

UNITED NATIONS
SECURITY
COUNCIL



Distr.
GENERAL

S/3586
13 April 1956

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

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. Text of Message from the Secretary-General to the Prime Minister of Israel, dated 11 April 1956 from Cairo, Egypt
2. Letter dated 12 April 1956 from the Prime Minister of Israel to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, at Cairo, Egypt
3. Text of message from the Secretary-General to the Prime Minister of Israel, dated 13 April 1956 from Cairo, Egypt

1. TEXT OF MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TO
THE PRIME MINISTER OF ISRAEL, DATED 11 APRIL
1956 FROM CAIRO, EGYPT

I received through Ambassador Eban your declaration that in order to facilitate my efforts you would, while reserving your rights, keep your patrols back from the demarcation line. I expressed my appreciation for the assistance you render me through this policy.

I received assurances from the Government of Egypt that they will give orders to their military units in the Gaza area to the same effect and that in implementation of their unconditional acceptance of Article 2, paragraph 2 of the General Armistice Agreement they would likewise give orders prohibiting shooting across the demarcation line in contravention of the assurance given, as well as against the crossing of the demarcation line.

I would appreciate your confirmation of the orders given to your patrols and your specific assurance that you will implement Article 2, paragraph 2 of the General Armistice Agreement in the same way as indicated by the Egyptian Government. It is my hope that with the mutual translation into action of the assurances concerning article 2, paragraph 2, it will be possible to re-establish quiet along the demarcation line. It is likewise my hope that, on the same basis, infiltrations and acts of retaliation will be brought to an end.

2. LETTER DATED 12 APRIL 1956 FROM THE PRIME MINISTER OF
ISRAEL TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS,
AT CAIRO, EGYPT

I am in receipt of your message of yesterday's date and beg to state as follows:

1. On 5 December 1955 I informed General Burns that the Government of Israel undertook to comply with all provisions of the General Armistice Agreement in the letter as well as in the spirit, including Article 2, paragraph 2, on the understanding that the agreement was equally binding on the other party. This position of ours stands and is hereby reaffirmed unconditionally.
2. The undertaking received by you from Colonel Nasser in the course of yesterday confirming the acceptance of Article 2, paragraph 2, was violated last night by a series of murderous attacks, perpetrated by Egyptian gangs deep within our territory, of which you were informed by the Foreign Minister, Mr. Sharett, in his personal message to you after midnight. In the course of eight bloody assaults, hand grenades were thrown into peaceful dwellings, civilian road traffic was ambushed, while children at prayer in a synagogue were fired upon. The casualties were: three children and one adult killed and fifteen persons wounded.
3. A further act of aggression was committed by Egypt this morning: four Egyptian jet planes appeared over Israel territory near Avdat, and in the ensuing air combat one of them was shot down. It is clear therefore that Egyptian acts of hostility are continuing.
4. These open violations of an undertaking given by Egypt only a few hours before come as a sequel to the continuous infringements of other provisions of the Armistice Agreement by Egypt and to breaches of previous pledges to maintain a cease fire order. In view of these facts the question must be asked whether and what assurances have been obtained from Colonel Nasser guaranteeing the fulfilment of his present undertaking. We should like to know whether you have the certainty that orders had been issued to all Egyptian forces, and what measures had been adopted, to maintain a complete cease fire, not to cross the armistice line, to put an end to the activities of sabotage and murder gangs, and to refrain from all other acts of aggression and violence.

5. I should like to understand whether your interpretation of the reservation made by Colonel Nasser in regard to the observance of Article 2, paragraph 2, has been accepted and confirmed by him or whether this is merely an expression of your attitude which does not commit the Egyptian Government.
6. I feel confident that you will not rest content with securing an undertaking to implement Article 2, paragraph 2, but will insist on the compliance of Egypt with all other provisions of the General Armistice Agreement.
7. I would appreciate being informed without delay of the exact position of the Egyptian Government on all these matters.
8. I would be grateful for the transmission of this letter to the President of the Security Council, to be circulated to all members of the Council, together with your message to me.

