

**Middle East - Suez story No
37-40: Middle East - Suez
story No 37-40 - 39**

HS L 179:116a



Dag Hammarskjöld's saml.

L 179:116a

Middle East / Suez story - Nr. 40

(as put together by Dag Hammarskjöld
and kept in his safe in his office U.N.-HQ)

30 July 57 - 6 Nov. 59

Dag Hammarskjöld's saml.

Middle East / Suez story - 40

30 July 57 - 5 Nov. 58

Burns, E. L. M. (Commander of UNEF)

- 2 letters from D.M.
- 1 code cable to D.M.
- 1 letter to D.M.

30 July 1957

Much to my regret we have not been in a position to give you clear-cut information on the possible time-table regarding you personally. As you know, an immediate reason has been the difficulties into which we have run in our efforts to find a fully qualified successor.

First of all I wish to restate with all possible emphasis that our greatest wish would be to see you continue for the whole life-time of the UNEF. However, we know and highly respect your concern about the future, and for that reason I have accepted it as a matter of course that, if and when your interest in the future so requires, you would leave your present assignment.

You know that we have had frequent contacts with Ottawa. They have been aiming at ensuring that your interest would be properly taken care of even with the delays in your return to Canadian service which, step by step, have had to be made. As things have developed - and I take into account also the unfortunate rumours about your resignation - I have told Ottawa that I think it would be most desirable from the UN point of view to postpone your departure to the end of the year and that, if your interest in the future could be fully protected, I would most definitely wish you to stay as long as you were willing in the light of your own interest in the job and our needs.

I feel that the moment has now arrived where it would be most useful if you would get in touch with Ottawa yourself unless they are taking the matter up with you as they may well do. My hope would be that you would then be able to feel that you act wisely by staying to the end of the year and, indeed, that you might well prolong your service in the UN even further.

Major-General E.L.M. Burns
Commander of UNEF
Gaza

I know that the line I have taken in this letter means that I am asking a lot of you. However, I also know from what you have repeatedly stated, that you would like to help us to all the extent that this can be justified in view of the other and most legitimate interests which come into play. I am therefore sure that, with helpful arrangements from the Canadian side, you will see your way to assist us over this year and perhaps even later.

22 August 1957

PERSONAL

.... Enclosed please find a letter to you, prepared and dated 30 July 1957, which gives my reactions to your questions concerning your future.

The reason why you get it now and with unchanged date is the following. Before sending the letter I got in touch with Ottawa giving them the draft so as to prepare the ground for you and harmonise our actions. In reply I received, on 15 August, a message to the effect that the Prime Minister wished me to know that "in the light of the strong arguments for General Burns remaining in his post the Canadian Government did not wish to offer any opposition".

Although I hoped that this expression covered an attitude which, from your point of view, could be considered satisfactory, I asked for some clarification. Due to the complications which are unavoidable during the summer vacations with most of the key people absent, I have not been able to get such elaboration of the statement in the couple of weeks which have passed since the last message.

In this situation I do not wish to delay my reply to you any longer and, therefore, I send to you now my letter, as originally drafted, with this information concerning Ottawa's first reaction.

Dag Hammarskjöld
Secretary-General

Major-General E.L.M. Burns,
Commander of UNEF,
Gaza.

TOP SECRET

INCOMING CODE CABLE

TO: SECRETARY GENERAL
FROM: BURNS, GAZA
DATE: 29 AUGUST 1957 0411
NUMBER: UNEF 1863

Reur letter of 22 August enclosing that of 30 July. If Canadian authorities in light of argument you present agree that it is desirable I remain in present appointment rather than take up at this time the other employment they have in mind for me I am quite willing to continue to serve UNEF until end of year or for such period as you determine with Canadians. Am pouching fuller reply and also cabling Under Secretary Canadian External Affairs.

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FILE NO.:

5 November 1958

Dear Mr. Hammarskjold,

When it became known that the Colombian Battalion was being withdrawn from UNEF, I informed you that in my opinion it was essential that it should be replaced by an effective equivalent number of troops.

Experience has shown that a certain minimum number of troops is necessary to enable UNEF to discharge its responsibility of helping to maintain peaceful conditions in the area of its deployment along the Armistice Demarcation Line (including the international frontier in the Sinai).

This is governed by the necessity of maintaining a chain of sentry posts (76) which can keep the whole of the ADL around the Gaza Strip under observation, to prevent crossing of the ADL from either side or other incidents. At night the ADL must be patrolled to intercept persons who might attempt to cross it, contrary to the Administrative Governor General's regulations. These tasks require employment of 11 Infantry Companies. Guards on UNEF premises at Gaza, Rafah and Port Said require 2 more companies, and there must be a reserve of 3 more companies to supply the garrison at Sharm el Shaikh and so that the troops can be relieved from time to time from the exhausting nature of sentry and patrol duty along the ADL. This adds up to 16 companies, and with the departure of the Colombian Battalion

Mr. Dag Hammarskjold
Secretary-General



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there are only 14 companies available in the Danor, Swedish, Indian and Brazilian battalions. The Yugoslav Reconnaissance Battalion and the Canadian reconnaissance squadron are fully extended, watching and patrolling the international frontier in Sinai.

For the time being the gap has been filled by drawing on the companies in reserve. I would point out that this expedient can only be effective for a limited time, as unless the men on ADL duty have periodic relief, they will become exhausted, and no longer able to perform their duty properly. The morale of the whole force will be seriously affected with incalculable results on the effectiveness of its functioning.

I therefore strongly urge that the replacement of the Colombian Battalion should be carried out with the least possible delay. I do not have any particular preference as to whether this is done by bringing in a new national contingent, or by increasing the numbers of existing contingents. However, I would point out that the withdrawal of the Indonesian and Finnish contingents was compensated for by increasing the contingents of other contributing nations, and there have been indications that these nations feel that it would not be equitable to increase their present liabilities in respect of UNEF.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "E. L. M. Burns".

E. L. M. Burns
Lieut. General

Commander, United Nations Emergency Force