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Further report on the status of the cease-fire
in the Middle East

The following report on the situation on 4 January 1974 in the Egypt-Israel sector is based on information received from the headquarters of UNEF and UNTSO:

1. General assessment of the situation:

The over-all situation was quiet until the serious exchanges of fire referred to below (paragraph 2 (a)), which lasted for more than two hours and at times spread along the whole line of confrontation in the Suez City area. There were also brief but at times intensive exchanges of fire in the area on the east bank of the canal in the northern sector, where the positions of the parties appear to be somewhat unstable.

As previously reported (S/11057/Add.201, para. 1), the movements of the supply convoys for Egyptian troops on the east bank of the canal and for Suez City, which had been interrupted as a result of the situation in the area, were resumed on 4 January.

2. OP reports on ground activity (firing):

(a) Finnish battalion:

- (i) Position 221 (AMR 563-148): 1/ At 1352 2/ Egyptian forces opened artillery fire from area of Port Taufiq against Israel positions on shoreline near Position 221. At 1353 Israel forces returned fire with mortars, artillery and tank guns. Exchange of fire at intensive rate continued and gradually decreased to a sporadic rate until 1600 when it ceased (it was not possible to determine who ceased firing first due to darkness and difficulties with visibility in the built-up area).

1/ AMR: Approximate map reference. It should be noted that while UNTSO has been using the Egyptian Red Grid system, UNEF, for technical reasons, has had to adopt temporarily the Universal Traverse Mercator system. UNEF will change to the Egyptian Red Grid system as soon as the required maps are available.

2/ All times GMT.

- (ii) Position 229 (AMR 554-175): At 1446 Israel forces opened small-arms and machine-gun fire near Position 229. Egyptian forces immediately returned small-arms and machine-gun fire. Exchange of fire spread all along the confrontation lines in the city area. The rate of fire was intensive until 1504 when it reduced to sporadic rate and finally ceased completely at 1600 (it was not possible to determine which party ceased firing first due to darkness and poor visibility in built-up area).
- (b) Irish battalion:
- (i) Position 501 (AMR 443-186): Between 0740 and 0742 and between 0924 and 0950 sporadic machine-gun fire by Egyptian forces.
 - (ii) Position 502 (AMR 393-046): Between 0955 and 1000 and between 1135 and 1215 sporadic mortar fire by unidentified forces (identification was not possible due to distance from position). At 1040 mortar fire by Egyptian forces immediately returned by Israel forces (exchange of fire). Sporadic fire continued until 1200 at which time both parties ceased firing. Between 1845 and 1910 sporadic machine-gun fire by unidentified forces (identification was not possible due to darkness).
- (c) Swedish battalion:
- (i) Position 1107 (AMR 325-787): Between 0635 and 0645 sporadic small-arms fire by Egyptian forces.
 - (ii) Position 1121 (AMR 390-065): Between 1845 and 1849 intense machine-gun fire by Israel forces directed against Egyptian advanced positions (see document S/11057/Add.195, para. 3 (a)). At 1858 machine-gun fire by Egyptian forces in the same area immediately returned by Israel forces (exchange of fire). At 1901 both parties ceased firing.
 - (iii) Position 1105 (AMR 282-808): Between 1963 and 2156 sporadic small-arms fire by Egyptian forces.
 - (iv) Position 1101 (AMR 286-809): Between 2133 and 2140 sporadic small-arms fire by Egyptian forces.
- (d) UNTSO Patrols:
- (i) Patrol 22 (AMR 7600-8750): Between 0908 and 0922 sporadic artillery fire by unidentified forces (identification was not possible due to distance from patrol).
 - (ii) Patrol 12 (AMR 7470-8955): Between 1130 and 1150 sporadic artillery fire by Egyptian forces.

3. Reports on ground activity (movement forward):

Swedish battalion: Position 1121: With reference to S/11057/Add.195 para. 3 (a), Egyptian forces have not moved back.

4. Reports on air activity:

Finnish battalion:

- (i) Position 226 (AMR 550-160): At 0954 one unidentified jet aircraft, flying north to south, was first observed north of position and last observed south of position.
- (ii) Position 227 (AMR 549-166): At 1003 one unidentified jet aircraft flying north to south was first observed north of position and last observed south of position.
- (iii) Headquarters: At 1036 one unidentified jet aircraft, flying north to south, was first observed north of headquarters and last observed south of headquarters.

In all three instances, identification of aircraft types and nationalities was not possible due to high altitude.

5. Complaints by the parties:

A complaint has been received from Egypt alleging that on 4 January between 0915 and 1030 Israel forces opened fire 18 kilometres north-east of Ismailia. This complaint was not confirmed by United Nations observation.

6. Firing close to United Nations personnel and positions:

The following incidents occurred during the firing reported in paragraph 2 (a) above:

- (i) At 1440 two artillery shells from Egyptian forces exploded within 50 metres of Finnish battalion headquarters and one exploded within 15 metres of Finnish battalion headquarters gate. No casualties or serious damage to United Nations installations.
- (ii) At 1446 rounds from small-arms and machine-guns by unidentified forces passed close to and hit buildings in the Finnish battalion headquarters area, Positions 226, 227, 228 and 229. Identification was not possible due to difficulties with visibility in built-up area.

7. United Nations action:

Protest and strong request for restraint in relation to incidents reported in paragraph 2 above have been submitted to the Egyptian authorities.

8. Other matters:

Supply convoys. On 4 January a total of 27 lorries unloaded at Suez City and 24 lorries unloaded at OP Kilo.