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TWENTY-THIRD YEAR

**1446<sup>th</sup>** MEETING: 4 SEPTEMBER 1968

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## NOTE

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## FOURTEEN HUNDRED AND FORTY-SIXTH MEETING

Held in New York on Wednesday, 4 September 1968, at 3.00 p.m.

*President:* Mr. G. IGNATIEFF (Canada).

*Present:* The representatives of the following States: Algeria, Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, Ethiopia, France, Hungary, India, Pakistan, Paraguay, Senegal, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America.

### Provisional agenda (S/Agenda/1446/Rev.1)

1. Adoption of the agenda.

2. The situation in the Middle East:

Letter dated 2 September 1968 from the Acting Permanent Representative of Israel addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/8794).

### Expression of thanks to the retiring President

1. The PRESIDENT: Before turning to the formal work of the Council which awaits our attention, I should like to take this opportunity to express personally, most sincerely and, I am sure, also on behalf of the other members of this Council, our heartfelt admiration for the manner in which our affairs were handled by my predecessor, Ambassador de Araujo Castro of Brazil, during his tenure of the Presidency. He brought outstanding credit to himself, to the great country which he represents and to the group of Latin American countries in the United Nations.

2. In a most troubled and busy month, Ambassador de Araujo Castro set us a standard of patience coupled with firmness, of statesmanship coupled with humour and, above all, of impartiality and objectivity which those of us who follow him in the Presidency will find it most difficult to emulate and still less easy to equal.

3. With his example before us, may I express the hope that in our work we will all do our utmost to ensure that during the course of this month our labours on the Security Council will not be in vain.

4. Mr. DE ARAUJO CASTRO (Brazil): Mr. President, from my comfortable position among the ranks of the former Presidents—or, shall we say, of the Presidents in exile—I beg to convey to you my warmest thanks for your kind and generous words. August indeed was quite a hectic month for the Security Council, and it was a great honour for my country and me personally to preside over the Council's proceedings concerning the crisis which still persists and may unfortunately go on unabated for some time. I receive your praise in all humility, as I know it springs from your kindness and from our friendship. The

only thing I can say is that I am indebted to you and to all members of the Security Council for the assistance, co-operation and understanding given me during the past month. Let me welcome you to the Chair, and on handing over the gavel to you I wish you the best of success and express our entire confidence in your ability and leadership, which will, I am positive, provide the Council with excellent guidance for the conduct of our business on the difficult matters of which the Council is seized. Although you have been quite active from the first day of your tenure of office, let me express hope for a relatively quiet September, during which there may be added reason for praying for world peace.

5. The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Brazil for his kind remarks addressed to me.

### Adoption of the agenda

*The agenda was adopted.*

### The situation in the Middle East

**Letter dated 2 September 1968 from the Acting Permanent Representative of Israel addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/8794)**

6. The PRESIDENT: A letter dated 3 September 1968 [S/8797] has been received from the Acting Permanent Representative of Israel requesting to be invited to participate in the discussion of the matter just placed on the agenda. Therefore, if I hear no objection, I propose, in accordance with the usual practice, to invite the representative of Israel to participate in the discussion without the right to vote.

*At the invitation of the President, Mr. Y. Tekoah (Israel) took a seat at the Council table.*

7. The PRESIDENT: I have also received a letter dated 3 September 1968 [S/8799] from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Republic requesting to be invited to participate in this discussion. Therefore, if I hear no objection, I propose similarly to invite the representative of the United Arab Republic to participate, without vote, in the discussion.

*At the invitation of the President, Mr. M. A. El Kony (United Arab Republic) took a seat at the Council table.*

8. The PRESIDENT: The Security Council will now begin its examination of the complaint submitted to it on 2 September by the delegation of Israel [S/8794]. I would also draw the attention of members of the Council to the

supplemental information circulated by the Secretary-General on 29 August and 4 September 1968 [S/7930/Add.74 and Add.76].

