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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON DEVELOPMENTS THREATENING  
THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE UNITED NATIONS OBSERVATION OPERATION  
IN THE SUEZ CANAL SECTOR

1. I am increasingly concerned about recent developments which threaten the effectiveness of the observation of the cease-fire in the Suez Canal sector. These developments also expose United Nations Military Observers and other United Nations personnel engaged in the observation operation to grave danger and cause heavy damage to United Nations installations, vehicles and equipment. With this concern in mind, I addressed on 21 April 1969 identical letters to the Permanent Representatives of Israel and the United Arab Republic. The text of these identical letters is as follows:

"Excellency,

"I have the honour to refer to the situation in the Suez Canal cease-fire sector as described in the supplemental information reports circulated as Security Council documents in the S/7930 series. In the past few weeks heavy exchanges of fire, including the use of mortars, artillery and tank guns, have become an almost routine occurrence in the Suez Canal sector.

"Quite apart from my concern over these breaches of the Security Council cease-fire, I feel obliged to point out certain actions of the parties which substantially impair the United Nations observation operation and to bring to your attention my grave and increasing anxiety for the safety of the United Nations Military Observers and supporting Field Service personnel stationed in the Suez Canal sector.

"The Chief of Staff of UNTSO, Lieutenant-General Odd Bull, has on several occasions in the past communicated his concern to the authorities on both sides as regards the impairment of the observation operation, the safety of United Nations personnel and the heavy damage caused to United Nations installations and vehicles in the course of various breaches of the cease-fire. He has complained to them that United Nations installations and facilities, although clearly and unmistakably marked, have been repeatedly fired upon by both sides. In this connexion General Bull has remarked that many United Nations Observation Posts have been heavily

encroached upon on both sides of the Canal by military positions of the parties and that these encroachments not only reduce the observation capability of the United Nations Military Observers but also gravely and unnecessarily endanger their lives. General Bull has also requested the authorities on both sides urgently to provide assistance for the improvement or, when necessary, for the construction of shelters for the United Nations personnel. This assistance has so far been inadequate.

"A brief summary of some of the damage caused between 8 March and 20 April to United Nations installations and vehicles affords some idea of the risks incurred by the United Nations personnel in the Suez Canal sector. During this period there were twenty shooting incidents with the following damage:

- (i) Seven caravans and one small bus used as living quarters completely destroyed; caravans damaged on sixteen occasions, buildings of United Nations Control Centres and Observation Posts damaged on twenty-seven occasions; garage, general workshop and store houses damaged; residential buildings damaged on two occasions.
- (ii) Forty-eight vehicles damaged; nine trailers damaged; one generator destroyed and three damaged.
- (iii) Two radio antennae completely destroyed; numerous antennae damaged and several radio sets destroyed.

"It is remarkable that, so far, there have been no fatalities among United Nations personnel in the Suez Canal sector. I feel, however, that it is my duty to make every possible effort to ensure that these officers, who have been made available to the United Nations by their Governments, and the United Nations Field Service personnel who assist them, are not subjected to unnecessary or excessive risks in the performance of their duties. Indeed, I do not feel that this operation can, or should, be maintained indefinitely under such conditions, although I realize that in the nature of their functions United Nations Military Observers must inevitably face certain risks.

"I would be grateful if you would convey my views as expressed above to your Government. I would also request that instructions be given urgently to the military forces concerned to avoid as far as possible actions which restrict the observation operation or endanger the safety of United Nations personnel in the Suez Canal sector, in particular by the encroachment of United Nations Observation Posts and by firing at United Nations installations and facilities. I would further request that the construction of new shelters for United Nations personnel be completed as a matter of urgency.

"Accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) U THANT"

2. On 25 April 1969 I received two letters from the Permanent Representative of Israel in reply to my letter of 21 April. The text of the first letter is as follows:

"Excellency,

"I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 21 April 1969 concerning the safety of United Nations Military Observers and supporting Field Service personnel stationed in the Suez Canal sector.

"I have transmitted the contents of your letter to the Government of Israel which will give it careful consideration.

"In the meantime I am in a position to assure you that Israeli forces are under strict orders to do all within their power to prevent danger to United Nations personnel and United Nations installations. It is now clear that the United Arab Republic forces have been recently opening fire intentionally on United Nations Military Observers, United Nations installations and transport in order to inflict injury, damage and destruction on them.

