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LETTER DATED 15 JUNE 1967 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
UNITED STATES ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to refer to your telegram of 14 June 1967 which inquires whether the United States Government concurs in the request, set forth in document A/6717, for the convening of an emergency special session of the General Assembly.

Your telegram refers to rule 9 (b) of the rules of procedure of the Assembly as setting forth the responsibilities of the Secretary-General in dealing with a request by a Member for an emergency special session. This rule and rule 8 (b), which provides for the convening of an emergency special session within twenty-four hours of the receipt by the Secretary-General of a request for such a session from a majority of the Members of the United Nations, refer to General Assembly resolution 377 A (V) entitled "Uniting for peace". The "Uniting for peace" resolution and rules 8 (b) and 9 (b) of the General Assembly's rules of procedure constitute the only source of authority and the basis for the holding of an emergency special session.

General Assembly resolution 377 A (V) provides that an emergency special session may be called "if the Security Council, because of lack of unanimity of the permanent members, fails to exercise its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security in any case where there appears to be a threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression".

As you know, the Security Council is seized of the question of the Middle East situation. The Council has already adopted four resolutions calling for a cease-fire by the parties to the recent hostilities in the area, and a fifth resolution of a humanitarian character dealing with the aftermath of the hostilities. All five of these resolutions were adopted unanimously. A sixth resolution was voted on at the Council meeting on 14 June and failed of adoption because it did not receive sufficient votes. Several other resolutions are pending before the Council as well as other suggestions to deal with this complex problem.

* Also issued under the symbol A/6718.

With respect to the draft resolution proposed by the United States in document S/7952/Rev.3, I indicated on 14 June that the United States would be prepared to consider constructive suggestions and revisions. With respect to the draft resolution submitted by Canada, its distinguished representative indicated that revisions were being considered.

The present situation is therefore that members of the Security Council are still engaged in consultation looking towards further action by the Council on this matter.

The processes of consultation, negotiation and search for measures to harmonize the actions of nations enjoined by the Charter therefore have not been exhausted. For these reasons, the United States Government does not believe that a situation has arisen in which the Security Council, in the words of General Assembly resolution 377 A (V), "fails to exercise its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security". Accordingly, the United States is not able to concur in the request for the holding of an emergency special session at this time.

If, nevertheless, a majority of the Members decides to convene such an Assembly, the United States hopes that any discussion will have a helpful influence in encouraging and enabling all States concerned to deal effectively with the underlying causes of tension and conflict in the Middle East. The establishment of a firm and just peace would be a boon to all peoples of the area and would have a most favourable effect on general peace and security throughout the world. There is imperative need not for invective and inflammatory statements, but for constructive proposals and deliberative diplomacy.

I request that this letter be circulated as a document of the Security Council and of the General Assembly.

Accept, etc.

(Signed) Arthur J. GOLDBERG