9. The first name inscribed on my list of speakers is that of the representative of Israel, on whom I now call.

10. Mr. TEKOAH (Israel): Mr. President, at the outset allow me to express to you our deep respect and admiration and to extend my delegation's best wishes for success in your important task. I should also like to pay a tribute to your predecessor, the representative of Brazil, who presided over the prolonged deliberations in this Council in the course of last month with brilliance and outstanding effectiveness.

11. On 26 August a grave blow was struck again by Egypt on the cease-fire agreed upon last year between Israel and the United Arab Republic. In the darkness of the night an Egyptian military force consisting of approximately thirty men crossed the Suez Canal at a point 1.5 kilometres south of Lake Timsah, opposite Ismailia, dug itself in on the east bank, planted mines on the patrol track, and ambushed the regular Israeli patrol along the canal. The area of the west bank of the canal concerned is under strict military control by Egypt, and in it all activities are under close supervision by the Egyptian military authorities. On the east bank, where the incident occurred, there is no civilian population.

12. The Israeli patrol consisted of two jeeps with three soldiers in each. At approximately 2110 hours local time, one of the Israeli jeeps ran over two mines laid by the United Arab Republic forces on the patrol track, and was blown up. Heavy automatic fire was opened on the jeeps by the Egyptian force which had dug in on the east bank. The attackers also released flares and threw grenades. Two Israeli soldiers were killed and the third was dragged across the canal. This is fully corroborated by General Bull's report.

13. An inquiry was carried out on the following morning by United Nations military observers and General Odd Bull reported on it as follows:

"Between the canal and the damaged jeep the military observers examined a number of positions which appeared to have been hastily dug. In some of these positions automatic Klashnikoff rifle cartridges were found. Close to the positions were found some unexploded hand grenades, some hand grenade safety levers and two signal flare cartons with Russian markings. One entrenching tool was found in one of the dug positions.

"Near the canal edge the military observers saw a bollard around which were many footprints. A few barely distinguishable blood stains were also found. On the down slope of the sand embankment near the canal edge the military observers saw some marks in the sand leading to the bollard. These marks could have been made by a body dragged in the sand

"...

"The United Nations military observers' finding was that an Israeli Defence Force patrol was mined at

approximate map reference 7415-8705. Physical evidence indicated that the patrol was ambushed." [S/7930/Add.74, para. 5.]

14. By all indications the Egyptian force crossed the canal, which is only 150 metres wide, in boats, with the clear objective of taking up positions on the east bank, ambushing the patrol known to survey the area, and killing or capturing its men. The nature of the ambush, the professional manner in which it was conducted, the size of the Egyptian force employed, established on the basis of the footprints found in the area and the number of shelters dug by the attackers, the fact that the weapons used are standard equipment of the United Arab Republic Army, the co-ordination of the attack with Egyptian military positions on the west bank, leave no room for any doubt whatsoever that this was a deliberate and planned military attack by the United Arab Republic against Israel and that the responsibility for it lies with the United Arab Republic.

15. The entire area on the United Arab Republic side is a military zone in which there is a heavy concentration of troops. The Egyptian military positions are located along the canal at close distances from each other. In some places the distances between these positions are less than 100 metres. These positions control all movement along the west bank of the canal and on the canal itself on which, under arrangements reached between the parties on 27 July 1967 [see S/8053/Add.1] and renewed on 27 August 1967 [see S/8053/Add.2], all movement of boats and all military activities are prohibited. It is significant also that the Egyptian authorities refused to allow the United Nations military observers to pursue their inquiry on the west side of the canal.

16. In the afternoon of 27 August, General Bull met with the Israeli Minister of Defence, General Dayan, at the latter's request. General Bull reports that: "General Dayan took a most serious view of this incident. In the course of the meeting he requested most urgently the immediate return to Israel of the missing soldier" [S/7930/Add.74, para. 6].

17. General Bull met with Ambassador Gohar of the United Arab Republic Foreign Ministry in Cairo on 28 and on 29 August; Ambassador Gohar denied any knowledge of this matter.

