

Small files: Israel - Doron case, Boy incident, Jerusalem parade, Flint inc...

HS L 179:183



Dag Hammarskjöld's sand.

Israel

Jerusalem Parade - 1958

23 April

D. H.'s memorandum

MEMORANDUM

23 April 1958

1. The Israel Government informed UN representatives in Jerusalem on 24 January, and the Jordan Government on 27 February, that a parade was going to be held in the new city of Jerusalem on 24 April. No information was then given on the number of troops or the kind of equipment which would be brought into the city for this purpose.

2. By letter of 20 February to the Secretary-General, the acting Permanent Representative of Jordan informed him that the Government of Jordan had recently learned that Israel was preparing a parade in Jerusalem with "large contingents of its various services including mechanised, armoured and military units". The Government requested the Secretary-General to take appropriate measures at his disposal to prevent anticipated movements of such large proportions of troops and war material into the close proximity of the Armistice Line.

3. A few days after receipt of this letter, the delegate of Jordan paid a visit to the Secretary-General. The Secretary-General then pointed out that he lacked a factual basis for an intervention as the Jordan letter referred only to rumours regarding the composition of the parade. He further wished to know what the Government of Jordan considered to be the legal basis on which the Secretary-General could intervene.

4. At about the time of the Jordan demarche, the matter was brought up in conversations between the delegations of the US and UK and the S.G. The Secretary-General considered that, in view of the lack of sufficient information and the somewhat ambiguous legal basis for an intervention from his side, the question could first appropriately be approached from the political angle. He understood that it was taken up by the diplomatic representatives of the UK and the US. In these circumstances he considered that a reaction from his side should wait for a clarification of the Jordan stand on the point of law, and of the Israel plans.

5. The Government of Jordan did not revert to the matter with the Secretary-General until 28 March, when they specified the legal basis on which they objected against Israel plans. The letter elaborating their stand was received while the Secretary-General was in Europe. On his return to New York he saw the Ambassador of Jordan, 8 April. He explained to the Ambassador what line was being taken by the U.N. (see the following paragraphs).

6. The 31st March, the COS Jerusalem was informed about the concern expressed by the US Mission and others as well as about the Jordan letter of 28 March. He was requested to send in "his best information regarding the scope of the plans, keeping in mind the terms of the Israel-Jordan Armistice Agreement". A reply was received, 7 April, in which COS stated that enquiries had been made, 1 and 6 April, but that no data had been received; on 6 April the Chairman of the MAC had been informed by the senior Israel delegate that he had been told by the Foreign Office that he could not give the Chairman any information.

7. On 7 April, in response to the reply just mentioned, the Secretary-General stated "since you, as COS, have responsibility for implementation and therefore compliance terms GAA, we consider it vital that you contact Foreign Office direct regarding contemplated plans. Consider it entirely within your province to be informed regarding such matters. Depending upon outcome, might consider further action here".

8. A reply to this last mentioned message was received the following day. The COS had then seen the Foreign Minister, who had advised him that he would be given, by Israel Chief of Staff or his representative, "a general impression, a general picture", no minute details. "She could only advise, Prime Minister as Minister of Defense must decide". To this message the Secretary-General replied that he recommended that COS approach Israel Chief of Staff in order to elicit the broadest information possible. He was grateful for a report on the outcome.

9. On 14 April information was received at Headquarters from Jerusalem to the effect that several tanks were being moved to Jerusalem. In reply,

the Secretary-General pointed out that time was getting short for any demarches; he, therefore, asked whether anything had come of an approach to the Israel Chief of Staff and whether any other steps had been taken vis-à-vis Israel authorities than those mentioned in the cable of 8 April. The COS replied that the Israel Chief of Staff would not be available until 17 April. That day, however, he informed Headquarters that he had been experiencing considerable delay for the last four days in securing an appointment with the Israel Chief of Staff. 17 April, the Foreign Ministry had tried to postpone the meeting to the 20th; however the COS had insisted on a meeting on the 17th.

10. On 15 April a message was sent by the Secretary-General to COS stressing the key position held by COS in the procedures that had to be followed. The Secretary-General did so, along lines previously explained orally, 8 April, to the Jordan delegate, only so as to be sure that no misunderstanding had developed on the COS side concerning the primary role the Secretary-General had to give to UNTSO. The Secretary-General considered it appropriate to spell out that the natural further developments might be as follows:

1. For the COS to get whatever information could be elicited from Israel authorities;
2. For the COS to judge, in light of this, whether there was a basis for intervention, which, although it might not have any chance of success, at least would keep UN record in order;
3. In case of negative reaction from Israel to the COS demarche, the situation should be formally reported to the Secretary-General;
4. The Secretary-General should then make similar demarche through the delegation.

11. In the aforementioned message from COS, 17 April, COS explained his plan for a meeting with the Israel representative to be

- "1) to secure the plan for the parade and celebration in Jerusalem,
- 2) to point out UN is being faced with fait accompli (as tanks already are in Jerusalem) against which it must protest", and
- 3) to insist on Israel taking security measures in the vicinity of the ADL.

Following his talk with the Israel Chief of Staff, the COS planned to see Rifai for information and so as to urge the necessary security measures on the Jordan side.

