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Laos - 1959

28 Sept.

2 Meetings of D.H. with representatives
of Security Council Sub-Committee
on Laos (9:30 a.m. and at 6:00 p.m.)

Confidential

No 1

Meeting held in Secretary-General's Office
on Monday, 28 September 1959 at 9.30 a.m.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I am sorry to have had to call you to an early meeting on a Monday, but the background is such that I simply must bring you into the picture as regards our group in Vientiane without any unnecessary delay. Although it is common knowledge, I think that after all it may be wise to restate where we are constitutionally.

The representatives in Vientiane, of course, are representatives of Governments -- in a certain sense, alternates to you. You are in the first place the countries' representatives. The Sub-Committee has to interpret its mandate and, as I see it, in case of any uncertainty, it is under the guidance of the Security Council. It follows that, to the extent the group in Vientiane can itself make up its mind on how far it should go in various directions, it should do so. To the extent that it feels uncertain, it should refer the matter to you as its principals, so to say. To the extent that you feel uncertain I think constitutionally the correct thing in principle would be that the matter be decided by the Security Council.

These lines of responsibility, as is clear, leave the Secretary-General and the Secretariat outside. It is in that respect an operation 100 per cent different from Jordan or Lebanon or Gaza. Therefore, when we get requests for comments from the group in Vientiane, I must, even at awkward times, bring you into the picture because in that respect I and we may have views, but you are the principals and the question must be referred to you. I am in that respect the postman.

On Saturday we received a few cables which referred to the visits up north. I will read part of the cables and part of the replies to you:

"Laos authorities submitted yesterday evening" -- that is Friday night --
"detailed suggested itinerary for seven-day trip to Samneua and Phongsaly Provinces which covers visits to eight towns, assuming travel within the two Provinces by helicopter."

They obviously had some immediate informal talk on the basis of this and, later on, they had a more formal meeting, which took place Saturday morning. The result of the formal meeting is summed up as follows.

There is unanimity on the line to be followed among the four members. The Committee will request further details from the Laos authorities concerning specific purposes of visit to each town. The Committee asks the Principal Secretary to inform the Secretary-General that an itinerary, which, if accepted, will require helicopters, is under study. Decision on itinerary will be postponed pending receipt of the Secretary-General's comments concerning United Nations helicopter supply and pending details requested. In the meantime, a two-day visit to Samneua will be made beginning next Wednesday using Laotian Government Dakota aircraft. Experience gained on this trip will be taken into account in final decision on full itinerary of other trip. Press communique will be issued announcing Samneua trip, placing it within proper context of fact-finding function, leaving open the question of any other visits that may become desirable.

Later on, we received an additional cable on this same subject:

"Itinerary includes visits to Samneua and Phongsaly and surrounding Government-controlled areas up to about 20 kilometres from border, with stops also at Xeng Khouang and Luang Prabang. Laotian Government can supply Dakota transport for Samneua, Xeng Khouang and Luang Prabang, but further flights would require helicopters because of lack of air strips. Maximum duration of any single flight by helicopter would be three hours. Maximum total distance of entire trip from Vientiane and return to Vientiane would be 2,000 kilometres; maximum ground height 8,000 feet; maximum members of party, including Laotian leaders and officials, about fourteen people, plus water and food supplies; duration of total itinerary, seven days."

Then there is a repetition of the wish to have my comments on this plan.

Our reply on Saturday was sent on the basis of the first of these communications. We had not yet received the second one. I read it, reminding you of this fact. I think, however, that the reply in fact applies also to the second more precise cable. This is my reply:

"The points call for consideration as regards three aspects: (a) character of the Committee's operation; (b) significance for operation of United Nations principles as set out in the report to last year's General Assembly; and (c) availability of helicopters with crews, in view of application of those principles".

Concerning the first point -- that is to say, the "character of the Committee's operation", I said:

"I regard the Sub-Committee as the sole judge of its mandate and proper place of visits in its work programme with its procedural character. If this is of any interest to the Committee, I am personally of the view that visits should have a clearly defined purpose as necessary in order to supplement on spot information collected from Government and that thus they should not aim at -- or be permitted to be interpreted as aiming at -- independent observation unrelated to concrete facts quoted by Government."

