

37/102223

93-14
Africa Dept

(1043/731/53G)

SECRET AND PERSONAL.

BRITISH EMBASSY,

CAIRO.

December 11, 1953.

JE 1192

659

R.A.
16/12

My dear Roger,

Please see my letter of October 26 and your reply (JE 1192/583/G) of November 11 about uniforms.

JE 1192/629

2. At the end of the conversation on December 3 reported in my telegram 1672, I asked Fawzi if he had anything to say about any of the points at issue other than availability. He said that he would perhaps like to say a word about "attire". He gave me to understand that there might be a possible solution on either of two alternative lines of approach:

- (a) By our agreement that the technicians should wear a special uniform which would be designed for that purpose alone, even if this meant an alteration in Queen's Regulations.
- (b) On the basis of our own draft, provided that the Egyptian Government's permission were obtained on the occasions when it was considered necessary for the uniform to be worn.

3. I did not give him any encouragement over (a). As regards (b), I said that this was naturally a matter which would have to be more closely examined, but I suggested that British opinion would not stand for anything which referred to the express seeking of "Egyptian permission".

4. In telling you this, I am not of course in any way disputing what you say in your letter of November 11; but I thought it might be useful for you to know the present state of the game on this issue.

Yours ever
Michael

(M.J. Creswell)

R. Allen, Esq., C.M.G.,
Foreign Office.

P.S. I enclose a private Christmas card, specially designed for yourself - with my best wishes for the festive season

M.J.

Reference: -

FO 371/102823

93016

COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION

Le Journal d'Egypte 12/12/53



FO 371/102823

93016

COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION

IMPORTANTS DISCOURS DES LEADERS DE LA REVOLUTION DANS LA DAKAHLEH

GAMAL ABDEL NASSER: Si les Anglais

essayent de pénétrer dans une de nos villes,

nous les combattons jusqu'à la dernière

goutte de sang

**SALAH SALEM: Bientôt,
la région du Canal sera
débarrassée des soldats
britanniques**

LC 371/102223

43014

Egypt

E. 1192/664

Attached are some notes on Egypt for the debate in the House of Lords at the beginning of next week. Lord Rennell of Rodd had intended to move "That in any new arrangement with Egypt it is essential for this country to maintain a position which is consistent with our commitments and responsibilities". This motion has been withdrawn. Nevertheless, Lord Reading's office expect the first day of the debate to be devoted to Egyptian matters.

Flag A

2. Attached is a copy of the statement and notes about the Sudan. It is to be hoped that since their Lordships discussed this question recently, references to the Sudan will be only incidental. It is to be anticipated that some speakers may refer to Egyptian bad faith over the Sudan Agreement of February, 1953 in stating the reasons why we cannot trust the Egyptians to keep a Defence Agreement.

R.D. Edwards

December 11, 1953.

E.B. [unclear] 11.12.

M. O'Regan

Regu Allen 12/12

The motion in fact was allowed to stand, & was accepted after debate on Dec. 17th

*R.L.
18/12*

NOTES FOR HOUSE OF LORDS DEBATE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Top Secret
Secret
Confidential
Restricted
Open

Draft notes.

Egypt

Present position.

We are unfortunately not in a position to make a detailed statement of policy regarding the defence negotiations with Egypt at this juncture. Unless anything happens to prevent it, there will be a resumption of contact in Cairo next week following the Ambassador's return and the Egyptians have recalled their Ambassadors in London and Washington for consultation as to the position which Egypt should then adopt. Mr. Dulles told the Egyptian Ambassador in Washington on December 10 that his Government should settle with us on the terms offered on October 21 and by the time the debate takes place, ^{it is hoped that} ~~the Secretary of State or the Minister of State~~ will have spoken equally firmly to the Egyptian Ambassador here. The stage is set therefore for the climax in our negotiations and the Egyptians will watch carefully and suspiciously all ministerial comments for signs that we are working for a break rather than a settlement.

Opposition arguments.

2. The main opposition comments to be expected may be divided into two groups: -

(a) Those like Lord Rennell, Lord Killearn, Lord Vansittart and Lord Hankey, who maintain that you can never trust an Egyptian and that therefore it is useless to try to negotiate an Agreement with them. Lord Hankey goes further than/

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

than the others in maintaining that since the régime is a military dictatorship, we should have no dealings with them at all.

(b) Those who argue that any Agreement we have with Egypt should have regard to the increased perils to Israel resulting from a withdrawal of British troops from the Canal Zone. Their remarks may be directed towards the fact that the Egyptians have interfered with navigation bound for Israel going through the Suez Canal. They may also comment on the dangers of rearming Egypt beyond a point where the balance of power between Israel and the Arab States would be upset.

Points for reply.

3. In Her Majesty's Speech at the prorogation the negotiations with Egypt were referred to in the following terms: "My Government have been discussing with the Egyptian Government means of settling the differences between the two countries while safeguarding the security of the Middle East and the Suez Canal". Their Lordships might be reminded of the second part of this sentence.

4. It may, however, be advisable to say, as Mr. Nutting did on November 5, when winding up the Foreign Affairs Debate on the Address, that "the negotiations now proceeding with Egypt are not of course for a treaty of peace for the Middle East, but for a revision of the Anglo/Egyptian Treaty of 1936 covering the defence of the Suez Canal area". Certain of the measures necessary for the safeguarding of the Middle East as a whole are not suitable for inclusion in a bilateral agreement between the United

Kingdom/

[Hansard. Nov. 5th]

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

Kingdom and Egypt. For example:

(i) We stand by the tripartite declaration of 1950, in which Great Britain, France and the United States reaffirmed their resolve to maintain the Middle East frontiers and to prevent an arms race between Israel and the Arab States. This may be reaffirmed.

(ii) The problems involved in the maintenance of the freedom of navigation of the Suez Canal concern not only the United Kingdom, but also all the members of the British Commonwealth for whom the Canal is a life-line, ~~not~~ and all countries with shipping and trade passing through the Canal. *We have never*

5. As the Prime Minister said on May 11 this year: "We do not wish to keep indefinitely 80,000 men at a cost of, it might be, over £50,000⁰⁰⁰ a year discharging the duty which has largely fallen upon us, and us alone, of safeguarding the interests of the free nations in the Middle East, and also of preserving the international waterway of the Suez Canal. If agreeable arrangements can be made to enable this latter service and also the solid maintenance of the strategic Base to be discharged by agreement with Egypt, it would mean a great saving over our men and money". The position has not changed. If the Egyptians accepted the very reasonable terms we have offered in good faith, as the Prime Minister said then "they would render possible the reduction of the British forces in the Canal."

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

condoned Egyptian disregard for the Security Council resolution of Sept. 1951 regarding traffic bound for Israel.

Harmond. May 11/51

K0371/102225

13014

Zone from 80,000 to a small fraction of that number. There would be left technical personnel discharging their functions with the goodwill of the Egyptian Monarchy, Republic, Oligarchy, Dictatorship, or whatever it may turn out to be".

Egyptian Offensiveness.

6. We have had to put up with a succession of offensive statements by Egyptian politicians. As noble Lords will no doubt point out, this is hard to tolerate. We have not failed to point out to the Egyptians that offensive statements by persons in authority make it exceedingly difficult to convince people in this country that the Egyptian Government would observe the terms of any Agreement freely entered into. The arrest and deportation of British subjects from Egypt and the lack of co-operation of the Egyptian civil and military authorities in the maintenance of law and order in the Canal Zone, may be regarded in the same light, as factors working against rather than in favour of a settlement of outstanding differences. It is to a considerable extent due to these factors, and to the resulting lack of confidence, that the negotiations have been so long drawn out.

No alternative policy.

7. Those who are radically opposed to an agreement with Egypt have no alternative policy to offer. They will rightly stress the strength of the juridical position of Her Majesty's Government based upon the 1936 Treaty. But we must look further ahead than the period of twenty years up to December, 1956, specifically and unequivocally covered by the terms of that Treaty. Her Majesty's Government's policy in regard to Egypt must be considered/

E

371/102823

93014

Flag B

considered in relation to the defence needs of the West as a whole, and therefore transcending purely local considerations. (Attached is a confidential minute setting out the legal and factual position under the 1936 Treaty on the hypothesis that we reached December, 1956 without succeeding in concluding a new agreement with Egypt).

8. Their Lordships may also be reminded that we are negotiating with Egypt as a full sovereign state and are not seeking to impose terms which would be incompatible with full national sovereignty.

Revision for debate.

9. It may be of some assistance to Lord Reading if he can state that Her Majesty's Government will provide for debate in both Houses before the Agreement enters into force. We have already informed our delegation in Cairo that Parliament will wish to debate the Agreement and that it will be subject to ratification, following the normal ratification procedure.

(Cf. Lord Killebrew's question.)

U.S. Cooperation.

10. Subject to any statement the Secretary of State may make on return from Bermuda, it may be desirable to reaffirm in strong terms our solidarity with the United States in regard to Egypt. In point of fact, Mr. Dulles' "jolt" delivered to the Egyptian Ambassador in Washington on December 9, urging him to tell his Government to come to terms with us on the terms offered on October 21, has shown the Egyptians that we are completely solid. The press of this country on the other hand, have only seen the Bermuda leak reproduced in the New York

Times/

NOTHING TO BE ADDED IN THIS COLUMN

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

Minutes.

Please see Lord Killearn's remarks about the expiry of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936 in Columns 241 and 242 of the House of Lords Hansard attached.

2. Would you let me know how correct is Lord Killearn's interpretation? Lord Reading feels that if it is wide of the mark, he should write to Lord Killearn and tell him so?

P. O'Regan

(P.V. O'Regan)
December 31, 1953.

African Dept.

You should see the manner in which the S/S has dealt - A with Mr. Amery on this point.

Lord Killearn's account is really not too bad from a lawyer's point of view.

I would be against writing to him unless he attacks the S/S on the score of his reference to the Treaty in the F.A. debate.

M. Booth
Many thanks
P.O.
Lord Reading

M. O'Regan *W.B. Boothby*
31.12
(11)

OPERATION REDEPLOYMENT

Mr. E. G. 112
 11/12/53
 Dept.

10, Downing Street,
 Whitehall.

