

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

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Dag Hammarskjöld's saml.

Middle East conflict 1958 - Aug. 3-5

Sec. Gen.'s notes on talks with members of SECCO

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SECRET

(odds)

Soon after 12 o'clock, 4 August, Lodge saw me on his instructions regarding the summit meeting. The only remarkable point was a complete switch as regarding ^{5/}~~ing~~ informal consultations. He said that Eisenhower intended to make a first statement in the first meeting of the Council and would then be available for private talks backstage in whatever groups might develop, "two, three, four or five". I pointed out to Lodge that this was a very decisive statement, eliminating the doubts created by Dulles' press conference. What he now said solved, I thought, the problem of a balance between the summit meeting and the Security Council. It appeared that the formula I had suggested ^{to him} with colleagues (agreement that there should be opportunities for unofficial consultations, as need be) covered the American stand perfectly. He said that that was definitely the case.

As regards the American ideas about the development of procedures, including participation of non-members, they followed very closely my own memorandum.

Later in the afternoon Georges-Picot gave a summary of his talk with Lodge. In that talk Lodge had even been more explicit on the question of unofficial consultations. He had even gone to the point of indicating that it might be useful if Georges-Picot could tell Sobolev about the US stand. Georges-Picot did so. In view of this development I gave a more precise description of my interpretation to Dobrynin in order to be sure that there was no misunderstanding on Sobolev's side. I said that Lodge had made it clear that my formula was fully acceptable and that it was so in substance, not as a kind of screen.

Georges-Picot had the impression that the American intention now was that Eisenhower, after his first appearance, would avoid the Security Council entirely, having an excuse in the private talks. (The reason obviously would be to avoid being drawn into public debate.) Georges-Picot saw a very considerable risk in this stand, as he felt that the "eight" might be rather offended if they were supposed to continue the debate in the Security Council in the absence of Eisenhower, Krushchev and Macmillan. I said that it really did not rhyme very well with what we had read about the respect for the small nations.

Georges-Picot was also afraid that the vague hint of consultations among Heads of Governments would be too large a bait, with the result that some thirty Heads of Governments of all sorts of nationalities would come rushing only to find themselves excluded from the consultations and, to a large extent, also from the Security Council. I pointed out that these risks would be increased in case we were to meet in Geneva.

3 August 1958

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In the course of Friday and Saturday, August 1 and 2, I was in contact with all the Members of the Security Council apart from Abbas of Iraq.

Friday, before lunch, I agreed with Georges-Picot that I should make preliminary soundings in order to try to get a clarification of the situation. I anticipated that my very first round would be of importance mainly as an attempt to provoke reactions from the capitals. Georges-Picot himself did not know anything about the stand of the French Government on the British and American requests for a Security Council meeting 12 August, as this initiative had developed after his talks with de Gaulle.

I saw the Americans immediately after lunch. They had no information whatsoever on ~~the~~ Washington's stand, in spite of the reference in the letter to me of the same day to the effect that the US was "prepared to participate in informal consultations", and in spite of the statement in the letter to the Soviet Union of Friday, July 25, to the effect that the permanent representative was authorised to take part in informal consultations already at that stage.

I therefore^{after} saw Beely, Sir Pierson Dixon still being on vacation. He was a little bit better informed. It emerged, at the comparison of notes, that on the key point, the part to be played by informal consultations, the thinking of Macmillan seemed to be very close to my own as described below. However, also in Beely's case further instructions were necessary in preparation of consultations.

I next saw Sobolev. He said that he was not in a position to discuss on the basis of my letter at all, because of the implications of such discussion. He must make this perfectly clear. Under such circumstances he could, of course, listen but he could not venture any views. I pointed out to him how essential it was that he should have fairly complete instructions so as to be able to operate from Monday on in consultations aiming at a fairly early result.

My approach to the non-permanent members of the Security Council as well as to Sobolev and Tsiang followed an identical pattern of five points:

a) The political key question at present seems to be how the problem of informal consultations should be handled. The idea of a special Committee or even of formal invitations extended by the Security Council, seems to be dead in the light of the US stand, even with the most generous interpretation of ^{that} their stand. There then remain two main lines, with a possible compromising ^{e/} solution between them. ~~Two~~ One line was the one ~~fore~~ foreshadowed in Dulles press conference, which seems to ~~be~~ be that no decision of any kind should now be taken on ~~the~~ arrangements for consultations and that such consultations, in fact, would take place only by chance and socially. The opposite alternative would be that at this stage an agreement would be reached on informal consultations at the initiative of some countries, and also on the form which such consultations should take, (special time set aside, participation, time-table and similar matters). Probably, this last mentioned line went too far to be acceptable to Dulles, while Dulles own line as just mentioned would certainly be unacceptable to Moskow. With the two ^{plans} positions being impossible for the reasons given, one had to consider a compromise. Such a compromise, which seems to be reasonable, might be, at this stage, that a decision ^{be} was taken that

"opportunities should be given for informal consultations, as need be".

This decision in principle now would, once the Heads of Governments were at the Security Council, be followed by a pragmatic decision ^{in the light of} ~~on~~ the "need".

(It could be foreseen that such a decision might come about on the initiative of Macmillan.)

The reaction to my compromise formula was all around favorable. This seems to cover also Sobolev's reaction. (It follows from what I have said that I did not try it out on the Americans, but ~~that~~, on the other hand, it probably ^{lies} ~~seems~~ very close to the London thinking.)

b) As to the item on the agenda, I said I felt that the phrase "question of the Middle East" was too vague and wide, but that, on the other hand, "situation in Lebanon and Jordan" was too narrow. I believe that Eisenhower in the letter of 25 July had given a description of the substance of the item which was generally acceptable, that is to say that one should address oneself to the situation in Lebanon and Jordan but ^{the} "in a broader context" necessary to get a constructive discussion of the concrete cases. If this interpretation of the general acceptance of the scope ~~was~~ correct, we were facing only ^a ~~the~~ question of formulation and presentation, not of substance.

c) I expressed as my view that the question of participation should be treated as closely as possible on the basis of Article 31. That would mean necessarily Lebanon and Jordan, and perhaps the UAR. Inclusion of the UAR could well be defended in the light of the fact that they were already taking part in the discussions of the preceding and related ~~ated~~ items. On the other hand, if one did not find an argument of that type for their inclusion, it might open the doors first of all to Israel, and then subsequently to all Arabs. Were the Security Council to be so extended as to present ^{house} ~~only~~ a half-way between the Council and

the General Assembly, a very dangerous precedent would have been set.

d) and e) As final questions I mentioned the time and place. Apart from pointing out the technical difficulties of Geneva, I stressed some political consequences of the choice of that city. We could ^{have} managed it more easily if it had been just four or five Heads of Governments than if it were a question of the whole Security Council, with all the delegations that would follow the Council to Geneva with or without the hope of being invited. In the first case it was reasonable to hope that we could get over the difficulties, although they would be very grave. In the second instance, with the great number of delegations coming to Geneva, I fear ^{ed} very much that practical arrangements would break down. However, I did not want to say that Geneva would be impossible. We would have to make whatever arrangements we could, but I had to point out that if it were a meeting of the Security Council in its entirety around the 12th, I must register it as a complete gamble, and that if, on the other hand, the meeting was postponed until later, the Security Council would have to adjourn after a week or so. In these various circumstances, without going into detail, I ^{felt} ~~feel~~ that an automatic consequence of the removal of the meetings to Geneva would be a marked shift of emphasis from the Security Council to whatever consultations might take place.

In the talks with non-permanent Members it was quite apparent that the reception of the US note of Friday, 1 August, was most unfavorable.