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COMMUNICATIONS CIRCULATED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL
AT THE REQUEST OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Note by the President of the Security Council

The President of the Security Council has the honour to circulate, for the information of the members of the Security Council, the texts of the following communications:

1. Message from the Prime Minister of Israel to the Secretary-General dated 13 April 1956
2. Message from the Secretary-General to the Prime Minister of Israel dated 13 April 1956
3. Message from the Foreign Minister of Israel to the Secretary-General delivered personally at Lydda airport on 14 April

1. MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER OF ISRAEL TO THE
SECRETARY-GENERAL DATED 13 APRIL 1956

Jerusalem,
13 April 1956

I have received your message of today's date. I believe that the purpose we both have in mind would be better served if the discussion of the attitude of the Government of Israel on the issues raised in your message were conducted between us orally when you visit Jerusalem, just as you yourself have found it more profitable to clarify the position of the Egyptian Government by direct conversations.

Since you have agreed in your further discussions with the Government of Egypt to bear in mind our desire to be informed of their exact position on the points at issue, I would be grateful if you could ascertain whether their readiness to undertake the full implementation of the provisions of the General Armistice Agreement signifies that they no longer consider Egypt to be at war with Israel, as they have claimed to be before the Security Council. I should also like to be informed whether they realize that the observance of the General Armistice Agreement obligates them to discontinue the closing of the Suez Canal to Israeli ships and to desist from other forms of interference with Israeli shipping.

I regret the misunderstanding which occurred regarding the publication in New York of one of my messages to you. The text of this message was cabled to our Delegation in New York as a matter of routine and it was not intended that it be published before it reached you in Cairo.

I assume that you will forward my present message to the President of the Security Council for circulation together with your message under reply.

2. MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TO THE PRIME MINISTER
OF ISRAEL DATED 13 APRIL 1956

Cairo, 13 April 1956

I have just received your message where you indicate your feeling that the purpose we all have in mind would be best served by a continued exchange of views in direct conversation. I share your view and repeat my expressions of satisfaction that, in accordance with the plan laid down from the beginning, I will have an opportunity to meet with you and Mr. Sharett personally a couple of days from now.

I note the points you mention in your second paragraph. I understand my mandate under the Security Council resolution to be concerned primarily with the state of compliance with the Armistice Agreements relevant to the situation which had developed along the demarcation lines, in the demilitarized zones and in the defensive areas. If a question were to be considered as outside my formal mandate, the extent to which a discussion of it is appropriate or possible for me in this context will be determined by the willingness of the Governments concerned to consider it with me in my capacity as Secretary-General.

I am pleased to learn how your message came to be published in advance in New York, and I thank you for the explanation.

3. MESSAGE FROM THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF ISRAEL TO THE SECRETARY-
GENERAL DELIVERED PERSONALLY AT LYDDA AIRPORT ON 14 APRIL

Jerusalem, 14 April 1956

The following is our reply to your message addressed to the Prime Minister and transmitted by Colonel Brewster this morning:

In our view, interference with legitimate shipping constitutes a hostile act which is incompatible with the General Armistice Agreement. This view is endorsed by an express resolution of the Security Council of 1 September 1951, which ruled that in view of the existence and enforcement of the Armistice Agreement, Egypt is not entitled to claim and exercise belligerent rights.

The acceptance by Egypt of Article 2 (2) cannot be regarded as genuine and unconditional if interpreted as leaving it open for Egypt to engage in such hostile acts as she may deem fit.

I would also point out, with reference to your mandate from the Security Council, that the Security Council resolution of 4 April 1956 to which you refer "requests the Secretary-General to undertake... a survey of the various aspects of the enforcement of and compliance with the four General Armistice Agreements." In our view, this wording entitles the Governments concerned to raise with you, under your terms of reference, the question of any existing infringement of the provisions of the General Armistice Agreement.

I would be grateful for the circulation of this reply together with your message.