11 December, 1953.

Foreign Secretary

TE 1192

656

The exit from all your troubles about Egypt, the Suez Canal, the Sudan, the Southern Sudan and later on in the Middle East will be found in deeds not words, in action not treaties. What security have we got that the Egyptians now breaking your Treaty of 1936 will keep any agreement you will make with them. On the contrary, it is almost certain that increasing bad blood will develop between us over the Sudan; that as our troops in the Canal Zone diminish in strength in carrying out the proposed agreement the Egyptian riots and petty attacks will continue or increase. We shall no longer have available the force to occupy Cairo, etc. All that will happen is that our troops would be tied up half way through their evacuation, and many in our own Party will be able to say "we told you so", while the others mock.

- 2 -

2. Let me now tell you the action which, although apparently local, I believe would be comprehensive and decisive. Find some reason to send 2 battalions of infantry and 3 or 4 squadrons R.A.F. by air to Khartoum. The Governor could perhaps claim that public order required it as a protection and of course make it clear that there is no going back on our bargain of self-government for the Sudan. This would merely be a temporary measure to enable the new government to be set up in an orderly manner. The thing is not to talk about this, but after close, secret, intimate study among a few to do it.

3. Once this sign of strength and action of policy and design has been shown all the Conservative troubles here would be quenched. The negotiations with Egypt would of course be broken off or lapse, but the evacuation would be declared and would begin none the less, and the redeployment of our troops to the extent of an Armoured Division or 4 Brigades in the Middle East and Cyprus could begin and proceed as fast as convenient. There would be a regular series of troop movements organised

- 3 -

as if they were operations of war, yet we should be asking no favours and breaking no treaty and only taking security measures and guarantees while giving even more than the Egyptians had asked in the Canal Zone, that the Sudan should not be molested during its trial period of government.

4. The Egyptians should at the same time be told that all fresh additional expense caused by riotous attacks on our troops or rearguards and all damage done to the installations of the obsolescent base would be charged against their Sterling balances.

5. It would take say a month to plan and put this into operation, and meanwhile the Tory "rebels" should be told to have confidence in the Government which has a plan. There is no alternative except a prolonged humiliating scuttle before all the world, without advantage goodwill or fidelity from those Egyptian usurpers to whom triumph is being accorded.

ASE

The Rt. Hon. Anthony Eden, M.C.; M.P.

60371/102823

43014

✓ [unclear]

JE1192/656G

P.M./53/342

PRIME MINISTER

African Dept.
RA
OUTFILE

JE1192/656

14/12

I have been trying to think over the balance of advantages in this difficult Egyptian situation.

2. It is tempting to consider, after a certain interval, telling the Egyptians that since they will not come to any reasonable terms, and since we cannot give way any more, we cannot pursue the negotiations further. We would add that we would maintain our rights under the 1936 Treaty, and that we would make our own withdrawal in our own time. We would also take away as much of the base as we want, and is movable. It is conceivable that this line will be understood by the public here. On the other hand, I fear that it would be less satisfactory from the point of view of our continuing authority in the Middle East than the Treaty. The general view of the Treaty in Arab countries, and in the world at large would, I think, be that while the British had given up a good deal, they were still holding on. They were keeping the technicians there, and their base partly alive. They had maintained the right, which the Egyptians had accepted, to come back in certain conditions. They had also preserved some air and naval facilities, and therefore in war they meant to make themselves felt in this part of the world.

3. If to this was added a re-deployment which was more in accordance with the strategic need of our day, the impression would be strengthened. Such re-deployment would include, I hope, some increased forces in Cyprus and in Libya, a brigade in Jordan to which Israel might make no objection, and not least important, some forces in the Persian Gulf. Sharjah may have the best possibilities, but the Chiefs of Staff would have to study this. The question is, could we add any other good strategic stations to the list? Gaza has the attraction that

/it is

SECRET

EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON
DECEMBER 11.

The Egyptian Ambassador is calling to see the Minister of State at 2.45 p.m. on December 11. Monsieur Hakki has been recalled for consultation by his Government and, according to the press, the Egyptian Ambassador in Washington has been similarly recalled. The Egyptian Government clearly want to review the situation after the Bermuda Conference and in preparation for a resumption of negotiations.

2. Monsieur Hakki may be expected to reaffirm the assurance he made to Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick on November 27 of the desire of the Egyptian Government to reach a Defence Agreement and to deprecate the notion that they want to provoke a conflict with us. He will probably repeat his stock line that we should have confidence that Egypt will know who their friends are in the event of a war with the Soviet Union, and that in such circumstances, Egyptians will be only too eager for our aid.

3. The Minister of State may wish to make the following points: -

(a) Her Majesty's Government need better security than the word of Ministers who may not be in power when the circumstances arise which would make it imperative for the West to reactivate the Base facilities in the Canal zone. We need this security, not only to satisfy public opinion here, but as a warning to the Soviet Union which we believe to be indispensable in the present cold war situation.

(b) We are still by no means convinced that the Egyptian Government are sincere in their desire

to/

73014
34

to have an Agreement with us despite the Ambassador's assurances. These assurances are constantly belied by the utterances of Egyptian Ministers who go out of their way to stir up hatred against us.

(c) Although there seems to have been some slight improvement in the situation in the Canal Zone in the past week, we are still waiting for a positive response from the Egyptian Government that will show a desire to co-operate with us in decreasing the tension there. The Minister may wish to repeat the warning given by Sir I. Kirkpatrick on November 27 that if the present rate of incidents is not checked, we shall have to resort to the human right of defending ourselves.

(d) As for the negotiations, the Minister may wish to say that we are not wedded to the exact wording of the availability formula we suggested on October 21. He understands that Egypt is averse to leaving the decision regarding the reactivation of the Base to the United Nations. The essence of what we want on this issue is the means of reactivating the Base quickly in the event of a global war. In making this request, we are not speaking for ourselves alone.

4. The Ambassador will not know about the recent exchanges in Cairo which have resulted in the Embassy suggesting that the Egyptians have moved in the direction of a formula involving the concept of a global war. The Egyptian Minister for Foreign Affairs might consider it a *breach* of confidence if we were to mention these most recent informal talks to his Ambassador here.

5. The Minister might conclude by requesting the Ambassador to impress his Government with the very strong reaction of

British/

Reference:-

FO 371/102823

9306

COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION

British public opinion, particularly parliamentary opinion, to the recent organised campaign against British subjects and in the Canal Zone, and the fact that tactics of this sort work against rather than for a settlement such as both Governments desire. The sands are running out, and unless a settlement is reached quickly, the situation may deteriorate to a point beyond which no settlement is possible.

Bridges

December 10, 1953.

E. B. Ashley

11.12

1024/102 827
17 2/16
Euler

E. 1142/654(A)

CONFIDENTIAL

Egyptian Ambassador's call

The Egyptian Ambassador has been called home for consultation, we presume preparatory to a reopening of the talks. He asked to see the Minister of State and the attached brief was prepared, but on hearing that the Secretary of State would be back to-day Mr. Hakki said he hoped that Mr. Eden might be prepared to see him. The meeting with the Minister of State has now been cancelled and it is understood he will not be in the office to-morrow, which is the day the Egyptian Ambassador leaves for Cairo. The Department hesitate to press for an engagement at a time when the Secretary of State is so occupied, but would argue that Mr. Hakki's expectation of seeing the Secretary of State on the eve of his departure at the present important juncture in Anglo-Egyptian relations is natural. It will be certainly a matter for comment when he gets home if he has to say he was unable to see a Minister while his Washington colleague will be able, as we know, to say that he has just seen Mr. Foster Dulles.

E. B. Kohler

December 11, 1953

I am very reluctant to add to the Secretary of State's burdens by suggesting that he should see the Egyptian Ambassador tomorrow, especially as we have been round the whole course so often with Mr. Hakki already. Moreover, it might be argued that it would be better not to see Mr. Hakki, since it may be good for the Egyptians to gain the impression that H.M.G. are holding aloof.

/2. On

2. On balance, however, I think it would be a good thing if the Secretary of State could say a few words to Mr. Hakki. It would give the latter some talking points on his return to Egypt, and these points would have all the greater authority as coming straight from the Secretary of State on his return from Bermuda. I suggest that the points should be -

- (a) We and the Americans agree in principle on the need for the base to be available automatically in the event of a major war;
- (b) our offer made to the Egyptians on October 21 still holds good but may not do so indefinitely (here the Secretary of State could add whatever he thought fit about the attitude of the Conservative backbenchers);
- (c) the whole situation is dangerous in view of the tension arising from incidents in the Canal Zone and over the Sudan elections.

3. In other words the Egyptians have almost missed this 'bus and it is no use their waiting for another.

Roger Allen

(R. Allen)

December 11, 1953.

Private Secretary

*No S/S does
will want to see
him*

FO 371/102823

930/6



Dear Eden,

8 December 1953.

E. 1192/610

① Mr. C. S. J. J
 ② Mr. Allen
 ③ African Affairs
 for com. ans. re.
 2nd reply.

I would be most grateful if you would find two minutes to read the enclosed very short memorandum, though I realise that even two minutes must be hard to find, for a Foreign Secretary.

I hope you will believe that it is sent in a spirit of friendliness. Rumour has it that opinion is somewhat divided on the matter of the Canal base, in your party; so it might even be that the suggestion which I put forward, which I am sure is not new, might ~~even~~ help you in your dealings with those who may differ from you in this matter. If so, I shall be delighted; but that is not the main reason for submitting this memorandum; I believe it serves the best interests of the country. It would be most undesirable, in my view, that my party should succeed in turning you out with the help of the Amerys of this world and the Enoch Powells! That might be most embarrassing to us later and I would prefer to wait (a short while only, I hope) for some safer issue on which to rid the country of the present administration.

Yours sincerely,

E. L. Mallalieu
 (E. L. Mallalieu)

17/12
 12/12



Memorandum on the Canal Base
to Rt. Hon. A. Eden from E. L. Mallatien¹.

It would surprise me if it is not considered desirable to have a military base as near the Suez Canal area as possible.

This memorandum is based on the supposition:-

- a) that such a base is desirable;
- b) that a base in Egyptian territory is unlikely in present circumstances to be maintainable.

It is also based on the belief, which I have after making such enquiries as are open to me in Israeli quarters, that nearly every Israeli would welcome the setting up of a British base, or a N.A.T.O. base, in the Negev (a very short distance from the Canal Area).