18. This attitude, untenable as it is in the light of evident facts, should not perhaps come entirely as a surprise to those versed in Egyptian methods. When, for years until 1957, the Egyptian Army regularly sent raider units into Israeli territory to mine roads, carry out grenade attacks on civilian villages, and ambush vehicles, the Egyptian authorities, frequently through Ambassador Gohar, denied all knowledge or responsibility. It was only after documents from the Egyptian Army headquarters in Gaza came into Israel's possession that the full truth about these nefarious activities was revealed in formal Egyptian Army operational orders.

19. On 29 August General Bull met again with the Israeli Minister of Defence and conveyed to him the Egyptian reaction. General Dayan expressed deep dissatisfaction with this information on the Egyptian attitude.

20. In view of these circumstances the Government of Israel has decided to bring the matter before the Security Council.

21. The facts are clear. In violation of the cease-fire established by the Security Council, in breach of the arrangements prohibiting military activities in the canal, a well-planned military attack was perpetrated against Israel by Egyptian forces operating from the west bank. This is the first time that Egyptian units have crossed the canal and attacked the Israeli forces stationed along its east bank. This development is fraught with the gravest dangers for the maintenance of the cease-fire. No attempts to disclaim responsibility, feign ignorance or confuse the problem by introducing irrelevant allegations can alter the basic fact that Egypt could have prevented this attack. The best proof of this is that Egypt has prevented such incursions and attacks until now.

22. Under these circumstances we address to Egypt two simple questions and ask for simple unequivocal answers: Is Egypt ready to take all the necessary measures to prevent such attacks in the future? Is Egypt prepared to return the Israeli soldier captured in the ambush and dragged across the canal? The answers to these questions are vital for the future maintenance of the cease-fire in the area.

23. As early as 27 August, Israel informed General Bull: "From the nature of the operation, it may be inferred that this was not meant to be an isolated incident, but the initiation of a new policy of military aggression in the canal area" [ibid., para. 4]. Egypt undoubtedly realizes that Israel will not acquiesce in such a development and will not allow the lives of its soldiers or civilians to be put in jeopardy by Egyptian attacks in violation of the cease-fire.

24. We have brought this matter before the Security Council in an appeal to arrest further deterioration of the situation, to condemn the military attack carried out in violation of the cease-fire, to impress on Egypt the need to abide by its obligations and prevent the recurrence of such attacks in the future, and to return the captured Israeli soldier.

25. In recent months the world has watched with growing concern the general difficulties encountered by the Security Council, and the obstacles placed in its way, which have prevented it from discharging fully and equitably its responsibilities under the Charter for the maintenance of peace and security in the Middle East. The people of Israel are greatly discouraged by the inability of the Council to rise above the arithmetic of votes and vetoes and contribute effectively to the termination of Arab violations of the cease-fire.

26. Nevertheless, the Government of Israel has decided to try again to seek redress at the Council table. It hopes that perhaps this time it will find support in the Council for its efforts to ensure the faithful observance of the cease-fire and avert a serious aggravation of the situation.

27. The PRESIDENT: I call on the next speaker on my list, who is the representative of the United Arab Republic.

28. Mr. EL KONY (United Arab Republic): Mr. President, I should like to thank you and the distinguished members for inviting me to address the Council.

29. It was with great surprise that we learned through the information media that the Israeli authorities had decided to request a meeting of the Security Council complaining of an alleged involvement of United Arab Republic armed forces in an incident which occurred on the east side of the Suez Canal, at present occupied by the military forces of Israel; when we were informed officially of this request our surprise was increased further.

30. The reasons for this surprise are quite obvious. In the first place, this is not a complaint that Israel is bringing before the Council, but rather an ultimatum. It is unprecedented for the Security Council to be addressed in such a tone, and I am confident that the Security Council will not be intimidated by this arrogance.