"Particularly deplorable and barbaric was the wounding by the Egyptian forces on 22 April 1969 of United Nations Military Observer Captain Young of Ireland and the subsequent attacks by these forces over several hours on United Nations and Israeli personnel and vehicles which tried to extricate him.

"I shall not fail to inform you of any additional comments as soon as I receive them from Jerusalem.

"Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Yosef TEKOAH"

The text of the second letter is as follows:

"Excellency,

"On instructions of my Government I have the honour to refer to your letter of 21 April 1969 concerning the safety of United Nations Military Observers and supporting Field Service personnel stationed in the Suez Canal sector and further to the interim reply which I sent to you earlier today, to state the following:

"It is regrettable that the above letter, by referring indifferently to 'the parties' in general terms, is liable to convey a misleading impression, as if the two parties were equally responsible for the situation which prompted the letter under reply. It is beyond dispute, and this is fully borne out in the latest series of reports emanating from General Odd Bull and submitted to the Security Council by the Secretary-General, that the Israel authorities in general and the Israel armed forces in particular are punctillious in respecting the status and duties of the United Nations Military Observers in the Suez Canal sector, are co-operating fully with General Odd Bull, with a view to maintaining tranquillity in accordance with the resolutions of the Security Council, and are doing their utmost to reduce to the absolute minimum any risks to the observers and their equipment, and to United Nations installations. This attitude is in full conformity with the policy of the Government of Israel with regard to the cease-fire. In this connection I wish to repeat what I wrote in my letter today to the President of the Security Council as follows:

'The Government of Israel desires that the cease-fire be scrupulously observed on the basis of complete reciprocity and that tranquillity prevail along the cease-fire lines. The Government of Israel would appreciate it if Your Excellency could use your influence with the Government of the United Arab Republic to abide effectively by its obligation faithfully to maintain the cease-fire.'

"The recent supplemental information reports circulated by the Secretary-General as Security Council documents in the S/7930 series, to which the Secretary-General's letter referred, establish that the armed forces of the United Arab Republic are the ones that have repeatedly and openly initiated gross military assaults on the United Nations Military Observers and their equipment and installations, and have been exceptionally obdurate in their refusal to institute any practical steps to minimize the danger and damage. The circumstances of the recent attacks of this character leave no room for any reasonable doubt that the attacks were not the product of miscalculation or carelessness but were deliberate and are an expression of the declared policy of the United Arab Republic. Those assaults on the United Nations

cease-fire observation effort are in line with the publicly avowed Egyptian objective of creating tension in the Suez Canal area and of dramatizing it. It is not impossible that one of the factors influencing these activities of the United Arab Republic is an expectation that the United Nations might draw certain conclusions from this situation and decide to withdraw its cease-fire observation from that area - an operation which, as is well known presents considerable inconvenience to the implementation of the United Arab Republic policy of aggression.

"Your letter touches upon a number of specific aspects of the problem of safety of the United Nations Military Observers. I wish to confirm that the letter of 19 September 1968 from the Minister of Defense to General Odd Bull remains in full force and effect. The text of that letter read:

'In reply to your letter of 16 September 1968, I wish to express the regret of my Government and myself at hearing that several United Nations cease-fire installations were damaged during the exchange of fire in the Suez Canal area on 8 September initiated by the United Arab Republic forces in violation of the cease-fire.

'If any such damage was caused by firing from our side, I can assure you that this was wholly unintentional. I have given instructions to ensure that stringent precautions should be taken in future to avoid any similar occurrence.'

"On the question of encroachments upon observation posts, General Odd Bull or his representative have approached the Israel authorities on several occasions in the past with requests to increase the distance between Israeli military positions and the observation posts on the east bank of the Suez Canal. In each instance an agreed arrangement was reached to the satisfaction of the United Nations Military Observers involving either some re-siting of the Israeli positions in question or that of the observation posts. As far as Israel is concerned there are no differences of opinion in this matter, between the Israeli authorities and the United Nations personnel. On the other hand the problem does exist, and is a serious one, on the Egyptian side. To the best of Israel's knowledge, there is no readiness on the part of the Egyptian authorities to accommodate themselves to requests in this matter from United Nations Military Observers. Egyptian positions immediately adjacent to observation posts are clearly visible from the Israel side. These Egyptian positions brazenly abuse the shelter thus afforded them in the knowledge that the Israel forces will refrain from returning fire so as to avoid endangering the United Nations observation posts.