As to the second point, "significance for operation of United Nations principles as set out in the report to last year's General Assembly", I should like to say that the report is one which was never discussed by the General Assembly, but which covered the principles that have been applied in all fields of operations by the United Nations. From that report, I quote the following, and add that in the circumstances this quote must be considered as binding on me as executive. As a matter of course, it is not binding on the Security Council as it has never been approved through a decision by the General Assembly. But it is necessarily binding on me as I proposed it to the General Assembly and as I withdrew it from debate in the General Assembly, stating that I did not need any special decision. This is the quote:

"In order to limit the scope of possible difference of opinion" -- regarding these operations -- "the United Nations in recent operations has followed two principles: not to include units from any of the permanent members of the Security Council; and not to include units from any country which, because of its geographical position or for other reasons, might be considered as possibly having a special interest in the situation which has called for the operation. I believe that these two principles also should be considered as essential to any stand-by arrangement."

Now, when we come to the question of availability, we must, of course, look at it in the light of these principles. These principles exclude use of helicopters belonging to the United States or Thailand unless completely taken over and re-manned with a crew of accepted nationalities. I add, in my reply, that, irrespective of principles, you are certainly aware of the fact that the appearance of United States or Thai helicopters in a border area might well be provocative and lead to incidents in which the United Nations flag would be considered as having covered "hostile" operations; at least the United Nations and the nation providing the helicopters will be jointly involved as parties. This is, of course, the type of consideration which originally led to the establishment of the principles I quoted. In present circumstances, I would consider a supply of at least crews and if possible helicopters from States members of the Sub-Committee to have first priority. Then I refer, in my reply, to the two closest -- that is to say, Japan and Italy but say that "I am fully aware of the increased risks when using crews new to the area with its specific conditions." I add this observation: "All this is, of course, said provided that the Laos Government cannot itself take care of transportation in its relevant aspect which I would find quite acceptable in the light of their peculiar position in this case as hosts for a subsidiary organ of the Security Council. However, it goes without saying that also a visit by Sub-Committee members in Laos helicopters in areas which may be under rebel control has aspects which I guess the Committee itself wishes to take into consideration."

In the light of these observations, I say that I find it wise to start out with the Samneua trip, which can be made in Dakotas; and finally I say that, "As there was no possibility Saturday night to discuss the matter with you, further comments would be forthcoming on Monday. I shall inform [them] at once of the outcome of these forthcoming talks which may add to or, to some extent, modify what has been said above." Then, I add that "I find it difficult to sound out any Governments on possible assistance prior to the talks and reactions of Committee itself in the case."

This is now the story I have to give to you. In the course of the day I think we are under an obligation to give them a reaction which is more precise than mine. Mine was unhelpful in one respect. I kicked the ball back to them on the first point, that is to say, the political need. They got a direct quote which is binding on me but not on the Security Council, and they got an indication of what the consequences were of the principles in that quote. That is all they have because the observations I make concerning what it would mean to have incidents with this kind of helicopter in the border area are of course observations they have made themselves.

I think, Andy, that is roughly what we can say about it. I do not believe that there are any Laos helicopters. There may be personnel or a few trained. I would guess that there are Thai helicopters or at least crews, but I am not certain about that. I am certain that there are United States helicopters but they certainly are manned by United States people.

I should add that this very morning, according to information a moment ago, there is an additional cable in from Vientiane which certainly deals with this matter. We will circulate that to you so that you can see it in the course of the morning when the code is broken.

What is needed now is a stand on the helicopter part of the trip because the impression they give is that they would go ahead with it if we provide helicopters. This seems to put the responsibility for the question here. It is precisely the kind of responsibility which has to be placed on the Security Council side of the table.

Mr. ORTONA (Italy): I am trying now to summarize my understanding.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: You will get the verbatim later -- you will need it, of course -- as a memorandum.

Mr. ORTONA (Italy): We evidently have here an itinerary proposed by the Laotian Government which makes the going into the itinerary rightful according to the principles upon which the Sub-Committee has been appointed. That is the first thing to clarify. If the Laotian Government asked the Sub-Committee to go to look into certain places and accompanies the Sub-Committee, then we are still within the framework of the procedural basis for the Sub-Committee's function.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I am not sure at all, because with the same formula we could have put up the whole of UNOGIL. It is not enough to have Government initiative, an invitation. The Government can take the initiative for an observer operation which is completely unrelated to anything they have found themselves and this is not covered by the fact that it sends somebody with them. You must make further distinctions. As I put it myself, "I am personally of the view that visits should have a clearly defined purpose as necessary in order to supplement on the spot information collected from Government and that thus they should not aim at independent observation unrelated to concrete facts quoted by Government." That is to say, it is not sufficient, in my view, for anybody to go with Government representatives on Government initiative. The trip must be directly and concretely related to information which the Government has put on the table and considered necessary for that purpose.

