly regrettable, but in itself, legally and technically speaking, it is not against any Charter provision. From that you should not conclude that I either endorse or reject any specific terminology which this or that Government uses in its political debate. What I want to point out is that the state of no peace in the technical and legal sense is something with which we regrettably have to live. For that reason, it is not something about which we need to raise the question of Charter principles.

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QUESTION: I would like to ask two questions. You said before that the position of Secretary-General does not correspond to that of a Government. I wonder whether, on your visits to various capitals, you found that it was difficult for you to negotiate since you had no point to refer back to? Have you given any thought to setting up a political department so that they can refer back to you?

My second question is: Can you comment on the Hungarian situation now?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: To my mind, the first question you raised is a rather interesting one. It is partly insufficiently understood and partly insufficiently explored. I would say this: that the Secretary-General does not suffer from the fact that he has nobody to refer back to provided that the main organs of the United Nations, the Security Council or the General Assembly, have taken clear decisions on general terms of reference, ^{short of which,} / _{of course,} the Secretary-General is forced to undertake a kind of policy-making which from the point of view of Member Governments I feel may be considered unsound, or at least not in line with the kind of procedures we should have here.

On the other hand he finds himself in a situation where he lacks not means of pressure, but the kind of weight which every Government necessarily has because it is part of the world picture, part of the whole pattern of trade, policy-making and so on and so forth. That is partly compensated for by one fact. Because he has no pressure group behind him, no territory and no parliament in the ordinary sense of the word, he can talk with much greater freedom, much greater frankness and much greater simplicity in approaching Governments than any Government representative can do. In summing up, I would say that the lack of a superior body to which to refer does not matter if there is a clear-cut policy line laid down by the main bodies here. The lack of means of "pressure" -- if the word is not misunderstood -- is in a certain sense a weakness which, however, is compensated for, and in some respects perhaps more than compensated for, by the freedom of action, the freedom of expression, which the Secretary-General can grant himself and which, I am happy to note, Governments do grant him.

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You talk about the possibility of some kind of policy-making body, a political division. I do not remember exactly what you called it. In a sense, you have it, in the Middle Eastern question at present as regards the UNCT, in the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee has proved to be an extremely useful body to which I owe a great debt of gratitude for the assistance they have given to me in a free exchange of views which has clarified both the reactions of the General Assembly and my own thinking and for the support they have given to me in practice ~~and~~ also in other respects. It may be that such an Advisory Committee system in particularly crucial questions may prove an avenue towards a more balanced co-operation in fields like this one between the Secretary-General and the policy-making bodies, in the first place, of course, the General Assembly.

I replied so fully to this question that I have forgotten your second question. What was it?

QUESTION: I wondered whether you had anything to report on the Hungarian situation?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: No, there is nothing today.

QUESTION: With regard to the Suez Canal problem, do you think it would help if the question was discussed in the Security Council? Or would you favour private negotiations bilaterally or multilaterally?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: In fact, various Governments have already embarked on the second road. I do not think it is a good idea to jump from one form to the other unless and until the possibilities offered by the form already chosen have been exhausted. Whether or not this is the case can best be decided by those negotiating.

QUESTION: When you were in Cairo, did you take up in your talks with President Nasser the crucial question of free passage for Israeli ships through the Suez Canal?

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The SECRETARY-GENERAL: There was not a single part of the Middle Eastern problem in which Egypt is a partner, or to which it is a party, which I did not cover in my talks in Cairo.

QUESTION: Did he promise anything or say anything on that question?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I think that I must stick to my general rule not to inform the press first about what may happen in talks of that nature. I refer to what I said a moment ago. I have considerable freedom of expression in such discussions. On the other hand, obviously I am bound to observe some simple rules of discretion.

QUESTION: Assuming that a final peace settlement in the Middle East is still a long way off, do you feel that it is in the interests of both sides for UNEF to stay indefinitely in the Gaza Strip and in Sharm el-Sheikh? Are you making plans for a long stay?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I would put my reply in this way: I would be unhappy to see the break-up of the UNEF arrangement until we had such a background change of the situation as would to my mind render the UNEF unnecessary in its present form. We are not there yet. In fact, what I say corresponds very closely to the stand which I understand to be the stand of the General Assembly -- that is to say, that as long as UNEF has the functions which were determined and decided upon by the General Assembly it should of course remain in order to fulfil those functions. That is, short of such a change in the situation as would provide us with some better means, ^{for the purpose;} I have nothing ^{special} in mind, I just make that reservation as a matter of course.