3. TEXT OF MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TO THE PRIME MINISTER
OF ISRAEL, DATED 13 APRIL 1956 FROM CAIRO, EGYPT

I have received your message which I understand to be a reply both to my message concerning the assurance given by the Government of Egypt on compliance with Article 2, paragraph 2, and my message with questions to you whether you would confirm your orders to your patrols to keep back from the demarcation line; and whether you would give a specific assurance that you will implement Article 2, paragraph 2 of the General Armistice Agreement in the same way as indicated by the Egyptian Government.

As a matter of course I will comply with your desire to have my second message of yesterday and your reply circulated as Security Council documents; the same circulation will be given to this message. As you know the documents repeated in my first message of yesterday have already been circulated as Security Council documents.

However I will hold up circulation until I can assume you have received this message. I must express surprise at your publication in New York of your latest message before it had been received by me.

Regarding your paragraph 1. I note with appreciation your unconditional reaffirmation of your undertaking to comply with all provisions of the General Armistice Agreement in the letter as well as in the spirit. I have received corresponding assurances from the Government of Egypt. However, that leaves the question open, how, after a period of serious departures from the letter and spirit of the General Armistice Agreement, on both sides, full compliance is to be achieved. That question is the object of the present mission on behalf of the Security Council and will be discussed with you when I arrive in Jerusalem.

Regarding your paragraph 2. I have already noted with regret the new casualties suffered last night by the people of Israel. However, I do not, without further knowledge of facts, feel entitled to regard the occurrences of last night as casting doubts on the sincerity of the assurance given by the Government of Egypt.

Regarding your paragraph 3. I regret this new incident which cannot but further complicate the joint effort to re-establish peace and order. According to the Israeli complaint to the Mixed Armistice Commission, the place of the incident was over the demilitarized zone, where the presence of military aircraft from both sides would have been in contravention to the rules applying to that zone.

Regarding your paragraph 4. You ask whether and what assurances have been obtained from Colonel Nasser guaranteeing the fulfilment of his present undertaking. You certainly are aware that in negotiations of this kind, the representative of the United Nations must take the given word of any Member Government to the representative as binding for them in relation to the Organization. That is true of Egypt as well as of Israel. You further ask whether I have the certainty that orders "had" been issued to all Egyptian forces to observe certain rules defined in your message. You will in this context remember that I have asked you for your assurance that you will issue orders to the same effect as promised by the Government of Egypt. I regret that so far I have not received such assurances. Obviously, the issuance of orders on your side, as well as on the Egyptian side, has to be based on the simultaneous existence of assurances which guarantee reciprocity in the approach to the question of implementation of the general principles. I repeat that I hope to receive at your earliest convenience the assurances for which I asked in my previous message. As soon as such assurances have been received, I will, in relation to the Government of Egypt as well as in relation to your Government, ask for confirmation of the fact that the orders indicated have been issued.

Regarding your paragraph 5. My interpretation of the reservations made by Colonel Nasser has exactly the same legal standing and implications as my corresponding interpretation of your reservation. As you know, I have not received from you any confirmation on my interpretation, I have received one from Dr. Fawzi. I have in your case taken the silence as implying consent.

Regarding paragraph 6. You are right in your expectation that I will not rest content with an undertaking to implement Article 2, paragraph 2, but will insist on compliance with the General Armistice Agreement in its entirety. By that I mean implementation by concrete action along the lines of such a plan of transition to renewed implementation as may result from the present Security Council action. This attitude of mine applies equally to all parties to one of the Armistice Agreements. I am looking forward to my talks with you for the part to be played by Israel in a return to complete implementation of the Armistice Agreement by your country.

Regarding paragraph 7. Although I believe that my position has been sufficiently clarified in the previous points, I will have your observations in mind in my continued discussions with the Government of Egypt.

In conclusion I wish to inform you that I hope to be able to leave Cairo after completion of my talks here on Saturday. It is my hope that those talks will provide a background against which we will be able to agree on how the Government of Israel shall, on its side, re-establish compliance with the General Armistice Agreement.