Mr. ORTONA (Italy): Evidently there must be on the part of the Laotian Government an initiative to indicate facts so that the Sub-Committee should believe in its own responsibility to have to control and verify by going physically to the spot. There must be a Laotian initiative, and we have here the Laotian initiative. What we lack here is the judgement of the Sub-Committee, either our judgement or our alternates, whether this request of the Laotian Government relates to the concrete facts to be ascertained, which would continue to confer on the Sub-Committee the character of a procedural Sub-Committee. I think that that more or less is the legal position.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: That is the basic one.

Mr. ORTONA (Italy): That is the basic one. Then we have a second point which, to speak concretely, is as follows: If the Sub-Committee needs means of transportation which cannot be provided by the Laotian Government and can only be provided by certain countries like Thailand or the United States, this would run counter to the practices and principles which have been established in the past for similar operations by the United Nations, if my understanding is correct. So that we have no other choice, if we want to help the Sub-Committee

to perform its duties, but to provide the helicopters which do not put the Sub-Committee into a position of running counter to the principles.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Mind you, there are two levels there. The principles are definitely binding on me; they are not binding on the Security Council. But of course there are reasons back of these principles and the reasons are the seriousness of incidents which may arise if they were not observed.

Mr. ORTONA (Italy): The combination of these three points brings me to a suggestion which I utter here informally. I am just thinking aloud now. Could not the United Nations buy the helicopters from the United States, which is in a position to sell them there readily and quickly?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: There are two problems. We need not even buy them. We can take them over this or that way as we did in the case of the UNOGIL helicopters, provided that they can be regarded as completely outside the control of the United States Air Force or Thai Air Force. But then there is the question of the crew.

Mr. ORTONA (Italy): There is the question of the crew.

Mr. CORDIER: And ground service, which is a very serious matter.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Yes, that is very serious. There are quite a number of people involved, but the question is not that, the question is whether or not one should observe the principles, because if we do not observe the principles, the matter can be arranged in three hours. If we do observe the principles, it is a practical problem of considerable difficulty.

Mr. AMADEO (Argentina): Is there any practical possibility that the Japanese Government could provide for the helicopters, taking into account the distance?

Mr. MATSUDAIRA (Japan): It is not so easy. We have constitutional difficulties and I am reluctant to answer at this moment. I shall have to check it, but I must warn you that it is not so easy.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Even as regards crews?

Mr. MATSUDAIRA (Japan): Yes.

Then followed an exchange of views in French between the Secretary-General, Mr. Slim (Tunisia) and Mr. Matsudaira (Japan)

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: It depends again on what your people there feel.

Mr. MATSUDAIRA (Japan): Exactly.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: But there, the guidance they need in that respect, as I see it, is guidance as to what are the criteria: necessity, reference to government information which is concrete, etc. They have to decide, but they can have some guidance from you on that. However, I think that, in the case of

for example, Luang Prabang, it is a matter also of courtesy -- it is their royal capital. I do not think they will get anything there, but it is the royal capital. We have foreseen that they might move from the capital to somewhere else. One might read a document and might like to see where the document was born and check the facts which one can ascertain. That is something which is within the scope of the mission.

Mr. MATSUDAIRA (Japan): Yes, of course. Perhaps we could give up the second mission if we can have the first mission. Is it not sufficient for the Sub-Committee just to have the first part of the trip and to give up the second part -- give up the inspection of the border-line?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: They are proceeding with the Samneua trip at all events; and there, I felt that they were quite clear and that there was nothing to bother you about. There, I said: "Fine". It was not my business, but I could not see that there was any need for reference. So that part of the mission, is, so to speak, out of the way. The real story is, should they, after that, go on this extra trip with helicopters?