My suggestion is that an approach — however informal — should be made to the Israelis to establish the truth of this belief, for the following reasons:-

- (1) The stability of the Middle East is a pre-requisite of a peace settlement.
- (2) Israel, as an independent state, is a condition of such stability.
- (3) Its continued independence is debateable owing to its present precarious economic position.
- (4) The international control of the Suez Canal is of world importance.



2.

- (5) The present negotiations with Egypt can result in
- (a) complete withdrawal — "scuttle";
 - (b) the retention of a token and ineffective British Force under humiliating conditions;
 - (c) complete breakdown and a state of tension which the Western Powers dared not allow to continue.
- (6) Each of these spells danger for you personally, the Government and the country.
- (7) If a base could be offered in the Negev it would:-
- (a) safeguard Israel militarily and economically;
 - (b) offset Britain's diplomatic setback in Egypt;
 - (c) stabilise the Middle East;
 - (d) contribute to the prevention of Russian aggression.

I am aware that those who are unreasoning in their pro-Arab views will oppose this idea; yet I doubt if any Arab state apart from Egypt will oppose it, for to do so would be such a demonstration of the absence of a will to peace on its part. It is probable also that the Vatican will oppose it, since any stability of the Middle East based upon Israel's stability is one the Vatican would hate to contemplate. With its potential wealth and the Hebrew University, Israel, if firmly established, might well prove a successful rival to the influence of the Vatican in the Middle East.

* Israel would be able to effect considerable savings in military expenditure and derive economic benefit further, from supplying the base. This is the main reason why I am sure they want it.

1/10
December 17, 1953.

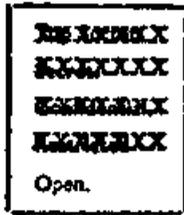
E. L. Lallalieu, Esq., C.C., F.F.

I am so sorry not to have been able to reply earlier to your letter of December 8 with which you enclosed a short memorandum on the Canal Base. You can imagine how fully occupied my time was between arriving from Bermuda and leaving for Paris.

I have not yet had time to give your memorandum careful study, but I promise to do so at the earliest opportunity.

E. L. Lallalieu, Esq., C.C., F.F.

Registry
No. JE1192/670



W.M.

Draft. letter
from

Secretary of State

to

E.L.
Mr. Mallalieu.

Q.C. Mr.

43014
+ 0 Jan. 1
OUTFILE

In my letter of December 17th I promised to study your proposal that we should seek to establish a military base in the Negev to replace the Suez Canal base.

I think the main difficulty about your ~~suggestion~~ proposal is that it could only provide - at best - an area in which to station troops; which is not the same as a military base. The reason why we wish to retain our base in the Suez Canal Zone and reoccupy it in case of a major war is that it provides a whole complex of technical and geographical facilities which are not to be found elsewhere. Briefly, these are: ease of access from the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean; good port and rail facilities; good water supplies; a large local population which can supply the labour necessary to run the base; and the large military installations which already exist there.

Not all these are indispensable: but none of them exist in the Negev. There is access to the Red Sea by the port of Elath on the gulf of Aqaba; but the port facilities are very small and the route passes close on the Egyptian Sinai Coast; there is little water; there is no local labour; and all the installations - including rail facilities - would have to be built from scratch.

/For

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

12/20/41
Lieut. Capt.
P.S. first

12/20/41

12/20/41

11
4/1

For these technical reasons alone, and leaving aside all the political considerations involved, it would seem better to go on trying to reach a satisfactory settlement with Egypt.

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

31-12

UNCLASSIFIED

Reference:-

F.O 371/102823

930/6

COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION

1953

J

AFRICAN DEPARTMENT

JE.1192/658

FROM

St. Norman Brook,
Cabinet Office

No.

Dated Dec. 7

Received in
Registry— Dec. 17

U.N.G. to secure for wording a defence
agreement with Egypt.

Brief for the Prime Minister's meeting
with President Eisenhower.

References to former relevant papers

MINUTES

21/8

(Print)

(How disposed of)

(Action completed)

20.2.52

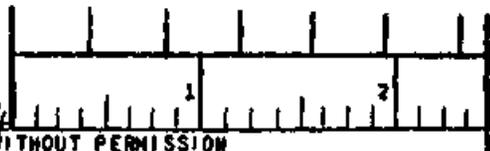
(Index)

W.P.
18.3.54

FO 371/102823

9306

COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION



FO. Sir P. Dixon ^{with} Duplicate Center J
 Sir I. Kirkpatrick EGYPT 8/12. PM but this when he
 Mr R. Allen. ^{10/12} and the President of 10.000
 We have 80,000 men on the Canal. E.1192/658

They are not there for any Imperialist purpose. Nor for any purpose serving the interest of the United Kingdom alone

They are there only because we cannot obtain from Egypt a satisfactory agreement to regulate the maintenance of the Canal Zone Base in peace and to ensure that we and our Allies shall have ready access to it in war.

The Base was built up during the war to nourish 15 Divisions. Its static installations, which cannot be moved - docks, workshops, railways, etc., - would be a valuable asset to the Western world in a future war.

If there is ever to be any international organisation for the defence of the Middle East, this would be a useful ready-made foundation for its operations.

Britain has an interest, in common with other Western Powers, in maintaining the stability of the Middle East and in ensuring free passage through the Suez Canal.

But this commanding position in Egypt is no longer of such over-riding strategic importance to her alone as to warrant the use of 80,000 troops to hold it against Egyptian truculence.

The essential requirements of the Western Powers in this area could be fully met by a much smaller force - 4,000 or 5,000 men at the most - if the Egyptians could be induced to accept a reasonable agreement for the maintenance of the Base.

We have made proposals to them for a reasonable agreement. We have gone to the limit of concessions to meet their amour propre. We can make no further concessions.

But if our friends - and especially the United States - would stand firmly with us in pressing the Egyptians to accept an agreement on these (very reasonable) terms, a three-fold advantage could be secured for the West.

First, a settlement making for greater stability in the Middle East in peace.

Second, a sure foothold and support for any operations which the Western Powers might have to undertake in the Middle East in war.

Third, a redeployment of our forces in the Middle East which would bring the greater part of the 80,000 back to Europe - when they could better serve the immediate needs of Britain and her Allies.

NORMAN BROOK

7.12.53

No reply needed

Mr. R. ^{White} ~~Allen~~ J
Africa Dept.

ALLIED POWERS EUROPE
DEPUTY SUPREME COMMANDER

14-12-53

E. 1192/678(A)

INDEXED

My dear Anthony

Capt Waterhouse has accepted my invitation for Thursday. He will come to my London office at 12.30 hrs and will then lunch with me in the House of Lords.

He asked if I could see him earlier as our conversation might affect his speech!!

I said I could not manage any earlier as I am in France till Wednesday. So it looks good.

I will do my best.

Yrs ever
Rantley

16371/162823

J 93014

AFRICAN DEPARTMENT

JE.1192/667

1953

EGYPT AND SUDAN

+ Hambrey,
Cairo.
Confidential
67(1043/307/53)
Dec. 15
2^d in Dec. 21

The effect of extreme statements on the
outcome of Anglo-Egyptian defence
negotiations. Report of a conversation between
General Maguire, Mr Hambrey, and
Major-General Benson.
(Copied Paris, W'ton, Ankara, B.H.E.O. Sayid.)

References to former relevant papers
JE1055/137

MINUTES

There does seem to have been an improvement
in the past week - fewer speeches, fewer incidents &
the apparent abandonment of the idea of an
Egyptian victory parade to Khartoum. The visiting
Ambassadors from London W'ton may have given
good advice on this; and the debate in the
Commons may have served the dual purpose of
demonstrating that HMG do want to go on with
negotiations, but in spite of the strength of opposition
to that policy

W Monis
23/12

Yes. It is (a) quite possible that Maguire really
wants to accept our offer and (b) the
atmosphere is better again. But (a) may
not be the deciding factor and (b) can change
in 5 minutes.

W Hambrey

23.12

LA 24/12

WMB
30/12

(Print)

(How disposed of)

ion leted)	(Index)
.31/12	W.F. 12.5.54

References to later relevant papers

FO 371/102823

9306

COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION



No. 267
(1043/327/53)

CONFIDENTIAL.

E. 1192/667

BRITISH EMBASSY

CAIRO.

December 15, 1953.

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that I called on President Naguib on December 14 in order to say good-bye and to present Major-General Benson as British delegate for the discussions regarding the Suez Canal Zone. General Naguib welcomed General Benson most kindly and said that he was hoping for a successful outcome in the Canal Zone talks. General Benson said that he was also most anxious to bring the talks to a successful conclusion but he could not conceal from General Naguib his concern at the constant incidents in the Canal Zone and also at the speeches which were being made on the Egyptian side. General Benson went on to say that it seemed to him most difficult to negotiate successfully when there was so much tension and when at any moment a really serious incident might occur. He emphasised that these incidents and speeches and the general tension made it difficult for any agreement which required confidence, to be accepted in the United Kingdom.

2. General Naguib replied that he entirely shared General Benson's point of view regarding the reduction of tension. He could assure him that he was doing everything he could to produce a better atmosphere.

3. In the course of some further discussion on this subject I said that I had personally been deeply wounded and offended by General Naguib's speech on December 6 about the Sudan. Now that we had made a friendly agreement about the Sudan and that the pro-Egyptian party had won the elections it seemed to me deplorable that speeches should be made on the Egyptian side raking up painful incidents from the past and causing further ill-will. Surely we should now let bygones be bygones. Otherwise what incentive had Her Majesty's Government to make agreements? I mentioned also a speech made by Colonel Shafai, a member of the Council for the Revolutionary Command on December 7 in which he had said that agreements were to be deplored because they discouraged people from hating the British. When such things were said, how could you, Sir, or the Prime Minister persuade Parliament that the Egyptians were such good friends that they could be safely trusted to guard the biggest military base in the world on our behalf?

/s/ General Naguib

The Right Honourable
Anthony Eden, M.C., M.P.,



4. General Naguib recalled what the Minister for Foreign Affairs had said to me (see my telegram No. 1688) and added that there had after all been speeches on the British side also. All the same he quite agreed that speeches should be moderated and said he would really do his best with his colleagues in that direction. JE1055/13

5. Before leaving the General I said that he had built up a great reputation for sincerity and idealism in the English-speaking world. This was a very precious asset and, speaking as a friend, I greatly hoped that he would be able to preserve it. It seemed to me that if an agreement was to be concluded, neither side could now afford to spread ill-will or to allow constant incidents in the Canal Zone. From General Naguib's own point of view, I suggested that his public would not understand how he could make such an important agreement with a Power which his colleagues said was the enemy of Egypt; and on our side, the House of Commons and the public might well lose confidence.

