

# Middle East - Suez story No 35b-36: Middle East - Suez story No 35b-36 - 26

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Middle East / Suez story - 35

13 Aug. 57

Memorandum conc. smuggling activities  
across the Int. Frontier between Egypt / Israel.  
(given to Loutfi for Foreign Min. M. Fawzi)

CONFIDENTIAL

13 August 1957

Given to Lauthi,  
for Fauri, today  
49. 14 Aug - 57.

Information, for which no claim of full authenticity is advanced, has been conveyed to the Secretary-General concerning smuggling activities by Bedouins across the International Frontier between Egypt and Israel. In substance, the information in question is as summarized below.

1. The International Frontier between Egypt and Israel is quite imperfectly marked at present since there are now only seven pillars standing in the rugged terrain along the line running south from El Auja.

2. Bedouins, often in large groups and with their animals, regularly cross the Frontier south of the El Auja Demilitarized Zone for grazing purposes, and occasionally do so in the Zone itself. If and when they also engage in smuggling it is difficult to identify such abuse of the grazing practice, which seems to have been tacitly recognized by the Governments concerned.

3. Narcotic smuggling traffic from Lebanon and Syria through Jordan and across Israel and the Sinai Desert to Egypt is said to be of long existence, despite Egyptian, and before them, British efforts to stop it. For practical reasons the Egyptians seem to have concentrated their preventive efforts in the western Sinai and especially close to the Suez Canal, rather than attempting to stop the smugglers at the Frontier.

4. Although there is evidence of smuggling, there is no present knowledge of any traffic in arms. The situation may have been different last October-November when the Bedouins could salvage some arms from the Sinai battlefields.

/5. UNEF, which

5. UNEF, which patrols the Frontier and is deployed along it, has not encountered or seen any smuggler caravans, although some unidentifiable tracks have been noticed.

6. According to the information, however, caravans organized for smuggling do cross the Frontier. They are thought to range in size from 20 to more than 100 well armed men, all of whom are skillful in guerilla-type fighting.

7. Nothing is known about the frequency of such caravans.

8. The nature of the terrain in the eastern Sinai and the length of the International Frontier running south from the Gaza Strip, which is 200 kilometers long as against the 60 kilometers of the perimeter of the Gaza Strip, are factors thought to be influencing the smuggling activity.

The information set out in the preceding points is said to be generally available to authorities of Egypt and Israel. No complaints have been received from either side about incursions across the Frontier southwards from Gaza.

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