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April 14, 1975

UN PEACEKEEPING FORCES IN MID EAST,
REOPENING THE SUEZ CANAL

Q. Do you expect Syria to follow Egypt and allow the UN peacekeeping forces to remain in the buffer zones between Syria and Israel? Are you pleased with Sadat's decisions, including to reopen the Suez Canal in June?

A. These forces are essential parts of the disengagement agreements on each front. The agreements were concluded as a step toward a peace settlement in accordance with Security Council Resolution 338. We naturally hope that the peacemaking process will be continued and the mandates of the UN forces renewed.

I welcomed President Sadat's announcement of the reopening of the Canal as a constructive initiative that can only enhance the climate for reason and moderation. It is very important that all parties adopt constructive attitudes in this period so that progress toward peace can be resumed.

SUEZ CANAL REOPENING

Q: Will the Suez Canal be opened for commercial traffic on June 5 or will it only be symbolically opened?

A: It is our understanding that the Canal will be opened for commercial traffic but that there may be some restrictions on the size of vessel drafts and the numbers of convoys in the first two weeks because the Canal has been closed for so long.