6. General Naguib then let us go with a great many expressions of goodwill, which he certainly uttered with every appearance of sincerity.

I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Ambassadors at Paris, Washington and Ankara, and to the Head of the British Middle East Office.

I have the honour to be,
with the highest respect,
Sir,
Your obedient Servant,

RMA Hankey

102823

93014

Utman pepi

1192

SUEZ CANAL BASE

(NOTE BY C.I.C.S. FOR MINISTER OF DEFENCE)

JE 1192 / 666

RECEIVED	1192
13/1/59	
1959	

1. The problem

To get the problem in perspective it is essential to be clear on three points:-

- (a) The aim of British Middle East politico-strategic policy.
- (b) The part to be played by the Base in that strategy.
- (c) The requirements that must be fulfilled to enable any base to function.

2. Aims of British Middle East politico-strategic policy

- (a) To prevent the Middle East countries from falling under Communist domination in peace, or being overrun in war.
- (b) To retain the oil resources of the Persian Gulf and Arabia, *above all in war.*
- (c) To protect the southern flank of Turkey in war.
- (d) To retain the free passage of the Suez Canal in peace, and for as long as it remains useable in war.

3. Concept for defence of Middle East

- (a) To build up and knit together the national forces of the Middle Eastern countries.
- (b) To maintain in the eastern Mediterranean small but powerful and mobile U.K. land and air forces to give confidence to the Middle Eastern countries in peace and quick support in war.
- (c) To have adequate logistic arrangements to sustain the forces that will be located in the Middle East in peace, and that will operate there in war.

This is the sole object and purpose of a British Middle East base.

4. Size, location and protection of the Base

(a) Size

Although the entry of Turkey into N.A.T.O. and the build up of Turkish military strength have reduced the forces required for the concept outlined in para 3 above and so the size of the base required, it will still cover a considerable area, and there must be room for

...../expansion

expansion in war. What is more the base cannot possibly function in peace or war without the use of the ports, railways, roads, telecommunications and other utility services of the general area in which it is situated. The idea of setting up a base in a restricted area, protected by a small fighting force and isolated from the utility and transportation facilities of the country in which it is situated is quite impracticable. Any such base would be useless. The installations in the present base can and must be reduced in number and size to match the forces likely to be available. The base as a whole must however remain well dispersed as a protection against air attack. It cannot be compressed into a small isolated area.

(b) Location

Because of its geographical position, its transportation, utility and other existing facilities, and the availability of labour, the Suez Canal Zone is the best location for a British Middle Eastern base. Its double sea entry (Port Said and Suez) enables it to be used even if the Mediterranean and the canal itself are closed to our shipping. However it is not the only possible place. Alternatives in order of preference are HAIFA, BEIRUT and ISKANDERIYAH, but any of them would be very costly even if politically available. Nevertheless a base in the Canal Zone would be useless without the facilities already mentioned, and at the very least the tacit participation of the Egyptian Government and people.

(c) Protection

Apart from the futility of having a base without adequate transportation facilities etc the cost in troops of protecting an area of the size required against a well trained and equipped terrorist and sabotage organization, backed by an actively hostile civilian population, would be prohibitive in peace and grossly wasteful of fighting troops in War.

Admittedly under the proposed arrangements our technicians and property will be a hostage to fortune. To increase the value of the

...../hostage

-3-

hostage by adding an inadequate fighting force would be the height of folly. The proper method of protection is the threat of retribution, with the fighting forces located outside the area of possible disturbance where they have liberty of action to carry out that threat if necessary (i.e. Libya and Cyprus).

5. Requirements to enable a base to function

- (a) Properly equipped modern ports of entry.
- (b) A good road and rail network.
- (c) A modern telecommunication system connecting ports, railways and installations.
- (d) A reservoir of skilled and unskilled labour.
- (e) Oil storage, cold storage, covered accommodation for all types of warlike stores, workshops and a reliable water supply.

6. Conclusions

- (a) The purpose of the Suez Canal base is to sustain our own forces in the Middle East in peace and in war, and those of our allies and friends in that part of the world. It is not for the protection of the Suez Canal.
- (b) The base cannot be made effective without the tacit cooperation of the Egyptians, we cannot afford the resources needed to protect it against an actively hostile Egypt, nor would it be any use under such conditions. It cannot be compressed into a small enclave isolated from the rest of Egypt.
- (c) We must either get a working arrangement with Egypt, or set up another less useful base elsewhere at great expense, or give up our ability to intervene in the Middle East in war.

1953

EGYPT SUDAN

935/101

Anglo-Egyptian Defense Negotiations

G. Riesenfeld
Craddock, H.P.,
Met Eden

Expresses his apprehension about the present situation, and suggests a gradual withdrawal of troops without resuming negotiations.

2 Dec 14

Received in
istry— Dec. 23.

References to former relevant papers

MINUTES

In this helpful letter, Mr. Craddock, after expressing his apprehension on the situation in Egypt, offered a suggestion for its solution, namely that we should take steps to reduce our forces in Egypt to the numbers allowed for in the 1946 Treaty.

2. A solution on these lines, together with a proposal that we should offer arbitration to the Egyptians, is one of the proposals put before Cabinet in the Secretary of States recent memorandum. When this has been discussed in Cabinet we should perhaps reconsider whether or not to advise the Secretary of State to reply to this letter (which starts by saying that it requires no acknowledgment).

(Print)

(How disposed of)

Off) Mrs Riesenfeld
Craddock, H.P., from
Secretary of State Dec 21

Ram Young

(R. C. Mackworth-Young)

January 12, 1954

I am inclined to think we should do no more until we have a clear policy.

R.C. (Rosen) 7/14/54

(Action completed)

(Index)

2818/2

WR
19 5-54

1) Miss Harris, to Private Secretary Dec. 28

References to later relevant papers

R22

From: G. Beresford Craddock, M.P.



(Private)

1. Sqs. Sec. seen
2. Mt. reply of thanks
3. Mr R. Allen

14, Courtney House, 4, African Dept.
Mulberry Close,
Hendon, N.W.4.

for docs office

December 14th, 1953

My dear Douglas Secretary,

E. 1192/677

This is a private and confidential letter which requires no acknowledgment and I am asking Robert Carr to hand it to you personally.

I am disturbed about the position in the Suez Canal, not only on account of the effect it may have on the Government but on you personally. In September as you probably know, some of our colleagues set up a private Committee to watch developments and I was asked to join. At the first meeting I stated that until we had further definite information I was not prepared to lend my name to any public statement or take any action which might embarrass you in your negotiations and it was eventually agreed that we should wait until more definite information was available.

I attended the Party meeting which was addressed by the Prime Minister, yourself and the Minister of Defence and came to the conclusion that the Government case was which stronger than I had anticipated. At the next meeting of the private Committee, I told my colleagues quite frankly that I could not give the full support to their views which I was sure they would wish because I felt the Government had put up a reasonable case which had shaken my hitherto strong feelings and advocated that we should proceed with caution. I also suggested that a few of us should seek a private interview with you before making any reference in public to the matter. My views did not appear acceptable to the majority and therefore I ceased to be a member of the Committee.

I am bound to say, however, that I am apprehensive over the whole situation in view of the breach of faith of Neguib during the preparatory stages

(Cont.)

-2-

of the Sudan elections and during the actual campaign. Anyone who knows the Egyptians realises how untrustworthy they are, but I thought Neguib might be better and the Sudan was a good test of his good faith. Events seem to prove that he cannot be trusted and any agreement he might sign with regard to the Canal Base would not be worth the paper it was written on.

As a result of the public utterances of some of our colleagues (which incidentally I deplore), it seems to me that you and your Ministerial colleagues are in a somewhat difficult position and I have been wondering what course could be adopted to avoid what might prove to be a most embarrassing situation for the Government on the one hand and for those on the back benches who feel very strongly about the matter. I therefore put forward the following suggestions for your consideration as a possible way out of this difficult and indeed delicate position.

Is it necessary to re-open negotiations with Neguib at all? Could not the position be left as it is and without any further discussion we could begin a slow withdrawal of our Forces from the Base. I have always felt that our position in international law was weakened by the fact that the number of our troops was so much over the figure agreed in the Treaty. The withdrawal of troops down to the numbers stipulated in the Treaty together with their equipment would take a long time probably two or three years, during which period anything may happen. We could tell Neguib that in view of their unreasonable demands we were not prepared to continue negotiations and that we were taking steps to reduce our Forces to a number in conformity with the 1936 Treaty.

Such a course could not be objected to by the United Nations. What I regard as more important however (though you may not agree) is that such an announcement on our part would probably satisfy our intransigent colleagues and no one could accuse H.M.G of having been forced to abandon their plans as a result of pressure from back benchers. The attitude of

(Cont.



-3-

H.M.G would simply be this - "We have done our best to meet all reasonable Egyptian demands. We can go no further and so we have decided to take steps to conform to the terms of the 1936 Treaty which of course cannot be done quickly in view of the complicated nature of the task ~~involved~~ in moving so many Forces together with their equipment etc. When this point is achieved H.M.G will be prepared to entertain any suggestions from Egypt in connection with a possible revision of the 1936 Treaty".

I hope you will not mind my writing in this manner. I appreciate the enormous difficulties with which Ministers have to cope and I am by no means happy about the future of our own country. Moreover I deprecate any "rebel" movements within our Party so making the task of Ministers still more difficult. Were we to have a real split it is my opinion that if we had a General Election any time within the next 18 months the Socialists would win and in my view this would be a national disaster. On the otherhand it seems to me that the time has come when we must as a country stand up for our own rights because if we go on retreating we may lose the support of many of our own followers in the country. In view of what has happened in the Sudan I have grave doubts about the advisability of making any agreement with Egypt over the Canal Base and I hope you may regard my suggestion as a possible way out of the present difficulty.

John ...
Richard Cross
 (Spelthorne, Middlesex).

