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Gaza Strip

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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FOR RELEASE

Statement of Senator Mike Mansfield (D., Montana)

JAN 17 1957

According to the press it appears there is a possibility of agreement among the Western powers to advocate the stationing of United Nations Emergency Forces along the Gaza strip and along the entrance on both the mainland and the islands to the Gulf of Aqaba until the perennial questions between Israel and Egypt over these areas is settled. It would be my hope that the United Nations Emergency Forces would be so deployed and would remain in these areas until a final negotiated settlement of their status had been reached. There is nothing to be gained by returning to the status quo ante because if the question of the Gaza strip and the free use of the Gulf of Aqaba are not settled, there will be no settlement at all but only a worsening of what had been a most difficult situation.

The right of free entry without hindrance for the ships of all nations through the Gulf of Aqaba must be maintained. It is my understanding that at the present time a pipeline is being built from the Israeli port of Elath on the Gulf of Aqaba, that it is one-third completed, and that its terminal point will be Haifa on the Mediterranean.

To return to the status quo ante in the Strait of Tiran would mean the blockade once again of the Gulf of Aqaba and the creation of a situation which would be detrimental to all parties concerned, including the United States and Western Europe. It is time for a peaceful settlement of these two areas within the United Nations, and it is to the interests of the Western and Arab worlds that the temporary United Nations police force be stationed permanently in these two areas until an agreement is reached.

It is time also for the United Nations to begin working toward the creation of a permanent United Nations police force. In this respect it would be well for the United States to take the lead.