QUESTION: Mr. Hammarskjold, if I may return to a house matter, the United Nations is going to miss within a few days a very familiar and beloved figure. I wonder if you would care to comment on the loss of this United Nations personality. I refer to Dr. Benjamin Cohen.

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The SECRETARY-GENERAL: You are a great friend of the Secretariat, but I think you may be jumping the gun a little bit here, and I believe that we should leave personal matters outside this discussion. I leave it with the greatest confidence to Ben Cohen to give you clarification on the state of his affairs.

QUESTION: Do you feel that Egypt will permit the UNEF to stay in Gaza and at Sharm el-Sheikh indefinitely if it is not stationed also on the Israeli side? And secondly, is there any way of avoiding a possible crisis if Israel attempts to send a ship through the Suez Canal?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: On the first point, I think that we have seen, in the last five months, so many changes in the situation, so many new elements brought in, that you will understand if I consider it a little bit futile to crystal-gaze. All I can say is that there is at present full understanding between the Government of Egypt and ourselves as to deployment of the UNEF on the Egyptian side. The further developments are things which I would rather leave aside in this discussion. I think that the situation as it now stands, and as far as it goes, should be considered satisfactory, a view which, as you know, was expressed not only by the Advisory Committee, but most recently echoed by Mr. Dulles in his press conference.

Your second question referred to the situation in the Suez and the possibility of avoiding a clash there. On that point I can only refer to what has been said in public from the two sides. They speak for themselves; I do not speak for them. What the situation might be if and when we were to run into trouble because of this or that stand is something which I would rather leave aside for the moment and not comment on.

QUESTION: May I ask why you have kept the terms of the UNEF agreement with Egypt, as it relates to Gaza, in a state of secrecy, and why an operative agreement of that type as a public matter should have been secret?

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The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Because it is a stage in ^{a process} where I think the right moment for full publicity will be at a somewhat later time when things have been more fully developed in practice and the situation has become more settled. There is nothing more remarkable to it than that. You know very well from negotiations conducted by, for example, the United States that, not as any matter of secrecy or quiet or what not, but just as a part of sound procedure, one does not, so to say, bring everything out when one is still in the run. We have reached a certain stage in the developments that is a basis for further developments. I would rather reserve, as I said, any statement on these various matters until a stage when the situation is clarified more in detail and more definitely.

QUESTION: Would you suggest that the UNEF be a permanent element in United Nations operations for future emergencies? A kind of permanent force?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: We have to see a little bit what the UNEF is and how it came into being. You know well that, under the Charter, a United Nations force was envisaged in quite different terms. It was envisaged under the terms of Chapter VII -- that is to say, to be used after a decision of the Security Council, a decision which was mandatory and compulsory. The whole operation this time was an operation under the "Uniting-for-Peace" resolution -- that is to say, in the General Assembly. The Assembly has not got the rights of the Security Council, and a force set up by the Assembly is, for that reason, tied by the Charter rules in other Chapters and other parts of the Charter than Chapter VII. It is not anything that, so to say, can be used as a means of enforcement of a specific policy. That is the great difference between the UNEF and a force as envisaged in the Charter itself. I do believe that this specific form, although useful under the circumstances, valuable as to the experience it yields, is too much tied to a specific case and a specific set of circumstances to be able to serve directly as a basis for further development.

On the other hand, I think that the experiences are such and the lessons we have learned are such that it will render much easier the build-up of a kind of United Nations force, perhaps also outside Chapter VII, or within Chapter VII, which should be a lasting element in the United Nations equipment.

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To sum up, I would thus say that I scarcely see the possibility of just letting the UNEF, as it was formed and developed last fall, become the basis for a continuous organic development. I would rather see it as a kind of experimental prototype from which we learn a great deal and which, I hope, will make it easier at a later stage to renew the discussion and reach results concerning a United Nations force as a formal part of our equipment.

