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Aide-Memoire (Sec. Gen's talks with Nasser and Fawzi, Egypt)



At Cairo
11 April 1956

AIDE - MEMOIRE

This morning, at eleven o'clock, General Burns and I saw Colonel Nasser and Dr. Fawzi.

I gave Colonel Nasser, in ~~a~~ very short outline, my views on the origin and character of my mission, underlining that the United Nations, ^{this} in ~~its~~ context, was the only possible instrument for a lessening of tension, but also a screen against such interventions ^{from outside the region} as probably would be unavoidable if the situation were not improved. I stressed especially this last point as essential in the light of Colonel Nasser's wish to maintain Egypt's independence. ^{With} ~~In~~ this general background I went back to yesterday's discussion with Dr. Fawzi and said that I wanted to explain my reaction, both on the shooting across the demarcation line and on the raids in a way which I had not found possible in the presence of Colonel Gohar.

It was for me impossible to try to work out a way ^{to achieve} ~~towards~~ full compliance with the Armistice Agreements and ^a reduction of tension along the Demarcation Line in a situation where, daily, news about shooting across the Demarcation Line and raids negated the very purpose of the Security Council effort. I had to ~~say~~ speak with brutal frankness. The situation, from my point of view, was impossible. I knew, and they knew that I knew, that Colonel Nasser, at any time, could stop the shooting and they knew that I knew that the same ^{was} ~~is~~ true about the raids. Under such circumstances I must ask him to act so as to render continued discussions possible.

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Colonel Nasser replied that he did not like to bring up details for discussion, and he did not think that it was fruitful for me to do so. He had noted that the United Nations, by its several démarches in the last few days, had added to the tension by presenting ultimata parallel to those of the Israeli Government. He had had to face that situation in 1948, so he recognized the constellation.

I replied that I agreed with him that it did not make sense to discuss a special detail of the question of compliance ^{out} of context, but all the same I thought he must understand why a stopping of the present warlike actions had to be brought out for special and initial consideration, if we were ^{finally} to be able to get a definite solution even of those problems in their wider context of compliance with Armistice Agreements. There was no reason to talk about an ultimatum. My own approach to him had a time-limit set to me by the very circumstances ⁴ the fact that I was taking up discussion with him today. ⁷ it was my duty to reflect this time-limit in my approach to him. There was no ^{parallelity} ~~parallelity~~ of the kind he indicated, as my démarche to him corresponded to a similar ^{tenuous} démarche to the same effect to Mr. Ben-Gurion. ~~Recognizing~~ ^{Accepting, as I felt he must,} my view that stopping of warlike acts was a pre-condition, recognizing the time-limit set by that very fact, recognizing the exact equality of treatment of the Israel and Egypt Governments, I ^{felt that} think he could see the démarches and my present approach in their proper perspective. Generally speaking, I did not want to have a war of words, and I wished the episode to which he referred to be closed. What we ^{were} ~~are~~ discussing ^{were} are hard facts, and those facts had to be brought in harmony with the demands of the situation.



Colonel Nasser, for the time being, did not pursue the subject.

I continued by saying that I had to bring up again the subject of my conversation yesterday with Dr. Fawzi. This morning I had received the text of the last Israeli letter to the Security Council, which gave ^a the one-sided presentation of Mr. Ben-Gurion's approach to General Burns. I would consider ^{it to be the} in general interest to make the record complete by a publication on my ^{dual} ~~double~~ démarche to Mr. Ben-Gurion and Col. Nasser; such a publication of the two letters would put the story in the right perspective, but ~~it~~ was obviously not possible without adding the reply of Ben-Gurion's (and my comments on that reply) which, in turn, would not be possible unless I had an assurance from the Egyptian Government (in identical terms, in writing). It was not personal interest, as my exchange of letters with Mr. Ben-Gurion kept my record with the Security Council straight, but I felt that it was in Egypt's interest to give a written assurance, as that would balance the ^{acc} ^{(put an end to the} count and a war of words. I would be pleased to see such development and, for that reason, hoped that the Egyptian Government would see its way to give me a written assurance.

Later in the conversation, both Dr. Fawzi and Col. Nasser indicated that such a written assurance will be given, after an agreement on the text, in the course of the afternoon.



