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REPORT BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE OBSERVATION OF THE CEASE-FIRE IN  
THE SUEZ CANAL SECTOR COVERING THE PERIOD FROM 11 JULY TO 5 AUGUST 1967

1. The following report is based on information received from Lt. General Odd Bull, the Chief of Staff of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization in Palestine (UNTSO).

Negotiations with the parties for the establishment of the military observation groups

2. Pursuant to my request, as outlined in my report of 11 July 1967 to the Security Council (S/8053), the Chief of Staff held discussions with appropriate authorities of Israel and the United Arab Republic to make the necessary arrangements for the stationing of United Nations Military Observers in the Suez Canal sector.

3. The Chief of Staff saw the Israel Defence Minister and other Israel officials on 12 July and from 12 to 14 July visited Cairo and held conversations with Under-Secretary Salah Gohar and other United Arab Republic officials; he met again with the Israel Defence Minister and Israel officials on 14 July. From 15 to 16 July, the Chief of Staff again visited Cairo for further discussions with United Arab Republic authorities.

4. Meanwhile, on 14 July, a heavy outbreak of firing occurred in the areas of Suez and Fort Tawfiq, spreading along the Canal and involving artillery and air action. A cease-fire was finally arranged by the Chief of Staff for 2200 hours GMT on 15 July.

5. Following initial reconnaissance, advance parties, consisting of four Observers on each side with the necessary supporting staff, proceeded on 15 July to El Quantara on the eastern side and Ismailia on the western side of the Canal sector to make arrangements necessary for the implementation of the cease-fire.

6. In the initial discussions with the parties various limitations on the observation operation were suggested which would, in the opinion of the Chief of Staff, seriously hamper its effectiveness. These related mainly to movement of observers, and to communications. The problem of the movement of observers has been resolved, and the communications problems partially resolved.

#### Operation of the Cease-fire Observation

7. UNTSO cease-fire observation on the Suez sector commenced at 1600 hours GMT on 17 July 1967. At that time, nine United Nations Military Observers were in the Suez sector, five on the UAR side and four on the Israel side; operational control centres had been established at Ismailia on the UAR side and at El Quantara on the Israel side; and communications had been established between the control centres and headquarters UNTSO. Limited reconnaissance of the Suez sector had been accomplished previously on each side by Military Observers who had moved to the area for that purpose on 15 July 1967.

8. The strength of the United Nations observation groups on each side were increased as the new temporary Observers became available. By 5 August 1967, there were 16 Military Observers on each side. In the light of revised estimates based on practical experience the Chief of Staff now considers that a total of 50 Observers will be required in the Suez sector as against the original estimate of 25: 26 Observers being assigned to El Quantara Control Centre and 24 Observers to Ismailia Control Centre. I therefore propose to secure urgently, on the same temporary basis as the original 25, the services of an additional 21 Observers. This will mean that the observation in the Suez Canal sector will be carried out by 46 temporary observers and four of the regular UNTSO observers.

9. Observation posts have been established on each side of the sector. Three OP's are at present located on the United Arab Republic side of which only one, at the Ismailia Control Centre, is at present manned on a 24-hour basis. Four OP's are at present located on the Israel side, two of which are manned on a 24-hour basis, the El Quantara Control Centre and OP yellow at MR 7427-8837; one additional OP on the Israel side is scheduled to commence 24-hour operation shortly. Observation posts are at present located at:

UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC SIDE:	OP GULF	MR 7396-9264
	OP ISMAILIA	MR 7402-8765
	OP LIMA	MR 7662-8173
ISRAEL SIDE:	OP GREEN	MR 7394-9401
	OP EL QUANTARA	MR 7409-9057
	OP YELLOW	MR 7427-8837
	OP BLUE	MR 7677-8055

10. United Nations Observers are patrolling from and between the established OP's during daylight hours. UAR and Israel military Liaison Officers are available to United Nations Military Observers on their respective sides.

11. The two observation groups, one on each side, operate independently of each other. Each control centre reports separately to Headquarters UNTSO. Observers on one side may not communicate directly with Observers on the other as they should be free and able to do, and are thus to some extent handicapped in the sense of loss of time in arranging on the spot cease-fires. The two control centres may, however, communicate with each other directly in the event of operational need, i.e., for the arrangement of a cease-fire.