QUESTION: I hope you will pardon me if I repeat a question which may have been asked before; I have not heard all of them. Would you care to comment on the present status of Israel's request made to you repeatedly for a "yes" or "no" answer from Egypt as to whether it considered itself in a state of belligerency?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: The question has not been asked before. The present status is that the question which the Government of Israel asked me to transmit to Egypt was formally transmitted to Egypt in the course of my visit to Cairo. At my departure from Cairo I had so far not received a reply. As you know, I have not been home many days and quite a few things have happened. In those days I have not heard anything about it.

QUESTION: President Eisenhower said again yesterday that it should not be assumed that Egypt will bar the ships of any country when the Canal is reopened. How do you feel about that assumption?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I have no reason to comment on the statement made by the President. I think it is a wise assumption.

QUESTION: You said before that you have not so far received any reply from Egypt with regard to non-belligerency. You said also that a short time only had elapsed. What time would you consider long enough in which to expect such a reply or to say a reply was overdue?

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The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Does that not somehow depend on the circumstances? Is it possible to state a general rule when, from your point of view, it is appropriate to reply to a friend of yours, or to a foe of yours? After all, it has to be seen in the total setting. Mind you, I did not say what I said concerning the timetable in justification or defence of anything. I wanted to point out that the timetable having been what it is, there is no reason for comments in either direction on the fact that, so far, there has been no reply.

QUESTION: Although the Egyptian memorandum on the Suez Canal does not make any reference to the six principles of the Security Council, do you feel that all these six principles are mentioned in that memorandum in some way? Is there any one that is not mentioned in it?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: That depends largely on the interpretation of the memorandum. The principles, as you remember, were not called principles by the Security Council, but were called requirements. That is to say, they were requirements which should be met by any arrangement established for the Canal. Whether or not the Egyptian proposals do meet those requirements is a question of interpretation of the text, on the one side, and of the requirements, on the other hand. You know that the requirements have been interpreted in different ways. I should like, however, in this context to draw your attention again to my proposals of 24 October to Egypt because they are of interest just as an illustration to your question. Those proposals were said in the very letter, if satisfactorily handled, to meet my understanding of the requirements. What I feel or do not feel may not be too important or interesting in this context, but what is more important and interesting is that, later, in various capitals when this matter has been discussed publicly -- for example, in parliaments -- it has been obvious that the view/^{was accepted} that a plan developed on the lines of the 24 October letter would meet the requirements. That is a guidance at least in the interpretation of the six requirements as it has developed in the past few months. But I would leave it to others to say whether or not this proposal meets all the requirements -- if all the requirements are, so to say, covered. I have already said that the proposals elaborate only part

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of what was said in the 24 October letter, leaving other matters more or less aside. That does not mean that those matters necessarily are brushed aside; it may mean that they are left to the development in practice and, for that reason, it may be wise to add that the full reply to your question necessarily will depend also upon how various points in the Egyptian proposal are put into effect.

QUESTION: May I come back for a moment to the Hungarian question? You said that there were no new developments; but do you not envisage an Assembly meeting? Before the last session of the Assembly adjourned there were some representatives who even wanted a debate on the interim report. Then we learned that the debate would take place only if and when the final report was available. What is the situation now?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I have no information concerning the reactions of the delegations. I guess that the full report of the Committee will be forthcoming fairly soon. It may be that some of you know the timetable regarding the report of the Hungarian Committee. It will be the last half of the month, Mr. Cordier says. My guess would be that delegations would like to have a look at that report and decide in the light of their impressions of it.

QUESTION: Returning to the question, when is a reply overdue, would you repeat your question to the Egyptian Government, say, within a month, or at the end of a month, if a reply is not forthcoming?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: You are formalizing the issue far too much. A question raised by me is never abandoned by me; it is kept alive.

QUESTION: On the matter of the financing of the UNEF and the Canal clearance, do you think that is a matter for the Assembly to deal with fairly soon?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I think none of those questions necessarily calls for a meeting of the Assembly soon. As to the Canal, you know there are a limited number of countries which have put up advances, and we can manage

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what is our responsibility -- or rather the responsibility we have undertaken on the basis of those advances. If the Governments are not pressing too hard for a very quick decision or very early repayment, I think the sound approach would be that the matter will be settled as early as possible during the twelfth session. But it depends on their view of it. I must say that, so far, they have not shown any impatience. They understand that the issue, although important, is not one in the front line, but that we should take it up in due time and in good order. I certainly feel that none of the Governments which have provided advances would consider the question of such significance as to warrant the reconvening of the eleventh session for special meetings.

