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*Note du sous-secrétaire d'État suppléant aux Affaires extérieures
pour le secrétaire d'État par intérim aux Affaires extérieures*

*Memorandum from Deputy Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs
to Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs*

SECRET

Ottawa, May 2, 1956

REQUEST FOR FIVE ADDITIONAL CANADIAN MILITARY OBSERVERS WITH THE
UNITED NATIONS TRUCE SUPERVISION ORGANISATION IN PALESTINE

This memorandum has been prepared, as you requested, for your use at to-morrow's Cabinet meeting.

2. The Secretariat of the United Nations in New York has formally requested in a letter to the Canadian Permanent Representative that Canada provide urgently five additional Military Observers for service with the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization in Palestine, which is headed by General Burns. In addition to General Burns, there are already five Canadian Military Observers with the Organization.

3. This request is pursuant to the recommendation which, according to the Secretariat, is to be made shortly by Mr. Hammarskjöld to the Security Council as a result of his trip to the Middle East that UNTSO should be enlarged by 20 to 30 Military Observers. As will be seen from the attached memorandum on UNTSO, this would at least double the number of Military Observers now with the Organisation, and would exactly double the number of Canadian Military Observers (apart from General Burns). The use to which the new Military Observers would be put is indicated by a report in this morning's press to the effect that UNTSO had announced that both Israel and Egypt had approved the establishment of U.N. observation posts and mobile patrols on the border around the Gaza strip.

4. The text of the letter from the Secretariat is contained in the attached telegram No. 356 of May 1† from our Permanent Mission in New York. The letter states that this request results from the Secretary-General's agreements with the parties concerned, which provide for greater freedom of movement by Military Observers along the demarcation lines with a view to reducing the prospect of incidents and warlike acts. Similar requests have been made to the Governments of Australia, New Zealand, Norway and Sweden, of which only the last now has Military Observers serving with UNTSO. (Our Permanent Mission has so far not been able to obtain any definite information concerning the reaction of these Governments.) The letter asks that the five additional Canadian officers be of the rank of Captain or Major, and that they be available initially until at least October 31, 1956. It also says that, as this is a matter of great urgency, it is hoped that the Observers can depart for Palestine at the earliest possible date.

5. We have been informed at the official level by the Department of National Defence that, if a formal request, such as that which we now have, were received from the United Nations, and if the Canadian Government decided to accede to this request, the officers required could be made available for duty with UNTSO.

6. From the point of view of this Department, I think it is most desirable that the Canadian Government should give favourable consideration to this comparatively modest request from the Secretary-General. The work which the Truce Supervision Organization has had to perform and will be carrying out is of very great importance and provides an opportunity for a Canadian contribution to the assistance of peace in the Middle East out of