

**Middle East conflict -  
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Middle East conflict 1958 - August 5

E. L. M. Burns, commander of U.N. Emergency Force in Jordan

- to Sec. Gen.

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HEADQUARTERS  
UNITED NATIONS EMERGENCY FORCE

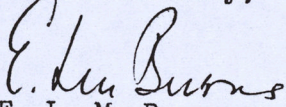
TOP SECRET

Gaza, 5 August 1958

Dear Mr. Hammarskjöld,

On receipt of your message 1249 today I have written out a memorandum giving my views on the operation and organization of a United Nations Force in Jordan. The memorandum is necessarily somewhat sketchy as I thought it advisable to send it off by today's pouch, which should reach you on 8 August. If I had waited for the next pouch it would have reached New York only on the eleventh. If I have additional thoughts or think I should make any corrections to the memorandum I will send them by top secret message.

Yours sincerely,

  
E. L. M. Burns  
Lieutenant-General  
Commander UNEF

Mr. Dag Hammarskjöld  
Secretary-General  
United Nations  
New York

MEMORANDUM

A United Nations Force in Jordan:

Considerations

1. In the following notes, it is assumed that the object of a United Nations Force in Jordan would be to safeguard the nation from interference by any of her neighbours; furthermore, that Jordan would welcome the presence of such a force. It is also assumed that the Force would stay in the country "to maintain peaceful conditions" until political negotiations could achieve a stable basis for Jordan's relations with her Arab neighbours -- if not with Israel.
2. The three neighbours from whose territory interference might come are Iraq, Syria and Israel.
3. Iraq seems the least likely to attempt subversive or overt interference in Jordan's affairs as matters now stand. A better assessment of her attitude towards Jordan will become possible through analysis of the line taken in Iraqi radio broadcasts and the press. Assuming that Iraq has no immediate intention of getting political control of Jordan, the frontier between the two countries would need little attention from a United Nations Force (UNF). A motorized reconnaissance unit supported by reconnaissance from the air would probably be adequate.
4. The Syrian border would be the next most critical. The border is extensive, and mostly desert. To prevent all infiltration would

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be impossible, but principal routes could be watched by a motorized reconnaissance unit (preferably armoured), supplemented by air reconnaissance. The attitude adopted by the United Arab Republic towards a United Nations Force in Jordan, and towards Jordan generally, would of course be of crucial importance. It would be difficult for the UAR to refuse all cooperation with a United Nations Force in Jordan which the majority of the United Nations favoured, and still retain the advantage of having UNEF in Gaza.

5. The Israel border of course causes the Jordanians the most apprehension. Their main reason for accepting the presence of a United Nations Force would be the safeguard it would afford against Israeli pressure or a sudden coup. The dangers to peace and the general conditions along the Jordan-Israel border are well-known and need no elaboration here. The principal danger areas, in order of importance are the following: (a) Jerusalem, from Mount Scopus in the North to El Mukabbir (Government House) in the South; (b) Latrun; (c) Tulkarm-Qalqilya; (d) astride Hebron-Beit Jibrin road. To watch these sectors adequately, more or less in the manner in which UNEF watches the Gaza Strip ADL, five infantry battalions would be needed. In the sectors the United Nations Force occupied it should have responsibility for preventing infiltration similar to UNEF's.

6. A United Nations Force in Jordan should have no responsibilities for internal security, except to protect United Nations personnel and

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property, when the civil power fails to do so -- again, the same condition as for UNEF.

7. The alternative lines of communication for a United Nations Force in Jordan would be: (i) Beirut-Damascus-Amman-Jerusalem; (ii) Aqaba-Maan-Amman-Jerusalem; (iii) Haifa-Jenin-Nablus-Jerusalem; (iv) Port Said-Gaza-Beersheba-Jerusalem. The first and fourth routes would be dependent on UAR agreement; the third and fourth on Israeli consent. Route three would be the most convenient, but there might be Jordanian objections to overcome, and the Israelis, if they consented at all, would probably try to extract an exorbitant quid pro quo. The main advantage of route (iv) is that it is already established to Gaza for UNEF, and there could be some pooling of administrative services between the two forces. Route (ii) is the least convenient, the longest and roughest road, and should only be considered as a last resort. Route (i), though long, seems to be the most practicable, assuming a favourable UAR attitude. There is also the question of aircraft corridors to be considered; it is to be hoped that the Force's aircraft could use the Lydda-Qalandia corridor across Israel as UNTSO, UNRWA and occasionally UNEF aircraft do.

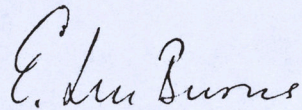
8. Adding up the requirements for the tasks outlined above, it appears that a force of approximately the same strength and composition as UNEF would suffice. It would probably have to be somewhat stronger in motorized (preferably lightly armoured) reconnaissance units, and in

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reconnaissance aircraft. It would also probably need more second-line motor vehicles. A force of any less size would not, in my opinion, create the necessary impression. The great value of a United Nations Force is psychological. For this reason also it is very important that troops of the highest possible quality should compose the force; well trained and disciplined, even if not heavily armed.

9. The headquarters of the Force should be in or near Jerusalem; anyway, on the West Bank of the Jordan.

Gaza, 5 August 1958.



Lieutenant-General,  
Commander,  
United Nations  
Emergency Force.