Rt.Hon. Anthony Eden, M.C., M.P.,
 Foreign Secretary,
 Foreign Office,
 Downing Street, S.W.1.

FO 371/102823

930/16

COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION

Encl 5
 Mr. R. Allen
 Africa Dept

December 21, 1953.

JE 1192/677

OUTFILE

Thank you very much for your letter of
 December 14 which Robert Carr has handed to me.

I am very grateful to you for letting me
 have your thoughtful comments on this difficult
 problem of Egypt, and I can assure you that I
 have very much in mind the considerations you
 mention.

(Sgd.) ANTHONY EDEN

G. Beresford Craddock, Esq., M.P.

F0 371/102823

930

1	2
---	---

COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION

PA/53/344

1. Mr. [unclear]
2. Miss [unclear]

3. [unclear]

E. 1142/613

Aug 15

J. White

In view of the railway strike I agree about Robertson but I still think it important that the party should be given some military information before the debate on Thursday. I am not thinking of the rebels, but of the rank and file who wish to be reassured but have little information to go upon. I should have thought that a combination of Alexander and Bobbity or Alexander and Crookshank with Head in attendance in either case at the Defence Committee on Wednesday would be valuable. No doubt you will let me or Alex know in due course for there is the question of the latter's return from Paris to be arranged.

2. As for Khartoum, I imagine that there can be no question of taking a decision till after I come back on Wednesday. Meanwhile I agree that the Maudi's message is encouraging. It looks as though bitterness against the Egyptians was already deep. This may yet become a factor for the Egyptians are not patient in their dealings with others.

ANTHONY EDEN

(A. Eden)
December 13, 1953

Prime Minister

Handwritten note: "Handwritten note"

W.C.

Handwritten signature: "A. Eden"

6371/62823

43014

E.1192/657

CONFIDENTIAL

The Egyptian Ambassador called on the Minister of State this morning. He said that he was returning to Cairo on Wednesday and wanted to be able to give the Minister for Foreign Affairs the latest picture of the British position. He himself felt that the gap was now a small one consisting as it did of the question of uniform, which His Excellency regarded as a secondary question and one on which it should not be difficult to agree a formula, and the question of availability of the base.

The Minister told the Ambassador that there was no possibility of an agreement which did not provide in some way for the right of the British technicians in Egypt to wear uniform. They would not want to do so in public places when they were off duty but there might be occasions when it would be necessary for uniform to be worn. The Minister said that he had nothing to add to the formula which had already been put to the Egyptian Government but he thought that we were in fact not very far apart on this issue.

The Minister told the Ambassador that the question of reactivation or availability of the base was even more important. He reminded the Ambassador that it had been our original idea that provision should be made for reactivation in the event of an attack on Turkey or Persia. However, the Egyptian Government did not like this and we had therefore sought to find a formula based on the "Uniting for Peace" resolution of 1950. Now it seemed that the Egyptian Government did not like this either and they were talking in terms of "consultation" only. The Minister told the Ambassador that it would be impossible for H.M. Government to agree to or indeed to get House of Commons approval for an agreement that did not allow for the base to be used in the event of global war. He pointed out that a Russian attack on, for example, Western Germany would automatically involve Turkey, and there must be automatic reactivation of the base in the event of a Russian attack in Europe or on Turkey.

The Minister went on to say that he felt strongly that it was not in Egypt's interest to agree that reactivation should only take place after consultation with the parties. It would be much easier for Egypt to have the matter cut and dried. If it were not provided for, there would be Russian pressure and all kinds of inducements to the Egyptian Government to stand aside. The Minister quoted the example of Belgium in 1939 and said that any country which had the chance of being neutral was likely to put off until too late the decision to take the necessary safeguards against an aggressor. But if that country could show that it was bound by treaty to undertake certain obligations it could stand up without difficulty to outside pressure and this was a much easier position for the people of that country. For example, it had been a safeguard to Egypt during the last war, in the face of Italian and German pressure, to be able to point out that she was simply carrying out her treaty obligations.

The Ambassador intervened at this point to say that small countries were always bullied whether they had treaty obligations or not. For example, Turkey in the last war had certain obligations but had been under constant pressure from both sides. The Minister pointed out that the circumstances in that case were quite different. Turkey might well have been a liability to the Allies as an active military ally during

/the war

10771/102223 93014

the war and it therefore might well have been that it suited us in the circumstances to have neutral.

The Ambassador said that we really must have confidence in Egyptian common sense; they had an interest in cooperation. Even if there should be no treaty (and he reminded the Minister that the treaty now under negotiation would expire after 7 years) the Egyptians would beg the British to come to their help if the need arose. Certainly after 70 years of British occupation they did not wish to see Russian troops occupying Egypt. But the provision that reactivation of the base should only take place after consultation was necessary in order to satisfy the psychological needs of a country anxious to see an end of the British occupation. The Ambassador thought that H.M. Government would really find it more satisfactory to have direct and simple consultation with Egypt in an emergency than to take the matter to the United Nations where discussion would undoubtedly be very protracted. He repeated that Egypt's own vital interests would make her seek British help.

The Minister told the Ambassador that he doubted whether, in the event, matters would work out quite like that. Consultation would be protracted and Egypt would be lost as Belgium had been. In response to a suggestion by the Ambassador that it was only certain die-hards in the Conservative Party that insisted on automatic reactivation, the Minister said that there was complete unanimity in the Government and in the Party that we must insist on automatic reactivation in the event of global war or a direct attack. He said that unless we had this in an agreement we should not feel that we had discharged our obligations as a world power.

The Minister then went on to raise another matter. The Ambassador had said that Egypt would always ask her friends to come to her help but it was difficult to reconcile this with a situation in which there was a continued series of unfriendly acts by the Egyptians. British spokesmen tried to make their statements about Egyptian affairs moderate in tone, but there were violent speeches by members of the Egyptian Government, apparently catering for a public opinion which was being followed instead of led. The Minister referred to General Neguib's speech of 10 days ago and said that its violence was reminiscent of the sort of thing that Hitler used to say of this country when England and Germany were locked in mortal combat. Fortunately the speech had not received wide publicity in this country. The Minister also complained of the measures that had been taken to restrict supplies of food to the British troops, and the deportation of British subjects. He said that it appeared that a systematic anti-British campaign was being conducted.

The Ambassador said that it must be realised that speeches by members of the Egyptian Government were for local consumption. Government spokesmen felt that they had to say for political reasons things which they did not really mean. Too much attention should not be paid to these statements; as soon as we had been able to bridge the gap and complete the negotiations we should find all would be sunshine after the clouds. As regards food supplies, there had been a great deal of misunderstanding. The Egyptian Government were in fact arranging for supplies to be sent to the British troops but in the interests of rationing they had to regulate the quantities sent to the Canal Zone and it was

/necessary

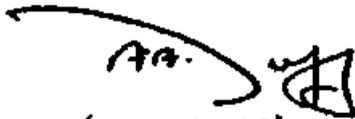
necessary for traders to have permits. The Ambassador also referred to incidents in the Canal Zone and said that such things occurred around any camp or garrison. He quoted a recent article by Cyril Falls which stated that the number of incidents in Germany was greater than in the Canal Zone. He also took occasion to point out that the Egyptian Government were giving no publicity to incidents caused by British soldiers.

Reverting to the main part of their conversation, the Ambassador asked whether Mr. Dulles did not put forward at the time of his visit to London some formula about availability. Was this not satisfactory to H.M. Government? The Minister said that his impression was that Mr. Dulles was in complete agreement with H.M. Government on the question of automatic reactivation, and (in reply to a further question by the Ambassador) he added that the Bermuda conference had confirmed this.

The Ambassador said that the important thing was to end the occupation. Once Egypt was free she would be able to do many things that she could not now do. The agreement was not an end in itself, but it was a psychological necessity and would open the way to a period of friendship and understanding.

The Minister said that it must be realised that there was a psychological state in the United Kingdom also. H.M. Government had thought that with the signing of the agreement on the Sudan in February a new era had opened in Anglo-Egyptian relations. But ever since there had been a stream of abuse.

The Ambassador took up the Minister's reference to abusive statements on the Sudan and the conversation concluded with five minutes argumentative discussion on this theme.


(A.A. Duff)
December 14, 1953.

African Department - to enter

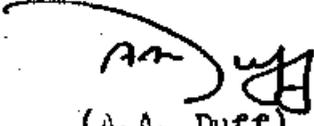
Copies to:-

Private Secretary
Lord Reading
Sir I. Kirkpatrick
Mr. Nutting
Mr. Dodds-Parker
Mr. R. Allen.

*Minutes.*CONFIDENTIAL

The Minister of State would like to know what the Department think of the argument in the fourth paragraph of the record of his conversation with the Egyptian Ambassador on December 14.

The Minister had previously mentioned this argument to Sir R. Stevenson who apparently was not much impressed with it. The Minister feels that if there is any value in it a follow-up letter to Sir R. Stevenson might be worth while.


(A.A. Duff)

December 15, 1953.

African Dept.Copies to:-

Sir I. Kirkpatrick
Mr. R. Allen.

Nothing to be Written in this Margin.

371/102223

93014

The Minister of State would like to know what the Department think of the argument in the fourth paragraph of the record of his conversation with the Egyptian Ambassador on December 14.

The Minister had previously mentioned this argument to Sir R. Stevenson who apparently was not much impressed with it. The Minister feels that if there is any value in it a follow-up letter to Sir R. Stevenson might be worth while.

(A. A. Duff)
December 15, 1953.

African Dept.

Copies to:-

Sir I. Kirkpatrick
Mr. R. Allen.

African Dept.

I don't think very much of it, do you?
There will be Russian pressure anyway,
& even if there is a definite Egi. commitment
they will wriggle out, if it suits them.
The Egi. Amb. (rightly) quotes Turkey
in the last war as a case in point:
he might have quoted Egypt herself!
He didn't believe war (despite the 1926
Treaty) until the invaders had been defeated
in Africa: he didn't mind because he
had all facilities (as the Amb. has also
printed out to me) but we got them because
we were in a position to take them.
Still, it's a debating point & can do no harm -
R.A. Duff

6371/102823

93014

CONFIDENTIAL

E.1192/657(A)

The Minister of State has asked for the Department's views on the arguments he put to the Egyptian Ambassador in paragraph 4 of the attached record. The view that an Egyptian commitment to reactivate the base in certain circumstances without consultation had an important "cold war" aspect as well as a practical one has for some time been a standing component in our armoury of arguments. In recommending it for use in Monday's talk with the Egyptian Ambassador the Department were not aware that Sir Ralph Stevenson set little store by it.