As to the UNEF, that question, you know, is a different one. The General Assembly has given sufficient financial authority to keep the UNEF operation going well into the time of the twelfth session. However, there are some -- I would not exactly call them legal but some questions of principle involved which are at present being discussed. I hope that, again, those who are the most interested parties in this case -- the contributing Governments -- will see their way to a solution of those questions of principle which will not render it necessary to have a meeting of the General Assembly again. Again, I would say that it is my strong impression that those Governments have a very keen sense of proportion and would not like to create any unnecessary fuss or difficulties which would force all delegations to get together again on what is not an immediately urgent matter.

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QUESTION: Could you comment on the story which appeared during Mr. McCloy's visit to Cairo to the effect that the Egyptian Government had requested a loan from the United Nations or the International Bank in connexion with the equipment of the Canal?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: There has been no such request, either directly to me or via Mr. McCloy.

QUESTION: I wonder if you would mind clearing up what may seem to be a very petty point. There were certain mumblings, apparently among some of your aides in Cairo -- mumblings which were heard back here -- to the effect that Israel had "snubbed" you by not specifically inviting you to come there. Would you care to comment on how you feel about your relationships at this point with the Government of Israel, in view of the fact that they had said that you would be welcome there?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: People really are too sensitive on my behalf. I have never considered myself "snubbed". I think that this was a good, sound business relationship, where they very kindly said that I was welcome and where I said that, as matters had developed, I really felt that my most immediate and urgent need was to take up certain talks here. That is the whole story, and those who read into it either a snub by me or a snub by Israel are just too sensitive.

QUESTION: I think that you have said that you are unaware of any revival of the fedayeen organization in the Gaza Strip. Could you tell us whether it would be possible for the UNEF, under the present arrangements, to detect such a development and perhaps act against it?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: My reply would be: Yes, under present arrangements. That does not, of course, mean that we can have a watchful eye in every corner. In general terms, however, my reply is: Yes.

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QUESTION: In this question, I am trying to establish the trend and direction of the negotiations with regard to the Suez Canal issue. At the present time, the major negotiation seems to be by way of direct talks, through the Embassies and otherwise, between Washington and Cairo. I wonder where the Washington talks and Washington's responsibilities for these negotiations begin and whether in the present talks, so far as you know, the United States also speaks for the major users.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: My reply to the first question would be this: As matters now stand, the discussion is going on between certain Embassies and the Government in Cairo. I am kept fully informed; there is no need for me, so to speak, to squeeze myself in between. To the extent that this or that Government wants to have my reaction, it gets that reaction -- and that is all. That is to say, I am, so to speak, part of the picture but am not engaged in any direct talks or negotiations.

As regards the second point, it is of course for the United States to reply. I think, however, that if you have put the question you should not find it difficult, with your knowledge of the whole development, to see what the reply is likely to be.

QUESTION: I have raised this point only because, as you may be aware, a number of friends of the United Nations of long standing have privately expressed some concern -- justifiably or not -- over the possibility that in such a complicated arrangement of consultations it is possible for some Governments to fail in their negotiations, to blunder, and then to permit the United Nations to "hold the bag" and take the responsibility for their failures. I am not worried about this so long as you are in office, but I am wondering whether you are worried about it.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: No, I am not worried about it, although I cannot deny the theoretical possibility. But, you know, there are so many theoretical possibilities in the world that we just cannot afford to go around being worried about them.

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QUESTION: Could you give us any report on the progress of the negotiations concerning co-operation between the United Nations Relief and Works Agency and technical assistance agencies, on the one hand, and Egypt, on the other hand, in caring for the people in Gaza?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: This is one of the matters which I had no time to cover myself and which was, therefore, left open for further discussion between the Egyptian authorities and Mr. Labouisse as Director of UNRWA and Dr. Bunche as, let us say, personal representative of the Secretary-General. I have no recent reports on developments, but this question -- which, as you know, belongs to the last phrase in the much-discussed statement of 22 February -- is under study.