Mr. ORTONA (Italy): My reaction is this. I think the reversal of the responsibility, as we see in the exchange of telegrams, puts in an impossible position the people who have to decide from New York. It is true they want to decide to undertake the further part of the trip if they have the helicopters; but it is also true that we do not know whether they consider it necessary, to complete their mission, to go on the second part of their trip. How can we judge from here, we in New York, whether this second part by means of helicopters, is considered a necessity by the facts which they have already ascertained, or not ascertained? I am trying to put myself in the position of an objective judge. Here I am with a Sub-Committee which is to perform a mission, but I do not know what the mission is to be because

I have not the facts in my hands here. They have. They reverse, saying: Of course, if you give us the helicopters our decision is easier. But how can we proceed in such an operation as even to go against the principles which have been established in the past if we do not know that this is really necessary?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: May I remind you what has been said on that? My first reply was that I regard the Sub-Committee as sole judge of its mandate and of the proper place of the visits in its work programmes with its procedural character. They will have to make up their mind on that. Then they have said in a cable later:

"Before making decisions concerning proposed itinerary Sub-Committee desires that you be informed of above in order that Sub-Committee may take into account your comments relating to possible supply helicopter transportation by UN."

Well, that is not a technical question. It is partly a highly political question, as you can see. For that reason I had to cable back and ask them if this way of putting the question meant that they had really decided to proceed on the proposed itinerary, subject to our action. That is to say, is the first question answered by them on their side, or is it not answered? Then ^{here} ~~it~~ (still remains a political question -- which is yours: should the principles apply or not? You have freedom; I have not. I can reply for myself, but not for you. Even once the political reply is given, there is the question of the sounding of Governments as to who can put them up the most quickly. The situation is upside down.

Mr. ORTONA (Italy): I know it is upside down because if they say, here we are, a Sub-Committee with a mission entrusted by the Security Council; we cannot fulfil it a hundred per cent, not even eighty per cent or seventy per cent, if we do not go there; then we would know, and we might be induced to say, let us find a formula through the American helicopters and put a flag or some sort of indication on them in order to denationalize them as much as possible. We have the responsibility of placing the Sub-Committee in a position

to perform its duty. But is that its duty? That is the point.

Mr. MATSUDAIRA (Japan): But they want a judgement of principle about their duty, about the extent of their duty.

Mr. ORTONA (Italy): The judgement of principle was illustrated by the Secretary-General. If the Laotian Government requests us to look into the facts and if the Sub-Committee judges that the request is related to the preparation of documents and to the concrete facts to be ascertained within the scope of procedure, they have to go; there is no doubt about that. Otherwise, why have they gone to Laos? Only to sit and look at documents? We have always understood that this was one of the eventualities which might occur. We even considered the point of going to Viet Nam. We went much further away from Vientiane, even considering that they could go to the other country, and we did not give a definite ruling on that.

Mr. MATSUDAIRA (Japan): In order to go to other countries I think we need Security Council procedure.

Mr. AMADEO (Argentina): That is another problem. In any case I quite agree with Mr. Ortona's view. I think the problem must be decided there by our own delegates there to know the extent to which the inclusion of this mission by helicopters is within the scope of the trip. But, at any rate, the question of principle, for me, is decided by the resolution which established the Sub-Commission, and that resolution does not leave the smallest doubt about the legality of the fact-finding trip. It is for the Sub-Committee there to find out whether the invitation of the Laotian Government is within the scope of the Sub-Committee's mission, and it is for them and only them to decide.

As to the matter of transportation, I believe that there is a conflict. It might raise a conflict between the principles and practices established and the necessity for the Sub-Committee to fulfil its mission. I think that,

in this conflict, the scope of the Sub-Committee's mission must prevail because, otherwise, there is a question -- shall we say? -- of trying not to be partial. The main thing is that the Sub-Committee should perform its duty. That is what we must take into account first of all, and if we find a way -- for example, the procedure which Mr. Ortona has suggested, of buying helicopters or putting up a UN flag -- then we could do that. What we cannot do is to leave some part of the mission not accomplished. That is my view.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: May I be a devil's advocate and ask: what is the mission?

Mr. AMADEO (Argentina): I started from the principle that the mission meant including this trip by helicopter. That was, I think, the starting point. If that is decided by the Sub-Committee in Vientiane, if they think this aspect of the mission is necessary, then the question of transportation and flags comes after.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I fully recognize and agree with that line, with, however, the reservation -- which has nothing to do with this discussion -- that the line between this and an operation of the UNOGIL type, which nobody has so far requested, is becoming thinner and thinner and more and more difficult to see. But, as I say, that is outside this debate. It is a worry which I have, a worry which I have most seriously, because I do believe that the precedent may come to backfire badly if confidence in it is shaken.