2. We should probably be wrong to neglect any form of persuasion at so important a juncture, and we should require to know that the Egyptians would be positively repelled by the argument before deciding not to use it.

3. It is, however, much more difficult to establish a hierarchy of persuasiveness, and on reflection we should hesitate to put the argument in question very high on the list. In so far as neutralist sentiment in Egypt is strong, and there are signs that it is growing at the moment, it is scarcely an inducement to tell the Egyptians that we have hit on a means of putting neutralism out of their power. As addressed, on the other hand, to political leaders who envisage, as Hakki says they do, calling on us for help if Russia menaces them, the notion of giving warning now in the hopes of reducing Russian expectations of Egyptian neutrality ought to be fairly attractive. Finally, as a means of turning the key on those who have made up their

/minds

minds in favour of coming to terms with us, the argument seems to be powerful. I do not know whether it is worth writing to Sir R. Stevenson about this.

E. B. Ashley

December 16, 1953

I agree generally with the foregoing, and I think that this is a debating point for use with the Egyptians, but I do not think it is much more.

2. The Egyptian Ambassador has quoted the case of Turkey in the last war: I think that this is in fact a case in point because, if memory serves me, we were pressing the Turks at one time very strongly to come into the war and they refused to do so despite the alliance. I think that the Ambassador might indeed have quoted the case of Egypt herself, who did not declare war (despite the 1936 Treaty) until the invaders had been defeated in Africa: it is true we did not mind much, because we had all the facilities we needed (as the Ambassador has also pointed out to me) but we got them because we were in a position to take them.

3. There would be Russian pressure on Egypt anyway, and even if there were a definite Egyptian commitment, they would wriggle out if it suited them. In substance therefore it is all a question of their state of mind at the time. Perhaps the Department would re-submit with a draft letter to H.M. Ambassador at Cairo, taking account of these minutes.

R.A.

(R. Allen)

African Dept.

December 16, 1953.

10371/102823

93019
JE 119
116
diff
value base

Enter J.G.
Return to Dept
(It may be
handed again)
JE 1192 676

TOP SECRET

SECRETARY OF STATE.

The attached memorandum on the Canal Zone problem represents the outcome of a discussion with Lord Reading, the Parliamentary Under-Secretaries and Assistant Under-Secretaries.

I agree with it. But it shows that unless we get an agreement with Egypt we are in a very bad posture. We must either remain in the Canal Zone indefinitely by force, a most unattractive policy, or we must leave Egypt of our own volition. However we do this it will look more or less as if we were running away.

In these circumstances it seems to me that we must make every effort to conclude an agreement. In particular we should carefully examine the possibility of a "global war" formula whilst standing firm on the uniform question. And we must continue to do our best to mobilise American support.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretaries concurred in the memorandum. Mr. Dodds-Parker thinks that we could start the first phase of re-deployment now by moving the armoured squadron to Jordan and equipping a first armoured squadron of the Arab Legion. Then, when circumstances permit, we could build up these forces in Jordan into one British and one Arab armoured brigade both using joint workshops. The third phase might be a reduction of British personnel sufficient to operate one active squadron and two squadrons on a care and maintenance basis. Lines of communication will also have to be developed through Akaba, which will also have a useful commercial value for bringing out minerals.

The Minister of State is in general agreement with the paper. He says "apart from all other considerations is it not possible for us to start a quick contraction of our present base? We hear stories about it being too big even to guard or clear the sand away. What are we doing to reduce it to a reasonable size?"

December 11, 1953.

43014 Sec. P. 12 (2) ZP8/SG

MIDDLE EAST POLICY

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has demanded a saving of £308 million by 1955-56 on our defence expenditure as at present planned so as to reduce it to £1,650 million. Some economies in home defence expenditure are planned by the Service Departments but these are not enough. Some economies in overseas defence expenditure have also been planned on certain assumptions which may not be fulfilled. But these are in any event unlikely to be sufficient and we must therefore look further.

2. Our main military commitments overseas are in Germany, the Middle East, Malaya and Korea. We cannot count on substantial reductions in the last two.

3. The large forces which we maintain in Germany are the linchpin of the Western defence effort. Our present N.A.T.O. policy is to maintain their size and improve their quality. Any reduction would have a disastrous effect on N.A.T.O. and a fatal one on the E.D.C. The smaller N.A.T.O. Powers like the Belgians, Dutch and Scandinavians would lose heart, Western Germany would ride anchorless and a change in the whole foreign policy of the United States would be likely to follow. Such a collapse of the Western defence effort would be immediate and probably catastrophic for the free world.

4. A reduction in the Middle East would have an unfavourable effect both in the short and long terms upon our position in the Middle East. This would be seen both politically, in particular through a weakening of our influence with the countries towards whom we have Treaty obligations - Iraq, Jordan and Libya; and in turn in our economic position through a possible whittling away of our oil interest. But the effects of such a reduction, whether it was achieved through an agreement with Egypt or not, would not be so far-reaching, nor so immediately catastrophic, as a substantial cut in Germany. It seems clear, therefore, that if we are to make a substantial reduction it must be in the Middle East.

5. A substantial economy in overseas defence expenditure is likely in effect to be achieved if, as the result of an agreement with Egypt on the lines of our recent negotiations, we withdraw our forces from the Canal Zone and redeploy a smaller garrison elsewhere in the Middle East. If we fail to obtain such an agreement, two alternatives remain open to us:-

(a) to stay on in the Canal Zone;

(b) to announce that we intend to vacate the Canal Zone and redeploy elsewhere in the Middle East the forces which we consider necessary; making it clear to the Egyptians that any interference will only delay our departure.

6. If we chose alternative (a), we should have to maintain our position against growing Egyptian hostility. This would remove all possibility of effecting a reduction and would very probably end in involving an increase. Our choice is therefore between reduction and re-deployment after or without an agreement.

7. It is desirable on strategic grounds that we should obtain an agreement which would provide for satisfactory maintenance of the Canal Zone base and give us the right of re-entry in war. The Chiefs of Staff consider that, wherever we deploy our Middle East forces in peace-time, a base in the Canal Zone area and entry through Suez and Port Said are of great value for the support of forces in the Middle East in war.

8. If we began withdrawal soon, we could (if all went well) cut our Middle East forces from the present equivalent three divisions to one armoured division supported by eight squadrons of aircraft deployed in Cyprus, Libya, Jordan and possibly Israel by mid-1955. To this armoured division would be added the technicians which we should leave in the Canal Zone if we obtained

an agreement with Egypt. These forces (less the technicians) are the bare minimum - or even less - necessary to enable us to meet our obligations under our Treaties with Iraq, Jordan and Libya and the 1950 tripartite declaration on Israel. The retention in these areas of forces of this size however would not alone (i.e. without a base in the Canal Zone) suffice to convince the countries of the Middle East that we are able to protect them in the event of aggression by the Soviet Union; and if we cannot so convince them, the chances of getting their co-operation in any form of Middle East defence organisation are slight.

9. We are however obliged, by financial stringency, (unless our whole defence policy is modified), to carry out the re-deployment referred to above. The damaging effects of this would be mitigated if we could obtain a satisfactory agreement with Egypt, since we might hope that the countries of the Middle East would, despite the reduction in our forces, believe that it remained our intention to defend the Middle East effectively. The mere fact that we had been able to reach a satisfactory agreement with Egypt would also redound to our credit in the Middle East. Our first aim must therefore be, on political as well as on strategic grounds, to obtain an agreement with Egypt.

10. If we fail to reach an agreement with Egypt, we must, unless we decide to remain in the Canal Zone, announce our intention to make alternative arrangements. These arrangements might be to re-deploy our forces and to carry out our withdrawal from the Canal Zone either -

(i) immediately;

or

(ii) by 1956 when the present Anglo-Egyptian Treaty is due for revision;

/or (iii)..

6371/102223

93-14

(iii) in our own time, and in our own way, adding that interference with our plans would delay their implementation.

Any of these courses must be expected to give rise to difficulties. The first is probably impracticable. Moreover, the announcement of it would be interpreted in the Middle East as a policy of scuttle. The chances of our obtaining the facilities required in connexion with our proposed re-deployment would be very slender.

11. If we adopted the second course, we should probably be harrassed by the Egyptians and we might in fact fail to meet the date we had announced.

12. If we took the third course, we should presumably try to convince world opinion that this was not a policy of scuttle. But the Egyptians would have little faith in our intention to withdraw and we must expect them to take measures designed to hurry such a withdrawal. We in turn might feel obliged to take counter-measures, and eventually we might find ourselves committed to intervention in the Delta. In this event we should probably be unable to withdraw our forces for a long time. Even if this did not happen, the chances of our obtaining fresh facilities in other Middle Eastern countries or even of retaining the facilities which we at present have would be much diminished. We must in any case expect Iraq to press for a revision of the Treaty including the abandonment by us of our present military facilities there; Jordan would find it impossible to grant us additional facilities; and even the retention of our facilities in Libya might prove uncertain.

13. It is obviously difficult to foresee exactly how events

/will.

0 371/102823

930

COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION

will develop if we withdraw from the Canal Zone without an agreement with Egypt, but we must expect our prestige throughout the Middle East to be shaken. Not only would this affect the military facilities we require in the various countries of the Middle East, but our position in the Persian Gulf, where we are fighting a battle against the encroachments of Saudi Arabia at present, would be undermined. Turkey and Israel would be disconcerted, for different reasons. The old Commonwealth countries, particularly Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, would be even more reluctant than they are at present to enter into definite commitments regarding the defence of the Middle East.

14. If we have to withdraw without an agreement, probably the third course mentioned in paragraph 10 would be best calculated to enable us to maintain our prestige in the Middle East. But it also carries with it the risk that Egyptian reactions might be such that in fact we should be unable to carry it out successfully, and might be faced with an indefinite commitment to maintain order in Egypt. Subject to these exigencies we should aim in fact to be out of the Zone by 1956 for the reasons which are examined in the following paragraphs dealing with the legal position.