"The Secretary-General's letter contains a summary of some of the damage caused between 8 March and 20 April 1969 to United Nations installations and vehicles as a result of 20 incidents. Study of

General Odd Bull's reports relating to these incidents reveals that from 12 March until the end of the period under review no damage whatsoever was caused to any United Nations observation posts on the Egyptian side despite the propinquity of Egyptian positions to them. The sole instance since 12 March of damage to a United Nations installation on the Egyptian side, occurred on 10 April at the Ismailia Control Centre. However, that damage was not caused by a direct hit but consisted of 'external damage to building by impact of heavy calibre weapons immediately in front of building' (S/7930/Add.154), which itself is about 1.5 kms. from the Canal and invisible from the Israeli side. Damage of that kind could occur despite all the caution and strict preventive measures of the Israel Defense Forces to prevent damage to United Nations personnel and installations. On the other hand, General Bull's recent reports show that in a period of less than five weeks the Egyptian armed forces attacked United Nations installations on 14 March (S/7930/Add.141, para. 4 (a)), 24 March (Add.144, para. 5 (a)), 4 April (Add.148, para. 6 (a)), 10 April (Add.153, para. 4 (a)), (Add.154, para. 2), 11 April (Add.155, para. 5 (a)), 12 April (Add.156, para. 4 (a) (11)), 15 April (Add.160, para. 4), 17 April (Add.162, para. 4 and Add.163, para. 1), 18 April (Add.164, para. 1 (m)), 19 April (Add.165, para. 4), 20 April (Add.166, para. 3), and 21 April (Add.169, para. 1, 2 (a)).

"There is here an obvious one-sided pattern. The attitude of the United Arab Republic became abundantly clear in its utterly barbaric conduct yesterday when Egyptian military forces repeatedly attacked United Nations and Israeli personnel and vehicles attempting to extricate the wounded United Nations Military Observer Captain Young of Ireland. The calculated nature of these attacks also reveals itself in the transparent, and quite artificial, efforts of the Egyptian authorities to manufacture allegations that the Israel forces had been operating from or close to observation posts. The United Nations Military Observers themselves have more than once denied these trumped up charges, e.g. in Add.148, para. 5, Add.150, para. 5, Add.153, paras. 1, 6, Add.156, para. 1, 3 (a), Add.158, paras. 1, 4, Add.160, paras. 3 (b) (vi) and 4, Add.163, para. 2.

"With regard to the question of shelters for United Nations Military Observers, you are undoubtedly aware that considerable work has already been completed. However, virtually continuous shelling and sniping by the United Arab Republic forces in the last few weeks has rendered further progress practically impossible. The Government of Israel is unable to accept any responsibility for any consequent delay. It is, therefore, regretted that the observation in the Secretary-General's letter that assistance for the improvement or for the construction of shelters for the United Nations personnel has been 'inadequate' might convey an impression that it is applicable to Israel. The Israeli authorities are exerting their utmost endeavours to expedite this construction, and will continue to do so to the extent that Egyptian acts of aggression do not impede it.

"The simple answer to the difficulties to which the Secretary-General's letter adverted is faithful and scrupulous observance of the cease-fire. This is the policy of the Government of Israel, which considers that the United Nations should insist on the same policy being followed by the United Arab Republic.

"Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Yosef TEKOAH"

3. On 25 April 1969 I received an interim reply from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Republic, the text of which is as follows:

"Excellency,

"I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 21 April 1969, the contents of which I have immediately conveyed to my Government.

"Accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) MOHAMED AWAD EL KONY"

On 30 April 1969 I received a further letter, dated 29 April 1969, from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Republic, the text of which is as follows:

"Excellency,

"With reference to your letter dated 21 April 1969, in which you expressed your increasing anxiety for the safety of the United Nations Military Observers and Supporting Field Service Personnel stationed in the Suez Canal Sector, I have the honour, on instructions from my Government, to inform you that while deeply appreciating the courage and perseverance with which they are carrying out the difficult and dangerous tasks under the prevailing conditions - an appreciation already expressed in our letter to the President of the Security Council of 26 April 1969 - I wish to assure you that the United Arab Republic has affirmatively responded to the proposals submitted by Lieutenant General Odd Bull, Chief United Nations Observer, to Ambassador Salah Gohar, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, at the meeting held between them on 23 April 1969.