Now I have this other cable which I shall read. It may be helpful. I shall disregard the comments which are a part of the running debate and go straight for the Committee's decision in reply to my question as to whether or not they have, in their own mind, decided to go ahead. Their decision was limited to requesting the Principal Secretary to inform the Secretary-General that the Sub-Committee has not yet taken any decision on the necessity or desirability of proposed itinerary; this matter would be examined later in the light of experience

gained in two days' visit to Sameua; departure now scheduled for Thursday morning; and that the question of helicopters if, as a result of that examination, it became relevant, would be considered at that time, taking into account the principles laid down in the General Assembly report.

I think one can safely read into the last the feeling that they regard the principles as sound.

Mr. AMADEO (Argentina): That leaves the question open.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: It leaves the question open and, in such circumstances, there is, of course, a slight change in our situation in the sense that you have some more time and we have a perfect excuse not to go ahead just now with the helicopter question. My reason in rushing the meeting was, obviously, that if the feeling of your group was that you should go ahead with the sounding out of the possibility of helicopters, I would not like a moment to be lost.

Mr. AMADEO (Argentina): May we have another meeting late this afternoon?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Yes.

Mr. AMADEO (Argentina): We already intend to meet informally this afternoon, and perhaps after this meeting we can reach among ourselves some kind of agreement on the question and then transmit to you what we have talked about.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I think that would be excellent. I think it would really be for your group of four to decide whether or not you wish to act and advise your people there to take into account the so-called principles or not, because they have reserved their opinion on the desirability and they must have the first word on that. That leaves you with the political problem: should we or should we not stick to the principles?

Mr. ORTONA (Italy): Could I ask two favours? The first is, could you be so kind as to give us that part of the cable which relates to the principles so that we can have them in front of our eyes when we discuss them among ourselves? Secondly, what are the precedents for any sort of arrangements such as chartering aircraft or putting a different flag on a means of transportation which have been developed during operations of the UN somewhere else?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: We shall look into that; but we have been extremely clean-handed. We have been very keen to avoid a situation in which anybody could say that we lent ourselves to be a screen for somebody else.

Mr. ORTONA (Italy): Or to be partial.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Yes; it is a rather important line. In the course of the morning you can have the report and, at all events, you will get the special text from the report and then, on your initiative, as you see fit, I will always be available later in the day.

Mr. MATSUDAIRA (Japan): I think that, in principle, we should wait for the decision of the Sub-Committee on the spot. Why should we rush? That is my feeling. The Committee is doing the right thing in considering the principles set forth by the Secretary-General.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I pity them a little. It is not easy for them to sit there and evaluate these considerations which are on our side. There is the question of the need which they must decide. They should also decide whether it fits in or not. There are, however, other things on which they are entitled to have good advice. I, for one, would be very happy if you could give them some indication of your feelings regarding the specific helicopter situation: what their responsibility is, how far it goes in taking decisions, what advice you have on the extent to which the principles should be applied, what requests you wish to endorse -- for example, sounding out concerning technical possibilities --

so that they know where they are. That is what I would plead for for their sake.

Mr. MATSUDAIRA (Japan): We will study the possibilities.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: At any rate, I am at your disposal. Again, I excuse myself for having taken Monday morning, but you can see that even half a day means something in these matters.

Confidential

No. 1

SP ET - 3 - Laos I SP

MEETING OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF
SECURITY COUNCIL SUB-COMMITTEE ON LAOS

On Monday, 28 September 1959, at 6:00 p.m.

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL: Well, gentlemen, here we are again.

Mr. ORTONA: We have just had a meeting on the problems that were raised this morning, and we have come out with the following considerations:

First of all, we have taken note of the principles and the opinions that you expressed this morning on the way to interpret the request of the Laotian Government to proceed, and we think we are all in agreement that the framework in which you have placed this eventual trip is the right one. But we have also come to the conclusion that, for that very reason, it is up to what we might call our co-delegates in loco really to decide whether a trip is necessary and desirable. We do feel that this is a most important ^{pre}judicial point to be developed by them and that, in any communication that you might have with them, it might perhaps be emphasized that we have studied the problem very thoroughly and we feel that we cannot take upon ourselves any responsibility for deciding that that trip is necessary and desirable. X

Secondly, we have looked into the principles which we read again in the document that you kindly gave me this morning, and, in spite of your description of those principles as being simply ^{listed} explained in a study of the experience derived from the establishment of UNEF, we feel that we should take them into the utmost consideration and try to abide by them as far as possible. X

There now remains the problem of the means of transportation, which, as we had thought, derives from the decision that they must take in loco as to whether to proceed or not.

