

That was in 1953. Then later, in 1955, when I happened to be in Cairo, I discussed this question with General Burns who came over from Jerusalem to see me, and we went over the question of the advisability of making a proposal at the next Assembly -- that would have been the Assembly we are at now -- for a United Nations force to patrol the boundary not only between Egypt and Israel, but between Jordan and Syria and Lebanon and Israel. On my return to Ottawa we brought this question up again when Sir Anthony Eden and Mr. Selwyn Lloyd visited us here, I think in January, 1956. We also took the question up in Paris with the French Government. At that time the Governments which I have mentioned, the British Government and the French Government, did not feel that this was a practicable proposition.

One reason they did not feel that way was that they themselves had been discussing it with the United States and the United States was hesitant about the wisdom at that time of trying to introduce a police force on the borders, with a demilitarized zone. Behind all this hesitation and objection, if you like, was the fact that ... neither the Government of Israel nor the Government of any one of the Arab states was in favour of that kind of force. I can assure the Committee we have received arguments from the Government of Israel, which indicate why they did not favour that kind of force.

What it was thought might be done at that time was to increase the truce observation organization. That was done, and Canada did send additional officers to it. It was with that background that the discussion was introduced in the House here last January or February -- I forget the exact date -- by the hon. member for Prince Albert, and it was with that background that I expressed some hesitation as to whether it was a wise move to make at that time. But I did mention the matter again in the Committee on External Affairs ... on April 17, 1956:

"The idea of an international force for Palestine -- which a few weeks ago got a good deal of attention--"

I was referring to the debate in the House.

"-- does not appear now to be regarded on either side, the Jewish side or the Arab side, or by the others most concerned--"

I meant the United Kingdom, the United States and the French Governments,

"--as practicable".

That was my statement to the Committee, and no reference was made by any member of the Committee to that matter subsequently. Therefore I assumed that they accepted that statement of the impracticability of this move at that time.