

This message was delivered through UNTSO channels early in the morning of 29 January.

27. On 28 January the Secretary-General instructed General Bull to proceed urgently to Cairo. The Chief of Staff went to Cairo early on 29 January to explain fully to the UAR authorities that while UNTSO could give assurances that the necessary activities for the southward survey could be carried out without risk of a clash, no such assurance could, in present circumstances, be given as regards any activities in connexion with a survey or evacuation to the north. The Secretary-General, however, would continue his efforts to eliminate any threats of a clash in connexion with possible work to the north.

28. On the morning of 29 January the Secretary-General met with the Permanent Representative of the UAR at 1100 hours EST to go over the same ground. In addition, the Secretary-General expressed the hope that pending the outcome of his efforts to resolve the difficulty over the question of survey to the north, the work toward the south would continue in accordance with the schedule. He also observed that if it should be found by the survey work now under way that all of the ships could be evacuated to the south there would be no problem.

29. On the morning of 29 January the Israel authorities informed UNTSO headquarters that a considered reply would be sent by the Foreign Minister to the Secretary-General's message of 28 January. In the meantime the initial reaction of the Government of Israel was that it was unlikely that Israel would be willing to consider its agreement regarding the southward release of the stranded ships to include any survey work to the north. The Israel Government considered it essential that General Bull should make clear to the Government of the United Arab Republic that a northward survey had not been agreed by Israel. The reply of the Foreign Minister to the Secretary-General's message of 28 January was received from the Permanent Representative of Israel at 1700 hours EST on 31 January and reads as follows:

"Excellency,

The Government of Israel has given earnest thought to your letter to me of 28 January, on the evacuation of foreign vessels stranded in the Suez Canal. In the meantime an outbreak of shooting took place in the Canal area yesterday, as a result of unilateral action by the United Arab Republic in violation of a solemn engagement.

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