QUESTION: You helped to work out the six requirements concerning the Suez Canal. One of those requirements was that the Canal should be open to shipping of all nations, without discrimination -- overt or covert. Do you consider that this means all nations, regardless of whether Egypt may fail to recognize one of those nations?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I regard that as a direct translation into a Security Council text of the basic principle of the Constantinople Convention. The reply to your question depends upon what is the correct interpretation of the Constantinople Convention.

QUESTION: It is not always easy to tell, from your reports, whether you now enjoy your job. Can you tell us whether you do enjoy your job?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Well, it seems incredible but I do -- and I have also enjoyed this press conference. Thank you.

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INTERVIEW FOR TELEVISION AND NEWSREEL CAMERAS

QUESTION: Mr. Hammarskjold, are you optimistic that the Gaza situation will be worked out?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Speaking on another occasion before television and newsreel cameras, I expressed such optimism. That was when I left for Egypt. If anything, I feel, after having been to Cairo, more convinced about the justification for my optimism at that stage.

QUESTION: There are so many unanswered questions about the Middle Eastern situation. Would you say that it would be wise to assume that the United Nations is waiting for something to come to pass before making an announcement about your talks with General Nasser?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: On that specific point, I feel that it is never a good idea to talk too much in the middle of the run. It is more satisfactory to everybody to wait until you have more elaborate arrangements to put out. For that reason, I think that for the time being we should be satisfied with what has been achieved, which, as you know, met with the approval of the Advisory Committee. Later on we may have to revert to the matter and be more explicit about it.

As to your general question, I would say that, in my view, it would be a little bit irresponsible if the United Nations were just to sit here and wait for something to come to pass. I think that the United Nations has a responsibility for seeing to it that the right things come to pass.

QUESTION: How do you feel about Israel's use of the Suez Canal, Mr. Hammarskjold?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I have a long, and I think perfectly consistent, record on that. As to the legal issue, I hope that the situation will develop in such a way that this will not become a new source of major disturbance.

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QUESTION: Reports have it that fedayeen bands are again operating in the Gaza Strip. Do you have anything on that?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Well, I have seen the newspaper stories about it, but I have nothing from our own people in the field.

QUESTION: What provision does the UNEF have in case this is true?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: The UNEF has, under present arrangements, such authority as to be able to feel that the developments are not, so to speak, undercutting their efforts at the Armistice Demarcation Line.

QUESTION: Have you and Premier Nasser reached any decision on how long the UNEF will stay in the Middle East?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: The agreement which exists is a public one. That is an agreement to the effect that the Government of Egypt will, in its attitude to the UNEF, be guided by what was called good faith in interpreting the functions of the UNEF. If there were to be different views as to the extent of time which those functions indicate, I am sure that that would be a matter for discussion.

QUESTION: Would you say that it is advisable to assume that Israel will have no difficulty in sending ships through the Suez Canal when the Canal becomes completely navigable?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I would rather not, for the present, comment on that. You remember that the matter has been raised quite recently in a couple of press conferences in Washington, and I think that I can refer to what was said then.

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QUESTION: What is the purpose of your next trip to the Middle East? I believe that you are going to visit Mr. Ben-Gurion this time.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: No plans have been made for a new trip to the Middle East for the present. In fact, the purpose will determine when such a trip should come about. I can say for certain that I would be most happy to have a chance to have a talk with Mr. Ben-Gurion.

QUESTION: Do you feel at this time that it is necessary for you to return immediately?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: There is nothing calling for my presence there just now. But, as I said just recently in the press conference, my suitcases are, so to speak, always packed, and it depends on my own judgement of the needs and the judgement of the needs of those who are parties to the conflict in the Middle East.

QUESTION: In your talks with Colonel Nasser, did you find him co-operative?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: You know how to put the questions. One of your colleagues asked, as you may remember, the same question in the press conference. I just wish to refer to the fact that we met with co-operation on the proposals we put forward concerning the UNEF, and you can draw your own conclusions.

QUESTION: Where do we go from here?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Where do we go from here? That is part of my professional secret.

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