The question of movement of boats in the Suez Canal

12. The differences in the positions of the United Arab Republic and Israel in connexion with the presence of boats in the Suez Canal were discussed by the Chief of Staff with Israel authorities on 19 and 25 July and with United Arab Republic authorities during visits to Cairo from 19 to 25 July and from 29 July to 1 August. During these discussions the Chief of Staff expressed his concern that the presence and movement of boats on the Canal could lead to a breach of the cease-fire; his concern was also expressed to both parties through their Liaison Officers by the officers-in-charge at Ismailia and El Quantara.

13. Israel maintained that either the boats of both parties should be allowed to move freely on the appropriate sides of the Canal, or that no boats should be permitted there. Israel also expressed its intention of placing its boats on the Canal.

14. The United Arab Republic stated that the best way to avoid any violation of the cease-fire was for the parties to desist from seeking to change the situation

which prevailed on 10 July when the consensus was reached in the Security Council. The United Arab Republic maintained that there had been Egyptian boats on the Canal at that time, but not Israel boats. It stated that it would regard the placing of Israel boats on the Canal as a violation of the cease-fire to which the United Arab Republic would feel obliged to reply by firing on the boats. (The United Arab Republic position was also set forth in a letter to the Secretary-General (document S/8070).)

15. The situation in the Suez Canal sector is further complicated by the presence in the Bitter Lakes of ships which have been stranded there since the beginning of hostilities on 5 June when the Canal was blocked. Arrangements were made with the United Arab Republic authorities by the national authorities whose flag the ships were flying for the reprovisioning of these ships and for measures for their safety.

16. Concerned lest the movement of boats in the Canal should precipitate an incident, the Chief of Staff on 18 July addressed a request to both parties that each should refrain from any action which might impair the quiet in the area.

17. Since, during the week following, the positions of the parties remained unchanged and danger of renewal of hostilities continued, on 27 July 1967 the Chief of Staff addressed an identical message to the parties (see annex I) asking that all military activity in the Canal be stopped, including the movement of boats in or into the Canal, for one month from 27 July, and requesting them to co-operate with the Chief of Staff in establishing the limits of the cease-fire sectors. In his request, he noted that it was understood that the boats of the Suez Canal Authority would continue to revictual and ensure the safety of the ships stranded in the Canal. It was also understood that all such measures were to be considered strictly from the point of view of maintaining the cease-fire without prejudice to the political, legal or other issues involved.

18. The Chief of Staff received a message in reply from the United Arab Republic authorities on the same day, 27 July 1967 (see annex II).

19. The Chief of Staff replied on 27 July (see annex III) noting with satisfaction that the United Arab Republic was not carrying out any military activity in the Canal. The Chief of Staff reiterated his request that for one month all movement of boats be stopped except for those of the Canal authorities for the revictualing

and safety of boats stranded in the Canal. On 31 July the United Arab Republic authorities stated that the Chief of Staff's conversations in Cairo on 30 and 31 July "showed that the contents of your above-mentioned message [27 July] coincide with the contents of my message [27 July] in respect of the movements of our boats in the Suez Canal in response to the Security Council cease-fire decision".

20. On 1 August, at the conclusion of the conversations with the United Arab Republic authorities in Cairo, the Chief of Staff stated that as a result of these conversations it was understood:

- "(a) That the United Arab Republic in observance of the cease-fire decisions does not carry out any military activity in the Canal;
- (b) That the movement of boats and craft in the Suez Canal is confined to the boats of the Suez Canal Authority which also controls the boats of the commercial firms which provide supplies to the ships stranded in the Canal and those which ensure their safety."

21. On 28 July the Chief of Staff received a letter (see annex IV) from the Israel authorities in reply to his letter of 27 July.

22. In view of the acceptance by both parties of the measure regarding movement of boats in the Canal, the Chief of Staff addressed to the Israel and United Arab Republic authorities a message dated 1 August as follows:

"In my message of 27 July 1967 I called upon the Governments of Israel and the United Arab Republic to stop all military activities in the Suez Canal, including the movement in or into the Canal of boats and craft for a period of one month, commencing on 27 July 1967 at 0800 hours GMT. I added in this connexion that it is understood that the Canal authorities will continue to revictual and ensure the safety of the ships stranded in the Canal.

"I should like to inform you that the two parties have responded favourably to this call with the understanding on the part of the United Arab Republic that the movement of boats and craft in the Suez Canal includes the boats of the Suez Canal Authority and the boats of the commercial firms which provide supplies to the ships stranded in the Canal and those which ensure their safety, all of which are under the control of the Canal Authority.

"Accordingly, I am instructing the officers in charge of the observation groups to observe and report on the movement of boats in the Suez Canal sector.

