

Statement by the United States Representative to the United Nations, in the General Assembly (November 4, 1956)

Caption: On 4 November 1956, Henry Cabot Lodge, the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations gives a speech to the General Assembly calling for all warring parties to respect the ceasefire immediately.

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In the very early hours of 2 November the General Assembly issued a clear call to the states engaged in hostilities in the Near East to agree on an immediate cease-fire and to withdraw their forces forthwith behind the armistice lines. That resolution of the Assembly was adopted by the vote of an overwhelming majority of members of the United Nations. I regret to say that the General Assembly had to take note last night of the fact that there had not yet been compliance with the terms of its resolution. Some of the parties to the hostilities addressed communications to the Secretary-General concerning their attitude toward a cease-fire and stating conditions upon which they were willing to heed the General Assembly's call, but the parties had not taken any effective steps to carry out the General Assembly recommendations.

Knowing full well the urgency of the situation in the face of human suffering and casualties, and realizing the need for international assistance to the parties in arranging for a cease-fire, the General Assembly last night [early morning, November 4] resolved, on the proposal of the delegation of India, that the Secretary-General should try to bring about the carrying out of the cease-fire by the parties and the halting of the movement of military forces and arms into that part of the world. The Assembly asked the Secretary-General to report to it within 12 hours on the compliance achieved.

At the same time, the General Assembly adopted a draft resolution which had been submitted by the delegation of Canada and which requested the Secretary-General to try to arrange for the withdrawal of forces behind the armistice lines and to submit to the General Assembly within 48 hours a plan for the setting up of an emergency international United Nations force to supervise the cessation of hostilities.

We have now heard the report requested of the Secretary-General on compliance by the parties with the United Nations call for a cease-fire. It is most discouraging that the parties have not yet agreed upon a cessation of hostilities and that they have not yet given orders to their armed forces accordingly. The Secretary-General is to be greatly commended for his selfless and unflagging efforts, and we earnestly hope that within a short time he will be able to report compliance.

The Assembly's call for a cease-fire was unconditional. The states concerned — and, above all, those engaged in attack — must stop their military operations. There must be an immediate and unconditional cessation of the fighting. This was true when the Assembly first met in emergency special session; it is true now. Silencing of the guns is the necessary prelude to the solution of any — I repeat, any — of the problems which beset the Middle East. We appeal to the states engaged in hostilities — and particularly to Israel, France, and the United Kingdom — to honor their obligations under the charter of the United Nations and, as loyal members of the organization, to heed the General Assembly's call to stop the fighting.

The Secretary-General has been asked to present to us by early Tuesday [November 6] his full plan for setting up an emergency international force, as called for in the draft resolution which was submitted by Canada. We should do well to suspend our debate on this matter for the present and to adopt the draft resolution introduced by Canada, Colombia, and Norway, which would establish a United Nations command, in accordance with the Canadian draft resolution adopted by the Assembly. We should take this step immediately to permit the Secretary-General and the governments with which he is consulting to proceed at full speed in making plans for the emergency international force.

The United States earnestly hopes that the Government of Israel will agree without delay to the prompt withdrawal of its armed forces behind the armistice lines and will cooperate fully in carrying out the plan now being negotiated by the Secretary-General. We hope that France and the United Kingdom will accept the plan envisaged in the Canadian proposal. We trust that the Government of Egypt, for its part, will be prepared to accept the temporary stationing within its territory of elements of the United Nations force in order to preserve peace in that part of the world.

It is most important that this plan should be speedily carried out. To facilitate the success of its operation, the United States is prepared to help — and help in an important way — as regards airlifts, shipping,

transport, and supplies.

We very much fear that time is getting short. We therefore move that the debate should be closed in order that we may proceed to an immediate vote on the draft resolution submitted by Canada, Colombia, and Norway.