31. In the second place, the Israeli allegations are groundless. As soon as news concerning the alleged incident reached us an inquiry was ordered. The findings of that inquiry—which were later conveyed officially to General Odd Bull, Chief of Staff of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, by the Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs—showed that no United Arab Republic forces had taken part in any action in the territories east of the Suez Canal which are still occupied by the Israeli forces as a result of their aggression against my country in June 1967. Apart from categorically denying any involvement of United Arab Republic forces in the incident, General Bull was assured by Ambassador Gohar of the continued and scrupulous observance by the United Arab Republic of the cease-fire, in conformity with the Security Council resolutions.

32. As regards the missing soldier, Ambassador Gohar stated that the United Arab Republic authorities had no knowledge whatsoever of the matter.

33. I am under instructions from my Government to reiterate these statements and to confirm their contents before the Council. In this connexion, I beg to submit to the Council that the claims and allegations of the Israeli representative regarding the involvement of United Arab Republic armed forces in the incident are not substantiated at all by the United Nations observers in the area. I further submit that the report of General Bull, contained in document S/7930/Add.74, lends no credence to these fabrications.

34. I need not dwell at all on refuting the Israeli arguments or stressing the discrepancies of the Israeli allegations. Yet I should like to underline certain facts which, by their mere recalling, readily belie the Israeli claim. First, it is worth noting that there was a lapse of time separating the alleged event from the request addressed to General Odd Bull to undertake the inquiry. On this point, I have only this to say for the time being: perhaps the Israeli authorities desperately needed those fourteen hours to plant the physical evidence in order to be able to build their case; for, if the case is viewed so seriously by the Israeli authorities as all their official statements proclaim, why did

they not immediately call on General Bull to carry out a prompt investigation? Secondly, the statement of the Israeli second lieutenant does not bear close scrutiny. If, in accordance with the report, he really had been at the scene of the alleged incident, why did he not react in time in order to save his kidnapped colleague? Thirdly, it is to be noted that the bodies of the two soldiers claimed by Israel to have been killed had not been examined in time by the United Nations observers when they were on the scene.

35. But if those three figures of fiction, as I have argued, do not exist, it is imperative for responsible people to search and ask for the motives that have spurred Israel to bring an unfounded case before the Security Council. What makes the search even more urgent is our cognizance of Israel's past history, its present behaviour and its future designs. Despite its membership in the United Nations and its verbal acceptance of the Charter, Israel's principles and objectives have consistently maintained that among all the membership of the United Nations it should be the one entitled to take the law into its own hands. Very recently Mr. Tekoah arrogantly informed this Council that no one, and I repeat "no one", has the right to advise Israel on the conduct of its defence policy. That policy is pursued regardless of its victims—be they innocent men, women and children—the rules of international law, the principles of the Charter, or even the basic tenets of human behaviour. Israel's past and present bodes ill for the future. This should be the main concern of the Security Council.

36. Israel seldom resorts to the Security Council and has always preferred to rely on naked force to achieve its ends. If today Israel has opted for a different course, it is not without misgivings that we should view its decision, for it is customary for Israel to use the language of peace when it intends to embark imminently on acts of war.

37. Should we then assume that in bringing to the Council a groundless accusation under the pretence that it is seeking justice, Israel may in fact be creating a pretext to start a full-scale military operation against my country, against Jordan, or both? Should we also assume that Israel is seeking the assistance of the Security Council to justify the perpetuation of its illegal occupation of Arab territories? These are in fact a few considerations that the Council may dwell upon, as their continuation is likely to endanger the peace and security of the world.

38. It is in itself ironic to have the aggressor complain against his victim; yet what makes the irony grotesque is that this fabricated complaint has been brought before the Council because General Dayan is dissatisfied. To satisfy General Dayan is really a problem. As an example of Mr. Dayan's designs I shall at this juncture only refer to a recent declaration published by the Israeli newspaper *HaOlam Hazeh* on 8 July 1968, and I quote:

"Our fathers have reached the frontiers which were recognized by the United Nations partition plan. Our generation was able to reach Suez, Jordan, and the Golan heights. This is not the end, for after the present cease-fire lines, there will be new lines, but they will extend beyond Jordan, maybe to Lebanon, and perhaps to central Syria as well."

