

Middle East conflict - Lebanon. Correspondence, statements, resolutions: Mi...

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Middle East conflict 1958 - July 23

Sec. Gen's notes on talks with M. de Vaucelles (France)
and A. Eban (Israel)

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M. de Vaucelles came to see me this afternoon at my request. I said that I had two points to raise with him:

- a) a possible formula for a summit conference within the framework of the Security Council; and
- b) the question of a neutralisation of Lebanon.

Regarding a) I said that I did not want to make any proposals ^{but} just simply how ^{to indicate} ~~to handle~~ the problem, ^{might be handled.} ~~but~~ If there was a will ^{there was, of course, a way.} I was guided by the wish to meet the French objection against too much publicity, the US objection against ^{departures from} regular procedure, and the Soviet objection against participation of, for example, China. My proposal would be as follows: a neutral Member of the Security Council would propose for inscription on the agenda an item called the situation in the Middle East. As a matter of course, the item would be adopted. That could take place in a Security Council meeting with the normal composition of the Council. The delegates of France, UK, US and USSR would then state at the Council table that ^{their governments} ~~they~~ were in contact regarding possible consultations and that they had the intention to report on the outcome of those contacts and consultations to the Security Council. (If they so wished, they could in this context include a reference to the SG.) The Council could then take a decision, noting the statements of the four delegates, noting their intention to report to the Security Council, and stating that they would suspend further consideration of the item until they had received reports.

With this formula it would be possible to keep the item entirely within the framework of normal UN procedures, while opening the possibility for consultations between the Governments on any level and at any time and place they wanted, with the inclusion of any Members of the UN beyond the four, which they agreed to ^{write} include. The position of the SG could be resolved in the same way; he would naturally take the position of rapporteur to the Security Council.

I told de Vaucelles that as a purely technical indication and not as a solution of the problem of the Governments concerned, the same views had been expressed to the UK, US and USSR. In a vaguer form it had also been communicated to the delegate of Israel and one of the Scandinavian delegates.

Regarding b) I asked him if the press stories about French studies of the question of Lebanon's neutrality were true. He said that they were but that he was not very well informed. The matter had been taken up by the Quai d'Orsay on the initiative of the Canadians. I said that on this occasion and for his own background information I wanted to tell him that I had taken up the matter with Dulles, on 1 July, and had later followed up the discussion. My feeling was that we should try to avoid a special status for Lebanon, which would, so to say, create two classes of countries under the Charter. It would be better to establish a kind of permanent representation on a fairly modest scale for the UN in Lebanon, as a kind of symbol, or seal, ^{for} ~~of~~ a special responsibility felt by the UN for the status of the country in the Middle East. The two main points in this approach ~~were~~ were the wish to avoid a formal neutralisation under UN aegis and the wish to provide a kind of mechanism for the safeguarding of a desirable political status.

I added that this attitude towards Lebanon was part of a much more general philosophy, ~~in~~ establishing a system whereby the UN had a permanent representation of the indicated type in Lebanon, where the UN position in Gaza was rendered more stable, and where we had some kind of formula for Jordan, which, however, could follow neither the Lebanese nor the Egyptian pattern. If we managed to get this kind of stability in Lebanon, Jordan and Gaza, we would, in fact have established a kind of "cordon sanitaire" around Israel. This rendered the Lebanese problem much more important than it would else have been, and it directed attention to the great difficulty of finding a technique for handling the Jordan case.

In reply to a question I told him that the whole approach had been mentioned to Selwyn Lloyd and also to the Israeli's. He asked me if the French Foreign Minister could take it up with Mrs. Meir. I said that, of course, he could, but that I would warn him to do it ~~not~~ in such explicit terms as to provoke ^a premature reaction.

In my own discussion with Eban this morning I had given a picture of my approach, adding that I wanted a kind of "hat" in the form of an agreement between the four countries to pursue ^{a "hands-off"} ~~the Heads of Government~~ policy. From the discussion with Eban very much more could be noted, but it may suffice to say that they had no suggestions to offer regarding a formula for Jordan after a British withdrawal, but said that the solution indicated by "Realpolitik" would obviously be that ^{Israel} ~~they~~ took the Western bank and that the rest of Jordan was joined to Iraq. This undoubtedly true indication of their basic philosophy was countered from my side by saying that the times of "Realpolitik" were passed, and that now the territorial integrity of Jordan was just as essential to the UN and to world peace as the territorial integrity of Israel. Eban stressed that he considered Jordan as a nation "as very frail".