10371/102843

93014

The Legal and Factual Position in Egypt in 1956

The Problem

15. Assuming that British troops are still in Egypt in December, 1956, twenty years from the entry into force of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936,

Are we legally entitled to stay on?

What would be the practical implications of staying?

Legal Position

16. The Foreign Office Legal Advisers have pointed out that there is no provision for terminating the 1936 Treaty, and that until 1956 negotiations for a revision of the Treaty can only be started by mutual consent of the Egyptian Government and Her Majesty's Government. If the question of maintaining our troops in the Canal Zone has not been settled by mutual consent before December 1956, under the terms of Article XVI of the Treaty either Egypt or ourselves can request negotiations, or, if the other party will not agree, insist on the matter being submitted for arbitration to the Council of the League of Nations, "or to such other person or body of persons for decision in accordance with such procedure as the High Contracting Parties may agree". The arbitration could not take place in the absence of agreement between Egypt and ourselves upon an arbitrator.

17. Our Legal Advisers have expressed the view that since Egypt has purported to repudiate the Treaty in 1951, Egypt would not be entitled to request either revision of the Treaty or arbitration in 1956. The Law Officers of the Crown do not accept this view, contending that since we did not elect to terminate the Treaty after Egypt's purported repudiation of it, the Treaty remains binding on both parties and can be reviewed only in accordance with Article XVI. At the meeting held under the chairmanship of the Lord Chancellor on June 10 of this year to try to resolve this difference of opinion, the Lord Chancellor upheld the view of the Law Officers of the Crown, but it was decided not to put anything definite on record at that stage.

(E) 1/10/80 S 7030/14

18. The Lord Chancellor and the Attorney General pointed out that since our legal right to maintain forces in the Canal Zone depended on the Treaty, we must maintain it integrally, not only as to rights under it but also as regards our obligations.

19. This would seem to point to a legal obligation upon us to accept arbitration if we had failed to reach agreement with the Egyptians by December, 1956, although it is difficult to see how the Egyptians can demand this arbitration as of right unless they are prepared themselves to invoke the Treaty, they have repudiated. In any case the arbitrator would have to be agreed between us and the Egyptians.

Practical implications of staying

20. A policy of maintaining our position in Egypt by force after December, 1956 would meet with little support in the outside world unless the state of tension between Russia and the West were at that time so bad that a strong case could be made out on military grounds. The question is still on the Agenda of the Security Council, having been there since 1947. We argued then that when once it was accepted that the Treaty was valid, Egypt had no right at that stage to negotiation for revision of the Treaty; the fact that the United Kingdom, as a matter of grace, agreed to enter into the negotiations for treaty revision in 1946, and the fact that these negotiations were unsuccessful, did not give Egypt a special right to bring the matter before the Security Council. Therefore the Security Council, in view of its duty to settle disputes in accordance with international law, and mindful of the principle of "pacta sunt servanda", should reject any applications made by the Egyptian Government. But after December, 1956, if we regard ourselves as bound by Article XVI of the Treaty, we can no longer maintain this position. We should therefore have to be prepared to face denunciation in the Security Council, and perhaps have to veto a resolution censuring our action.

20371/10033

9514

21. While we might, in such circumstances, expect at least moral support from Australia, New Zealand and possibly Canada, we could not count upon the support of the United States. We might be able to mobilise some help from the European maritime countries, if they felt that in the circumstances prevailing Egypt was menacing the freedom of navigation in the Canal and by then we had succeeded in organizing the projected Maritime Consortium. As against this, we could expect the Soviet Union to exploit the situation. There would be a very strong reaction from the other Arab States, and probably also from Pakistan (out of sympathy with a fellow Moslem country) and India. On balance therefore, it would do much damage to the international position of Her Majesty's Government, and we should have to weigh carefully whether the benefits accruing were worth it.

22. We should presumably have to maintain our military strength in the Canal Zone up to and beyond December 1956 at the present level if we were committed to a policy of defending our position there. In order to defend ourselves from Egyptian attacks and to save British lives in Cairo and the Delta, it might be necessary for us to occupy the rest of Egypt by force, or at least the main towns. There could be no certainty of our being able to withdraw again quickly after this had been done. The situation might degenerate into one where we were holding Egypt down militarily against a series of popular risings at a considerable cost to this country of men and money.

23. Events in the winter of 1951/52 have shown that the base could not be operated efficiently without the willing co-operation of Egyptian labour. Unless we were prepared, therefore, to rule with a rod of iron, the base which we had thus sought to preserve would not in wartime be the same desirable asset that it was in the previous two wars. There would remain a constant diversion of allied troops and materials devoted solely to the suppression of revolts in Egypt and the protection of the base installations from sabotage by the Egyptians

Conclusion

24. Our conclusion is that our best course is to strive for an
/agreement

agreement with Egypt. If this fails, we must recognise that our position, at least after 1956, will be extremely difficult to sustain and that in the meantime we shall not have been able to effect the economies which our situation demands. In these circumstances the policy of hanging on in the Canal Zone is not attractive and our best course would be to announce that we will make other dispositions in our own time and in our own way.

FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

December 11, 1953.

6371/102823

93014

Lord Rennell, but I take these vital interests from the Prime Minister's speech on May 11: the international waterway of the Suez Canal, including of course the shipping using it; the strategic base, and the British personnel left behind to look after that strategic base if and when the Fighting Forces are evacuated. I will examine those briefly in turn, but as a preliminary general observation I would say that under the proposed principles, owing to projected evacuation of the Fighting Forces these vital interests would be completely at the mercy of the present or any future Egyptian Government be it totalitarian, as at present, Communist, fanatical or some middle-Party or combination—which would probably be as good as anything.

I turn to the vital interests individually. Lord Rennell has already given a great deal of information about the importance of the hundred-mile Suez Canal through the Desert and the Lakes, and I can only dot the "i's" and cross the "t's," if he will allow me to do so. For the purpose of comparison, the 86 million tons net of shipping which passed through the Canal in 1952 compare with the 78,250,000 tons net which entered United Kingdom ports in 1951. That is to say, the traffic passing through the Canal is actually or little greater than the whole of the shipping using our ports. Thus has been fulfilled Lesseps's vision *aperire genibus terram*—to open the earth to the nations—and that peaceful function is still the most important. But I would add that in 1952 numerous naval units, large and small, and transports to and from the various theatres of war carrying 237,000 troops, mostly British and Allied, traversed the Canal; and, of course, the huge quantity of oil is also of great strategic importance. But, beyond that, I do not want to go into the strategic question because it might overload my speech. We might with advantage deal with that one day in one of our debates on Defence. As Mr. Donald Anderson, Chairman of the General Council of British Shipping, has repeatedly insisted:

"A carefully maintained and properly managed Suez Canal is vital now and always to British shipping and British trade to the East"

and I would add to that, international trade.

In the endless struggle with gales, fogs, sandstorms, the ever-trickling sands,

HL 73 D 13

breakdowns of steering gear and the human element, in order to secure a safe and speedy passage for ships whose size, draft, tonnage, and number is always increasing, the indispensable need is security for the personnel engaged, European and Egyptian, including pilots and experts and their wives and families, offices and communications of all kinds. They must have security. That security has in the past been ensured in the last resort by the British Forces stationed in the Zone. How necessary that is, as a deterrent and for actual protection, was strikingly demonstrated exactly two years ago, when the forces of disorder, under Egyptian Government stimulus, broke loose. Egyptian police protection failed, the Egyptian Army, for understandable reasons which it would take me some time to explain, stood aloof; and, but for the presence and efficiency of the British fighting Forces, the European quarter of Ismailia, where most of the people connected with the working of the Canal live, might, and very likely would, have suffered the fate of Cairo. My own room, which I usually occupied out there, for instance, had many bullet marks in it when I got back last year. Traffic through the Canal would unquestionably have ceased. I could explain that in great detail but, again, I think it would overload my speech. Then, of course, there is the incident of the mine which occurred at that time, as mentioned by the noble Lord, Lord Rennell.

For emergencies of that kind, the reported heads for a Treaty, given the withdrawal of the whole of the fighting Forces, make no effective provision. Neither do they provide any safeguard against an extension of the interference already exercised by Egypt over ships and cargoes destined for Palestine and other nations with which Egypt might be in dispute: it might be Great Britain, over the Base or the Sudan; or France over her North African Territories, or something of that sort. Another contingency which is not provided for is that at some future date an Egyptian Government, under some unpredictable internal or external pressure—and in that part of the world there are a great many internal and external pressures—might seize and occupy the Canal before the end of the concession in 1968. Their motive might well be the same as Mossadeq's, namely,

Reference: FO 371/102823

COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION

93014

1	
2	

QUALITY ASSURANCE UNIT

[Lord Hankey.] aggressive nationalism and to obtain the whole of the proceeds instead of the large part to which he was entitled.

Perhaps it will be argued that the provision, said to be included in the heads of agreement, for a declaration by Egypt of responsibility for maintaining and discharging her obligations under international conventions for securing free use of the Canal is appropriate and right. However, it is less important than it seems at first sight, because Egypt has for years been bound by the Constantinople Treaty of 1888 to preserve the free liberty of the Canal for the ships of all nations at all times, in peace no less than in war. In fact, this unilateral declaration, in evil hands that might be in charge, could serve as a pretext for seizing the Canal and its installations, nominally in order to facilitate her task. We cannot shut our eyes to such risks when we recall that only two years ago Nahas Pasha, in tabling the decess abrogating the 1936 Treaty, cited eighteen precedents for unilateral denunciation of treaties, several in recent times.

Now I come to the strategic Base. The reported heads of agreement do not offer any better security for the £300 million strategic Base, provided out of the pockets of the hard-pressed British post-war taxpayers, than for the Suez Canal. If the Suez Canal is exposed by the withdrawal of the British fighting Forces to grave risks, so is the Base in equal degree, since the guarding of the Base is to be entrusted to the Egyptian Army, if reports are correct. It is also difficult to believe that it can be maintained in an efficient state. According to reports, as the noble Lord, Lord Rennell, has mentioned, some 4,000 British technicians will be employed for seven years or so to overlook and supplement—I do not know whether it is 40,000; it used to be 60,000—Egyptians. Like the rest of the Egyptian population, these 60,000 men will have been exposed for months, if not years to this intensive and uncontradicted propaganda that we are a degenerate nation, and so forth. They will have seen our fighting Forces shouted out of the Zone and they will not forget that Egyptians who had served in the British Forces have been sentenced to death and other severe penalties. I ask your Lordships, what prospect is there for good teamwork in such conditions, especially

H.L. 73 D 14

as, according to common report, there will be a divided command, an Egyptian Commander-in-Chief and a British Technical Director? The prospect of friction will stand at a premium, and what incentive will these Egyptian workers have to maintain the Base in a state of efficiency for a foreign State which has been decried? Even the safety of our technicians will not be secured, not even if they are allowed to have small arms, because the Egyptian Army will have tanks, artillery and aircraft. Our technicians will be merely potential hostages in case of trouble.