39. Taking such declarations for a background, it is evident that if these are violations committed in the Suez Canal sector they are always committed by the Israelis. If there is killing, destruction and atrocities, the perpetrators are without exception the Israelis. Since their treacherous aggression in June 1967 they have consistently acted in the most brutal manner. They have wantonly shelled the Egyptian cities along the west bank of the Canal. Without provocation they aimed their guns and flew their planes over the innocent civilian population of these cities, inflicting untold damage, as if the inhabitants of those cities were mere hostages in order to apply pressure on my Government. For there were no military targets within these cities. Is it conceivable that the lives of men, women and children should be the price to be paid for the folly of the Israeli leaders? Is it tolerable that the indiscriminate destruction of buildings, whether homes, mosques, churches or hospitals, should be the toll collected for the insatiable desire of Israel to achieve its expansionist designs?

40. Innocent civilians should not be the target of any fighting. This rule we believe in and strictly adhere to. I just hope Israel would act in the same way. However, its perseverance with an aggressive and inhuman policy has caused heavy losses in civilian life and massive destruction of civilian buildings. I should like, with your permission, Mr. President, to cite a tragic result of this vicious policy of Israel. Its indiscriminate shelling of densely populated cities of the canal area has resulted in the following: 134 killed and 329 injured in Suez and Ismailia on 14 and 15 July 1967; 50 killed and 70 injured in Suez on 4 September 1967; 2 killed and 15 injured in Kantara on 12 September 1967; 86 killed and 216 injured in Suez, Ismailia and Kantara on 27 September 1967; 3 killed and 50 injured in Suez on 24 October 1967; 50 killed and 67 injured, in Suez on 3 July 1968—a total of 325 killed and 747 injured, all innocent civilians.

41. This policy of terror and intimidation is, nevertheless, bound to fail, for neither the will of our people nor the determination of our Government has been daunted.

42. Israel's attempt to hold every Arab Government responsible for the acts of patriotism on the part of their segregated population in the occupied territories should not even be taken seriously. Israel may be tempted to demand that the Arab Governments call on their tenacious people to lay down their arms, quit resisting and live meekly in slavery.

43. My Government has steadfastly supported all the movements of liberation in Africa and Asia. It is a matter of record that the United Arab Republic has always been one of the forerunners of those countries which oppose the abhorrent practices of *apartheid*, colonialism and oppression.

44. It is therefore ironic that we are now asked by Israel to negate the policy line laid down by the Charter, forsake one of the most cherished principles, and help in suppressing a genuine and rightful liberation move. What is even more ironic is that the move we are told to stifle sprang up spontaneously in various parts of our homeland which

Israel occupies in contravention to all the norms of international law and the injunctions of this important body.

45. I have had occasion earlier to refer to the Israeli attitude towards the United Nations; the least that can be said of it is that it is one of defiance and arrogance. Could it easily be forgotten that despite the unanimous decision of the Council requesting Israel to refrain from holding the military parade in Jerusalem, it nevertheless defied world opinion and proceeded with the original plans? Could anybody disregard the fact that time and again Israel has been condemned by this very Council on account of its aggressive military policy, and that despite those condemnations and regardless of the wrath of world public opinion Israel still continues to carry out large-scale military operations deep within the territories of Arab countries? Could we close our eyes to the adamant Israeli position with regard to Jerusalem, on which both the General Assembly and the Security Council have pronounced themselves to be against all the measures adopted by the military occupation authorities of Israel? Last, but not least, is it admissible that ten months after the unanimous adoption by this Council of resolution 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, which was promptly accepted by the United Arab Republic, Israel is still dallying with the collective will of the international community and has never declared its acceptance of the resolution, let alone its readiness to implement it? Such a state of affairs cannot continue and should not be allowed to continue.