12. COS received immediate approval of his plan. At the same time the Secretary-General explained that he would tell the Israel delegate in New York that he found that a demonstration of the great number of tanks brought to Jerusalem would badly jar with even the most liberal interpretation of the GAA. An informal demarche to that effect was made on 18 April, followed by a personal appeal to Mr. Ben-Gurion to heed the psychological dangers and avoid any ostentations.

13. The COS reported on his contact with the Israel Chief of Staff in a cable, 18 April. In that cable, he made the suggestion that the Secretary-General should indicate that a party which had violated the GAA could not be free from responsibility in case of untoward incidents, and should accordingly take on its side all appropriate security measures to prevent incidents. The Secretary-General, following this suggestion, directed an appeal to Mr. Ben-Gurion in support of the security measures proposed by COS, without spelling out the specific reasons which, however, he gave to the delegation in New York, 19 April.

14. COS reported, 19 April, on the conversation he had had the same morning in Amman. Rifai had considered the protest too weak and insisted on withdrawal. He also indicated that Jordan might bring re-enforcements to Jerusalem. The following day COS sent information to the effect that such military re-enforcements were sent by Jordan forthwith to Jerusalem.

15. In the light of this information an informal meeting took place between the Secretary-General and delegates of UK and US in the afternoon 20 April. There was agreement that the Secretary-General could maintain the line already taken by COS, however with a reservation for his right to revert to a request for immediate withdrawal, were the minimum requirements proposed by COS not to be met. A draft of a message to this effect, to be delivered to the two sides, was sent the same evening to Jerusalem.

16. In a meeting of the MAC Sub-committee, requested by Jordan, 21 April, Israel gave full details on the composition of the parade. That seemed to open the road to a meeting of the MAC. Such a meeting was also requested by Jordan. As a meeting of the MAC was thus planned, the Secretary-General informed COS that the proposed message should be withheld and instead used only as a brief for the Chairman of the MAC at the forthcoming meeting.

17. In the morning of 22 April Ambassador Eban and Mr. Kidron saw the Secretary-General. He then, in general terms, informed them about the line he had taken and about the fact that, in view of the intended tactics, he welcomed the MAC meeting as opening a good possibility to give formal satisfaction to Jordan, while establishing the UN line publicly as a basis for further efforts. At the same time, the Secretary-General was informed by the Israel representatives of the intention of Washington to issue a statement warning all Americans not to go to Jerusalem. In contacts later taken by the US representative he managed to get this statement withheld, to begin with at least until the result of the MAC procedure was known. In the evening, when the Secretary-General had received Mr. Ben-Gurion's message, Mr. Kidron saw him again and explained that this message referred exclusively to complications which had arisen in the MAC meeting (due, in fact, to Israel's change in attitude) and that Mr. Ben-Gurion had got the idea that the MAC meeting was staged by the Secretary-General in order to get a decision on which the US could act.

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20 April 1958

The COS has reported to the Secretary-General that he, 18 April 1958, was informed about the organisation of the Israel parade in Jerusalem, 24 April. The arrangements include a considerable number of tanks and other heavy equipment which had already been brought to Jerusalem. According to the Israel authorities the tanks and this heavy equipment are unarmed and the troops are without ammunition. The Secretary-General was further informed that the COS had protested against the inclusion of such equipment as contrary to the rules laid down in the GAA. The COS had requested that the Israel Government take certain security measures necessary in view of the arrangements contrary to the GAA with which he had thus been faced as a fait accompli.

The Secretary-General was later informed by the COS that, subsequent to the steps taken by Israel, the Jordan Government, 20 April, had informed him that they had decided to re-enforce immediately their military units in the Jerusalem area, also with heavy equipment, and that they had requested a meeting of the Mixed Armistice Sub-committee on the matter. These steps had been taken on the basis of a request that compliance with the GAA on the point in question be re-established.

The Secretary-General notes with great concern that, due to steps taken by the Israel Government later followed by measures taken by the Jordan Government, the UNTSO faces a breach of the GAA on both sides which may lead to an increase of tension and endanger the quiet in the region and which, in principle, should be corrected by an immediate re-establishment of full formal compliance.

The Secretary-General considers that, in the situation which has already been established through the Israel action and the steps subsequently taken by the Jordan Government, the following measures are necessary as minimum safeguards of the purpose of the relevant clause of the GAA and of the interest of the two Governments in order and tranquility:

1. All re-enforcements of military units, and specifically all heavy equipment, introduced contrary to the GAA, should be withdrawn immediately after the parade. The Secretary-General notes that Israel has already stated this to be its intention.

2. Formal assurances should be given by Israel that tanks and other heavy equipment taking part in the parade will be unarmed; a statement to this effect has been made, 20 April, by the Israel representative on the Mixed Armistice Sub-committee. Correspondingly, on the Jordan side, formal assurances should be given that measures taken will not involve the introduction of such armed equipment into the Jerusalem area.

3. Security measures should be taken in line with the requests of the COS in order to reduce the risk for incidents pending a re-establishment on both sides of compliance with the GAA. This refers also to the question where and how the tanks and the heavy equipment are displayed.

Short of acceptance by the two Governments of the minimum requirements mentioned above, the Secretary-General would find it necessary to take steps within his authority in support of an immediate withdrawal of all military equipment introduced in the area contrary to the GAA.