"The United Arab Republic Government has already taken the necessary steps towards strengthening the shelters assigned to the Observers all along the West Bank of the Suez Canal, with a view to making them safer and more secure for the Observers against Israeli fire from across the Canal.

"I would like to seize this opportunity to reiterate our readiness to contribute to the maximum extent, towards reducing the risks the Observers are faced with and enabling them to fulfil their duties under the dangerous circumstances created by the continuation of Israeli aggression.

"The responsibility for the deteriorating situation and aggravation of the conditions in the area lies squarely with Israel which committed on 5 June 1967, an aggression against three Arab State Members of the United Nations. This responsibility is all the more grave due to the insistence of Israel to annex the Arab territories it has occupied as a result of that



aggression. The expansionist aims of Israel and its intention of annexing Arab territories have been repeatedly expressed in statements made by Israeli leaders including the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defence and the Minister for Foreign Affairs. We have conveyed those statements to Ambassador Jarring on 8 December 1969 and 5 March 1969, as well as to the President of the Security Council on 13 February 1969.

"Israel has consistently refused to comply with the resolutions adopted by the Security Council putting an end to the Israeli aggression. It is no secret that the Security Council has more than once condemned Israel for its violations of the cease-fire. It is also worth noting that each time a resolution of this nature is adopted by the Council, Israel, through its representative to the United Nations, voices its defiance of those resolutions. Furthermore, it is to be underlined that Israel's flouting of the cease-fire resolutions, by continuing its aggression against the Arab countries and shelling their cities and economic installations, conforms with its aggressive plans aimed at forcing them to accept its diktat. Israel continues to shell Ismailia, Suez and other densely populated areas, as well as the economic installations in the Suez Canal Sector.

"It is clear that the insistence of Israel to pursue its expansionist policies and its attempts to force the Arab countries into acquiescing to its plans make it inevitable for Israel to systematically violate the cease-fire resolutions. This policy has incurred upon Israel several condemnations by the Security Council.

"Simultaneously Israel has refused the peaceful settlement adopted by the Security Council in its resolution of 22 November 1967. This was made evident by its refusal to implement that resolution or to co-operate with Ambassador Jarring in the achievement of this peaceful settlement. It is common knowledge that Israeli leaders have declared both their opposition to the aforementioned resolution and their determination to continue with their occupation of Arab territories, thus violating the Security Council resolution which requires the withdrawal of Israeli forces from all the Arab territories. The former Israeli Prime Minister has actually stated that the annexation by Israel of Arab territories is not negotiable with the Arab States.

"All this makes it clear that Israel does not intend to abide by the cease-fire resolutions. Israel has also refused the implementation of the Security Council resolution of 22 November 1967, as those resolutions conflict with Israel's expansionist aims. In addition, Israel persists in violating the Charter of the United Nations and disregarding the other resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly; in particular, the resolutions pertaining to the refugees and Jerusalem. Israel, furthermore, continues to commit barbaric acts against Arab population in the occupied territories. Eviction from homes, destruction of houses, arrest and murder of innocent women and children are common Israeli practices in those territories.

"Consequently, Israel bears the responsibility for endangering international peace, as well as for the deterioration of the situation in the Middle East. Israel must bear alone the responsibility for this aggressive policy.

"I am confident, Excellency, that you will continue to pursue your constructive efforts for the cause of peace and that you will endeavour to bring to bear on Israel the necessity of respecting the United Nations resolutions, so that the peaceful settlement approved by the Security Council may be realized.

"Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) MOHAMED AWAD EL KONY"

4. On 1 May 1969 I addressed the following letter to the Permanent Representative of Israel:

"Excellency,

"I have the honour to refer to your two letters of 23 April 1969 which were in reply to my letter of 21 April 1969 concerning difficulties in carrying out the observation operation and the safety of United Nations Military Observers and supporting Field Service personnel stationed in the Suez Canal sector.

"My letter of 21 April was addressed in identical terms to both parties in the Suez Canal sector for the reason that problems relating to the carrying out of the observation operation and the safety of United Nations personnel have arisen on both sides of the Canal. My intention in this letter was to elicit greater assistance from both parties in solving these problems. The day to day events in the Canal sector, which have given rise to these difficulties, are reported in detail to the Security Council in the S/7930 series on the basis of General Bull's reports. My letters to the parties were not concerned with the evaluation of these reports or the apportionment of responsibility for specific developments.