In the last five or six hours, having done some investigating, I have received some news which may help us in arriving at decisions or expressing opinions about this last practical point. I understand that the Laotian Government purchased two helicopters on 12 September from the French Government. The helicopters are of the Alouette type. I do not know exactly what characteristics they have, but it is the same type of helicopter which is flying small units in Algeria in the theatre of operations. Therefore, they may perhaps answer the need that we are trying to meet.

Moreover, we also know -- and we have known this from the very beginning -- that the Americans would be ready to cede to the Laotians helicopters of their own make. Therefore, if we could, as seems possible, come out with one or two

or three means of communication, which could be labelled as Laotian property, and, on top of that, if we could have a sign that that Laotian property is now operating on behalf of the United Nations for a particular purpose in which the United Nations and the Laotian Government are associated, I think we would be respecting the principles that are embodied in your document and that you explained to us this morning.

There remain the problems of the crew, of the ground services, and so on and so forth. We cannot, from here, give an answer to these problems, which again we think derive somewhat from the way in which the Laotian Government can present these helicopters as their own property, manned perhaps by Laotian citizens -- maybe French civilian pilots in Laotian pay -- or Laotian property manned by Americans in Laotian pay, of civilian character.

We cannot go into details of this kind. But we do feel that if it is ascertained that the Sub-Committee there feels that the trip is necessary and desirable, and if therefore we feel obliged to encourage them to take the trip because this would aid in the accomplishment of their mission, and if it is also ascertained, as seems possible, that the Laotian Government could have the property of the helicopters, the questions of pilots and of ground services might be solved in the course of time -- bearing in mind that these helicopters do not have to start their flights tomorrow, but that it may be three or four or seven days before they really go on a particular trip.

Therefore, if we are to convey a request to you, that request might be that you should please stress to them that in our opinion it is their responsibility to decide whether the trip is desirable, apart from the question of the availability of means of communication, and then it will be up to the Laotian Government to find a way to provide Laotian helicopters, which we know should be possible in view of the information we have received.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Thank you. I think that is very clear. As an aside, I would say that it is somewhat amusing that we did not get an indication of Laotian possibilities. It is not in any way the fault of your co-delegates. Maybe, that for some reason Laos has wanted to save its own helicopters. I do not know. But, anyway, we will bring this to their notice.

I think I have sufficient notes to make it possible to give a complete reply regarding your view of this matter. We will send this today, and I imagine that we will have a reply within the next two days. That will, of course, be communicated to you, and we will see where we then stand.

I guess that their basic consideration will stand, that is to say, that they do not like to give a reply to the question of whether it is necessary and desirable until they have seen what they get out of the trip to Sam Neua. Anyway, we gain time in this way. And certainly, as go-betweens, which we in the Secretariat are, we find it extremely helpful that you have been able already to formulate a stand.

Mr. ORTONA: One more point: We would like to add -- I think I correctly interpret the wishes of my colleagues -- that we might also touch upon the problem of safety. We would be worried, of course, about encouraging decisions -- or, if not encouraging them, at least seeing them made -- that might be harmful to the Sub-Committee from the point of view of physical safety. In this connexion, we might perhaps suggest that they give us their ideas as to the best measures to take. Perhaps one could paint the helicopter in a certain way or give notification, through loud-speakers or over the radio, that the mission is leaving. Or it might be that the best thing to do would be to let it go and place one's hopes in the good God, which is never a good way of being safe. I am sorry - I don't want to seem heretical -- but I think that perhaps we should make some provisions about that, at least advising them that we are worried about it.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: We should ask them for comments on what safety measures they might have in mind?

Mr. ORTONA: Yes.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: The trouble, of course, is that, quite apart from what man does, nature has its own ideas. There are natural enemies, and not only political ones. But that is another matter.

At any rate, I think this gives a very full picture -- so full and so clear, I think, that we need not both you with, so to speak, checking the cable.

We will edit it in line with what has been said. And then, if there is nothing else from your side, we will inform you as soon as we have a reply.

You will have the verbatim record of our earlier conversation in a couple of hours, I guess, because I ran through it in order to check it just after lunch.