"In co-operation with both parties I will continue my efforts in order to adopt all measures which might facilitate the implementation of the decisions of the Security Council on the cease-fire and on the observation of the cease-fire."

ANNEX I

Message dated 27 July 1967 by General Odd Bull, Chief of Staff,  
to the Governments of Israel and the United Arab Republic

"Having in mind the communications and conversations involving the two Governments on the question of boats in the Suez Canal, as well as other aspects of the implementation of the cease-fire demanded by the Security Council in its resolution of 6 and 7 June 1967, and the consensus of the Security Council of 9/10 July;

"As a means of ensuring full observance of the cease-fire, calls upon the Governments of Israel and of the United Arab Republic to stop all military activities in the Suez Canal, including the movement in or into the Canal of boats and craft for a period of one month commencing on 27 July 1967 at 1000 hours LT;

"Requests the parties to co-operate with the Chief of Staff in order to establish the limits of the cease-fire sectors to allow him to discharge properly his duties of observation of the cease-fire. It is understood that the Canal authorities will continue to revictual and ensure the safety of the ships stranded in the Canal.

"Further, it is understood that all these measures are considered strictly from the point of view of the cease-fire without prejudice to the political, legal or other issues which the parties involved may consider."

ANNEX II

Message dated 27 July 1967 from the United Arab Republic  
Government to General Bull, Chief of Staff

"Bull from Ambassador Salah Gohar.

"1. With reference to your message dated today July 27, I wish to inform you the following:

"2. Any presence of Israeli Forces on any part of the United Arab Republic territory is an aggression and consequently no right of any sort for Israel could result therefrom.

"3. No Israeli Forces were present on the East Bank of the Suez Canal at the time when the Security Council took its decision concerning the cease-fire.

"4. Any attempt by Israel to move boats into the Canal would constitute a military act aimed at the extension of aggression and is, therefore, a violation of the cease-fire decision.

"5. The United Arab Republic, observing the cease-fire decision, does not carry any military activity in the Suez Canal. Its activities in the Canal are confined to the boats of the Suez Canal Authority and the commercial firms which provide supplies to the ships stranded in the Canal, those which ensure its safety, as well as fishing boats.

"6. The above-mentioned situation has been prevailing at the time when UNTSO started its operation on July 17th 1967. We consider that the maintenance of that situation would ensure against any threat to the cease-fire decision.

"(Signed Salah Gohar)"

ANNEX III

Message dated 27 July 1967 from General Odd Bull, Chief of Staff  
to Ambassador Salah Gohar of the UAR

"Ambassador Salah Gohar from General Bull, Chief of Staff.

"1. Thank you for your message, dated 27 July answering mine of the same date.

"2. I note with satisfaction your affirmation that the United Arab Republic does not carry out any military activity in the Suez Canal.

"3. I note also that the activities in the Canal are confined to the boats of the Suez Canal Authority and the commercial firms which provide supplies to the ships stranded in the Canal, and those which ensure their safety.

"4. Further, I note your mention of the question of fishing boats. I know your views concerning the latter and while I appreciate your reasons, I must, however, reiterate my request that for a month all movement of boats be stopped, except for those of the Canal authorities for the revictualling and safety of the boats stranded in the Canal.

"5. I hope you will understand also my reasons for this temporary measure and, therefore, that you will be able to give a positive answer to my request.

"6. I will appreciate your prompt answer.

"7. Concerning the other questions referred to in my message, I am at your disposal to proceed to Cairo in order to discuss them with you.

"Please accept, Ambassador Gohar, the assurances of my consideration."



ANNEX IV

Letter from Mr. Y. Tekoah, Assistant Director-General,  
Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Israel, to Lt. General  
Odd Bull, Chief of Staff, dated 28 July 1967

I refer to your letter of 27 July 1967 in which you "call upon the Governments of Israel and of the United Arab Republic to stop all military activity in the Suez Canal, including the movement in or into the Canal of boats and craft for a period of one month commencing on 27 July 1967 at 0800 hours GMT".

I write to inform you that the Government of Israel accepts your proposal on condition of reciprocity. Appropriate instructions will be issued as soon as we are informed of the UAR's acceptance.

We note your request to the parties to co-operate with you in establishing "the limits of the cease-fire sectors" to allow you to discharge properly your duties of observation of the cease-fire. We are willing to co-operate in establishing cease-fire lines and would like to receive without delay a map with cease-fire lines clearly marked and signed by the parties (as the one for the Syrian border).

(Signed) Y. TEKOA  
Assistant Director-General

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