"I note with appreciation the steps which have been taken by the Israel authorities and armed forces to co-operate with United Nations Military Observers and to facilitate the observation operation. I also note the intention of the Israel authorities to exert their utmost endeavours to expedite the construction of shelters for United Nations Military Observers.

"There are a few points arising from your two letters of 23 April on which I believe that further clarification might be desirable on the basis of information available to the Secretary-General.

"(1) Your first letter of 23 April refers to 'the wounding by the Egyptian forces on 22 April 1969 of United Nations Military Observer Captain Young of Ireland'. Captain Young's injury, in fact, resulted from his vehicle striking an anti-tank mine on a roadway which had, according to information received from the Senior Israel Representative, been checked for mines earlier that morning.

"(2) On the question of encroachments, I am informed that in fact it is UNTSO which has normally resited its positions and that the Israel Forces have not resited their positions in the past in order to give UNTSO a clear area. For example, in October 1968, UNTSO agreed with the Israel authorities to the resiting of OP Yellow, which is completely surrounded by Israel positions. However, the actual resiting of OP Yellow has not yet been accomplished as the shelter in the new location has not yet been constructed. It is, I think indisputable that encroachment is on both sides a primary cause of firing on or near United Nations observations posts. For example,

Israel Forces have a number of prepared tank positions near United Nations observation posts which are used only during exchanges of fire, and these draw heavy calibre weapons fire from the other side.

"(3) As regards damage to United Nations observation posts on the west side of the Canal, your second letter of 25 April states that 'from 12 March until the end of the period under review no damage whatsoever was caused to any United Nations observation posts on the Egyptian side despite the propinquity of Egyptian positions to them', with the one exception of damage on 10 April at the Ismailia Control Centre, which is stated, in your letter, to be 'about 1.5 kms. from the Canal and invisible from the Israeli side'. In fact, the Ismailia Control Centre is approximately 200 metres from the Canal bank. Moreover, on 8, 9 and 11 March, United Nations installations on the west side of the Canal did, in fact, sustain a great deal of damage, as reported in S/7930/Add.134 and 135, and there was also some damage to United Nations installations on the west side of the Canal during exchanges of fire on 8 and 15 April (S/7930/Add. 150 and 160 refer).

"(4) As regards the progress of shelter construction, on the east side of the Canal only the construction of the shelter at Kantara Control Centre has as yet been completed, although the question of shelter construction was first raised with the Israel authorities in October 1968.

"As I have stated above, the intention of my letter of 21 April 1969 was not to open up a discussion on the responsibility for events in the Suez Canal sector, but rather to secure, as far as possible, increased co-operation in facilitating the task of observation and the provision of all possible assistance and protection to United Nations personnel in carrying out their duties. I fully appreciate the difficulties of the situation in the Suez Canal sector for all concerned and I also appreciate the co-operation which the United Nations Military Observers have received. I think it advisable, however, for the sake of the record, to make the foregoing clarifications.

"Accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) U Thant"

5. On 1 May 1969 I addressed the following letter to the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Republic:

"Excellency,

"I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 25 and 29 April in reply to my letter of 21 April 1969. I note with appreciation the statement in your letter of 29 April concerning the co-operation which the UAR authorities have given to United Nations personnel in expediting the building of shelters for United Nations Military Observers. The progress made in building shelters on the West Bank of the Canal has just now been confirmed to me by United Nations officials in the area.

"May I point out that your reply does not make any specific reference to two other matters of concern which I raised in my letter of 21 April, namely, encroachment on United Nations observation posts and incidents of firing near or at United Nations personnel, installations and vehicles. I would wish to reiterate my continuing concern about these matters.

"Accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) U Thant"

6. Since 21 April, the day on which I addressed the identical letters to the two parties, exchanges of fire have continued to take place daily in the Suez Canal sector. Encroachment on United Nations Observation Posts has continued, and some of these Observation Posts have been hit. With reference to the exchange of fire of 23 April, General Bull has reported that the nearest United Arab Republic firing positions were one metre from OP Delta and two metres from OP Charlie (S/7930/Add.172). General Bull has also reported that United Arab Republic forces have fired at United Nations Military Observers (S/7930/Add.171 and 180) and at a United Nations ambulance (S/7930/Add.170) and that Israel forces have fired at United Nations Military Observers (S/7930/Add.182). Since 20 April further damage sustained by United Nations installations and facilities includes two caravans destroyed and one damaged; one vehicle damaged; two radio antennae damaged; OP buildings damaged on four occasions, and residential buildings damaged on two occasions (see S/7930/Add.169, 171, 177 and 180).