I then brought up the question of shooting ^{across the D.L. \square} and told Colonel Nasser about the Israeli declaration that it would ^{now} keep their patrols away from the demarcation line, without abandoning their "rights". I felt that that declaration, which ^{so far} remained unilateral, ^{sh} would provide ^a basis for instructions to the Egyptian side to stop shooting.

Colonel Nasser replied that the Egyptian side was shooting only at patrols, which caused General Burns to point out that they ^{sent} ~~said~~ snipers into Israeli territory to shoot at outposts. This was an established fact. Colonel Nasser then swung around and said that although it certainly was most undiplomatic, he wanted to say that this was true; in a situation of tension Egyptian patrols were sent across the Demarcation line and were shooting at outposts; that was unavoidable in self-protection, in a situation of strong tension calling for ^{reconnaissance}

I replied that I wished to thank him for his frankness and the statement of this harsh fact. Such frankness was the only basis on which our talks would make sense. I concluded that with the Israeli declaration, there would no longer be an excuse for such practices. Colonel Nasser replied that he could give direct instructions stopping such actions, which caused me to say that I felt that under such circumstances we could tie the matters up. I could address a message to Mr. Ben-Gurion noting the declared intention of Israel to ~~keep~~ their patrols out of sight, saying that on this basis I had assurances of the Egyptian Government to keep their people away from the Demarcation Line and from shooting across the Demarcation Line, and requesting a confirmation that under these circumstances the Israelis would stick to their

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declared intention. I added that, as a matter of course, the Israeli intention which was caused ~~as~~ ^{of} a result ~~from~~ ^{of} our repeated requests, ^{abnormally} was tentative and ~~would~~ ^{might} break down if it did not lead to a pacification on the Demarcation Line. I did not see any reason why the matter should not be settled this very day.

Colonel Nasser replied that this could be done by the issuance of specific instructions and that Dr. Fa^{zi} and I ^{sh} would have a look at the text of the message. ^{I had in mind,} However, he wished to repeat that the previous practices were a natural outcome of a state of acute tension, ^{This} which caused me to indicate that that very tension was augmented by the practices, and could be broken only if both sides were willing to take the risk of tentative abstention from the ^{by} continued ~~practices~~ ^{sation}. For that very reason, whatever the background of the various actions, the logical approach to the prevailing conditions would be new instructions from the Egyptians, matched by the maintenance on the Israel side of the new patrolling practice.

However, without renewing the previous discussion, I ^{had} added in this context to bring **up** again the hot issue of raids, which I had raised at the beginning of our conversation. Col. Nasser certainly could see the very close relationship between the raiding and the issue we now had discussed as one which could be settled. I had to repeat ^{it} on that account - and if he wished/he could regard it as a tribute - that I knew, definitely knew, that he had it in his power to stop the raids.

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corresponded to a simultaneous démarche to the same effect to Mr. Ben-Gurion. Accepting, as I felt he must, my view that stopping of warlike acts was a pre-condition, recognizing the time-limit set by that very fact, recognizing the exact equality of treatment of the Israel and Egypt Governments, I felt that he could see the démarches and my present approach in their proper perspective. Generally speaking, I did not want to have a war of words, and I wished the episode to which he referred to be closed. What we were discussing were hard facts, and those facts had to be brought in harmony with the demands of the situation.

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to indicate that that very tension was augmented by the practices, and could be broken only if both sides were willing to take the risk of tentative abstention from their continuation. For that very reason, whatever the background of the various actions, the logical approach to the prevailing conditions would be new instructions from the Egyptians, matched by the maintenance on the Israel side of the new patrolling practice.

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The rest of the conversation touched on generalities. Colonel Hasser said that he was not sure about Israel's intentions, to which I replied I was just as sure about those as about Colonel Hasser's own intentions. It probably was undiplomatic for me to say so, but I wanted to add that in my several conversations with Foreign Ministers of leading countries, I had noted that they used about Colonel Hasser the same expressions of uncertainty about his intentions as he had used about the Israeli Government. This was an absurd situation, where the mutual suspicions had to be broken down. This, I felt, could



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