46. Israel should not be allowed to succeed in diverting the attention of the Security Council from the real issues. The Council should concentrate more fully on the daily crimes committed by Israel against the population of the occupied areas. The Council should devote its attention to the defiant attitude of the Israelis towards the resolutions of the Council and their systematic flouting of the principles of the Charter. The Council should be concerned about the danger posed not only to the Arab world but also to the cause of international peace and security by the expansionist policy of Israel, of which the statement of General Dayan quoted by me earlier is a flagrant example.

47. These then are the burning issues which deserve the attention of the Council, and certainly not the imaginary case of the abduction of an imaginary soldier.

48. The Council, entrusted by the provisions of the Charter with the primary responsibility for maintaining peace and security in the world, will, I am sure, act with its usual wisdom and dispose of the matter at hand in accordance with the Charter and the norms of justice.

49. The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Israel in exercise of his right of reply.

50. Mr. TEKOAH (Israel): The statement we have just heard from the Egyptian representative could not have been more disappointing, more negative, more unhelpful, more irresponsible in playing with obvious and undeniable facts. We are discussing a simple though extremely grave matter which requires a simple response. In accordance with its obligations under the cease-fire, Egypt is responsible for the

prevention of any incursions or attacks from its side against Israeli forces or Israeli civilians, and for the observance of the arrangements prohibiting movement of boats and all military activity on the canal. Is Egypt ready to take all the necessary measures to prevent, in the future, attacks of this nature? Is Egypt prepared to free the Israeli soldier abducted in the course of the attack that occurred on 26 August?

51. Instead of answering these questions, the Egyptian representative has meandered from professions of love for the Charter through love of United Nations resolutions and other sundry matters, until he has lost himself completely in a labyrinth of verbosity. I shall not indulge now in an exposition of how the United Arab Republic loves the Charter by flouting it; of how it honours United Nations resolutions by distorting and defying them; of how it has shown acceptance of Security Council resolution 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, which called for a just and lasting peace with Israel, by basing its policies on the infamous Khartoum decision: no peace, no negotiation, no recognition of Israel.

52. However, these questions belong to the framework of the mission pursued by Mr. Jarring, the Secretary-General's Special Representative. The only way for Cairo to prove its goodwill is to abandon the Khartoum decision, and to co-operate with Mr. Jarring rather than to accompany his efforts with intransigence, bellicose pronouncements and endless reports that his mission of peace is doomed to failure.

53. The representative of Egypt has also voiced the usual Arab complaint. Israel refuses to acquiesce in Arab aggression, they say; Israel does not agree to the killing of its soldiers and civilians; Israel defends itself—how does Israel dare to do this?—against attacks from the military positions established inside the cities along the west bank of the canal. There is one way, and only one way, to put an end to this, to avert the damage and the suffering on the west bank, and that is by stopping aggression from the west bank.

54. Here in the Council we are concerned with a different matter. Will Egypt ensure the maintenance of the cease-fire? Will it undertake to prevent military attacks, or will it persist in the attitude with which it confronted General Bull during his talks in Cairo, an attitude which amounted in fact to General Bull's being told, "Do not bother us. This is none of our business"?

55. The stand we have now heard the Egyptian representative express is an ominous one. It bodes little good for the future of the cease-fire. It is a reiteration of aggressive designs and a reaffirmation of the intention to pursue warfare against Israel. It is a signal of impending danger. It cannot be left unchallenged. It requires immediate and effective action by the Security Council. We trust that the Security Council will take such action.

56. The PRESIDENT: I have no further speakers on my list. Unless any member wishes to address the Council at this time, I suggest that we adjourn in order to give the

members of the Council an opportunity to consult one another. As a result of informal consultation, I understand that there is general agreement that the Council should resume consideration of the item on the agenda of today's

meeting at 3 p.m. tomorrow, 5 September. As I hear no objection, I shall take it that it is so decided.

*The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.*