7. The concern which I expressed to the parties on 21 April over the safety of United Nations Military Observers was unhappily borne out by an incident on

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the very next day, 22 April, when an Observer was seriously injured. The circumstances of this incident and the difficulties encountered in the evacuation of the wounded Observer are set forth below.

8. On 22 April at 1218 hours GMT Captain Joseph Young, an Observer of Irish nationality, who was proceeding from the Kantara Control Centre in the direction of OP Green, was seriously injured when his vehicle struck an anti-tank mine. Earlier on the same day, another United Nations vehicle also proceeding to OP Green, driven by a French Observer, also hit a mine, but in this case fortunately no one was injured. Shortly after the incident involving Captain Young, General Bull informed the Senior UAR Liaison Officer that Israel forces would attempt to evacuate Captain Young by helicopter. The reply of the Senior UAR Liaison Officer was conditional upon a number of requirements which under the circumstances could not be met. Therefore the only alternative was evacuation by road, which General Bull did not consider as satisfactory as by helicopter, since the roadway was obviously dangerous. General Bull made arrangements for a United Nations ambulance, clearly marked and flying a United Nations flag, to proceed from the Kantara Control Centre to the scene of the incident and he informed the Senior UAR Liaison Officer accordingly. The Senior UAR Liaison Officer replied that he could not guarantee safe passage for the vehicle. When asked for the reasons, he gave no details. General Bull then informed the Senior UAR Liaison Officer that the ambulance would proceed from Kantara and that he would hold the United Arab Republic authorities responsible for any firing upon it. While this ambulance was proceeding from Kantara to the scene of the incident, it came under fire from United Arab Republic forces on the West Bank of the Canal as reported in document S/7930/Add.170. Attempts to evacuate Captain Young by road were finally abandoned because of the firing in the area and the possibility that the roadway might be mined. He was evacuated by means of an Israel helicopter at 1945 hours GMT on 22 April. His condition was later reported as "good". In this regard, I have noted with regret some unfounded current news reports which, by exaggerating the nature and severity of Captain Young's injuries, have a harmful effect.

9. When Captain Young was wounded by the mine explosion, he was proceeding with a second United Nations Military Observer to assist two other Observers whose vehicle earlier that morning struck a mine while en route to OP Green to relieve the Observer team at the OP which had been on duty there since 15 April. Because

of the mine incidents, and the continuing firing in the area, the relief of this team could be effected only on the morning of 28 April. The three officers with Captain Young finally managed to return to Kantara Control Centre only during the night of 25/26 April. The relief of a number of other United Nations Observation Posts has also met with considerable difficulty and delay because of the recent exchanges of fire, sniping at United Nations Military Observers and frequent mining of roadways on the east side of the Canal. The Chief of Staff of UNTSO is approaching the authorities on both sides in order to discuss with them practical measures to facilitate the observation operation in the Suez Canal sector, and to secure all possible assistance and protection for the United Nations Military Observers and personnel in the performance of their duties.

10. One of the proposals General Bull has in mind is the establishment of safe perimeters around United Nations installations. He considers, and I agree with him, that each of the United Nations Control Centres and Observation Posts should be surrounded by a free area of agreed dimensions which should be clearly marked and should be free of any manned or unmanned firing positions and of any military personnel and equipment. Another proposal envisaged by the Chief of Staff in which I also concur is the provision, with the agreement of the two parties, of a United Nations craft for the exclusive use of UNTSO; such a craft would be used to relieve United Nations personnel at Observation Posts when relief by road is not possible, to evacuate injured United Nations personnel as necessary, and to cope with other unforeseen situations involving the United Nations observation operation.

11. I take this opportunity to pay a special tribute to the United Nations Military Observers and the Field Service personnel who are manning the observation operation in the Suez Canal Sector. In the face of almost continuous exposure to danger and in increasingly uncomfortable and hazardous conditions they continue to carry out their tasks with a high sense of duty, great courage and with accuracy and objectivity. The Chief of Staff informs me that despite the unhappy developments of recent weeks, the morale of the Observers in the Suez Canal Sector is high and their devotion to duty exemplary.