I ask a crucial question: would the occupants of the Government Front Bench, or would any of your Lordships, be happy to see a son or a grandson serving in those conditions, particularly if times were disturbed, as in fact they are disturbed? Can the Government hope to obtain competent volunteers for this service and, in default, can they order men to undertake it? Is it not certain also that, even if the Egyptian Government accept this obligation in order to get rid of our fighting Forces, they will repent of it when they realise that responsibility for the Base destroys the neutrality for which, rightly or wrongly, they yearn? In fact, they are always pressing this point of neutrality. They could even use the same tactics towards the Base as they used towards the rest of the story: this cold warfare, this shouting campaign and all the rest of it. I suppose we shall be told that these and other risks will be safeguarded by arrangements for the return of the Forces in case of emergency. I am afraid the only emergency which has been mentioned in the public Press—there may have been other references, of course—has been a major international emergency, and there is understood to be a difference of opinion still as to the conditions.

All that discussion, however, seems to me to be sheer waste of time until someone has given an effective answer to the Prime Minister's comment on a similar proposal in Parliament, in 1946, which, with your Lordships' permission, I will read (OFFICIAL REPORT, Commons, Vol. 423, col. 774):

"The Great Power with whom we shall be in dispute would, of course, say to the Egyptian Government, 'We should regard any movement into the Canal Zone of British Forces

B371/102823

93014

an unfriendly act. Can anyone suppose that the Egyptian Government, confronted with this situation and not desiring anyhow to have British troops or air forces in the Canal Zone will not refuse permission for us to re-enter. . . ? Can one imagine the British Government in such a situation, when the dread issue of peace or war in a renewed world struggle, may be hanging in the balance, forcing the issue. . . ? It is a positive act, . . . an act of aggression, . . . an act destroying the last hopes of peace."

I have never been able to discover an answer to that, and I have asked a great many people. Well, my Lords, return in the eventuality of some hostile action by Egyptians, or some failure on their part to restrain the forces of disorder, would obviously be even more impracticable. I think it worth mentioning, that in making the same criticisms on our withdrawal from the Southern Irish ports in 1936, Mr. Churchill described it as an "improvident example of appeasement." That is exactly what some people are saying of our present policy.

Another defect in the prospective heads of agreement bearing on the same issue of withdrawal is that they do not provide against the danger which was so strongly felt by the late Mr. Ernest Bevin, and expressed in a speech in the same series of debates, if not in the same debate as Mr. Churchill's quotation in 1946, which, with your Lordships' permission, I will read. Mr. Bevin said this :

"There must not be a vacuum. If the Egyptian Government try to force a situation in which there is a vacuum—meaning that we have gone and that there is nothing there for security instead, regional defence or any other organisation—to that I can never agree . . ."

As I understand it, the prospective arrangements would provide a permanent vacuum. While we were wrangling with Egypt or the United Nations as to whether our forces are entitled to return, our enemy could have landed sufficient troops by air to put both the Canal and the Base out of action, and maybe to occupy the whole Zone. There must be enough British or equivalent armed forces to stiffen their Egyptian comrades in resisting air attack and, until Egypt has settled down, to deter the forces of disorder. I am sometimes told that none of these things would happen if we withdrew, because there would be no more difficulties with Egypt. We should be living in a fool's paradise if we believed that. Just think of all the possible sources of friction that remain—the position in the Base,

HL 73 D 15

the Sudan, the possible threat to Palestine—recently mentioned very forcibly in another place. Pan-Arab, and even Pan-African, ideas have been hinted at in recent Press correspondence: and, above all, there is the complicated eternal political position in Egypt, which, as my noble friend Lord Rennell has said, has been the bane of most these settlements, as your Lordships can find if you study the words spoken in Parliament to explain it.

Now I come to my conclusions. Appeasement is too great a gift to Communist and other hostile propaganda. Any sign of weakness or retreat is seized on and spread all over the world. The results of Palestine, Abadan and the rest, however inevitable our actions were at the time, are a factor to-day in the situation in Egypt and the Sudan, in Kenya, Malaya, British Guiana, and in the unrest in many parts of the Colonial Empire. After the final evacuation of Abadan on October 1, 1951, a writer in the Egyptian Wafdist newspaper *Al Balagh* (at that time the Government newspaper) commented:

"This is an example that we must follow in our struggle with the British. It is only the weak whom they oppress. Their prestige in the East is finished."

I have shown how faithfully Egypt has followed that advice. I have two or three other quotations to the same effect. This propaganda is widespread, and it is a natural thing for Communists and critics to act upon it.

If we cannot hold the lifeline of the Empire and Commonwealth until we can get a better settlement, what can we hold? By evacuation, far from concentrating our forces elsewhere for better training facilities or amenities, far from solving our manpower problem, or our political problems in the Middle East or elsewhere, far from saving money, our forces will be scattered more and more all over the world to stop the rot. We shall not be worth while as an Ally. We shall deserve the fate of Akhnaton, the pacifist Egyptian Pharaoh, of whose reign his biographer records:

"In the space of a few years Egypt had been reduced from a world power to a petty State, from the richest country known to man to the humiliating position of a bankrupt kingdom."

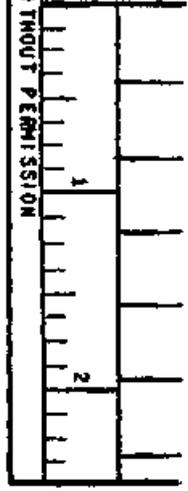
That is not my idea of a policy for the Elizabethan Age in Coronation Year. We must study more closely the firmness of our predecessors, of whom I can give a

References - FO 371/102823

COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION

LIBRARY RESERVE WILLIAM

93014



[Lord Hankey.]
 long list, in very similar circumstances. I could mention also a long list of Prime Ministers of the Dominions who have recorded the importance they attach to the Suez Canal, up to and including the meeting in June, 1953, when the Prime Ministers of the Commonwealth recognised

"the international importance of the Suez Canal and of the effective maintenance of the military installations in the Canal Zone."

I noticed that on August 11 Dr. Malan, in the South African Assembly, reflected the same idea when he said:

"We have undertakings in the Middle East, and it is essential for us that the Suez Canal should remain open."

My Lords, the time is not ripe for a sudden withdrawal of the whole of the British fighting forces. We must be absolutely firm on that. Reduction, I agree, is infinitely desirable, though I know the difficulties. But it must be gradual, tested in stages by trial and error. For the moment, the talks should be suspended and the offers we have made withdrawn. When Egypt has become sufficiently stable to justify *de jure* recognition, and realises that we too have a public opinion which insists on the fulfilment of our international commitments, and when she adopts a genuinely friendly attitude, a fresh start can be made. A friendly attitude is the essential point. We shall never get anything until we get that. Even if we have to wait a bit, I feel that it will be worth waiting for. It may not necessarily be very long, but in the meantime we shall have to continue, as so many British Governments have had to do so many times, to stand on the Treaty of 1936, with such gradual reductions of forces, unilaterally I suppose, as from time to time may be deemed safe.

4.40 p.m.

VISCOUNT ASTOR: My Lords, it is with great trepidation that I venture to address your Lordships for the first time. I venture to do so on this important topic only because it was my fate during the war to spend nearly two and a half years on the banks of the Suez Canal, on the staff of the Admiral who dealt with all problems of the maintenance and functioning of the Canal, of its defence against possible land, airborne, mining, bombing and other attacks. I think that in the speeches one has heard about the Canal there is sometimes shown a slight lack

of appreciation of the help which was received from the Egyptian Government and people during the war. I can speak from personal experience of how we got it, from the Military Governor at the top, through the Egyptian police, right down to the constables, the Frontier Force, the customs, the telephone and telegraph services, the railways, the junior Canal Company employees of Egyptian nationality, and the labour of the docks. Unless we had received their active and friendly co-operation—as we did in full measure—we should never have been able to maintain the Middle East campaign.

When the most serious attack of all came, the mining of the Canal, my particular job was to spot where every mine fell—quite a task on a dark night, along a canal extending over a distance similar to that from, shall we say, London to Birmingham. And if we did not spot accurately where a mine fell—and once or twice we did not—a ship was blown up and the whole function of the base came to an end. At first we had the Brigade of Guards on this job. They could be spared for only a short time, however, and the job was then taken over by the Egyptian army. They went at it enthusiastically; in fact they were so keen to shoot down Italian machines that we had to take away the rifles from half of them, to make sure that they would spot the mines, rather than shoot at the machines—and, be it remembered, they were supposed to be neutral. After some months I worked out statistics relating to the percentage of accurate reports received, and I found that the percentage of accurate reports from the Egyptian Army was exactly the same as the percentage from the Brigade of Guards.

The whole anti-aircraft defence of the Fleet at Alexandria was dependent upon the Egyptian Army, though they were supposed to be neutral. We all had the happiest relations with their forces, and I feel sometimes that the British Government and British historians have been somewhat unappreciative of the help and co-operation which we received from Egypt in the war, and the good will which was shown to us. It is tragic, from the point of view of people like myself, who enjoyed throughout those very difficult days the helpful co-operation of Egyptian Government officials and personnel, to see this lamentable deterioration in the

6371/102823

93014

every places where we used to go unarmed—except, perhaps, for a 12-bore gun with which to shoot snipe. When one remembers the good will and prestige we had during the war, I could follow Lord Rennell in quoting from the same play of Shakespeare:

"O how withered is the garland of the war."

Why has this deterioration in the British position occurred? The noble Viscount, Lord Stansgate, and the Government of which he was a member, must accept great responsibility for some of the developments—though some preceded that period—and if I venture to go back in history it is not to apportion blame, but to see what we can do now to remedy the position. After Alamein had been successfully won, lack of imagination was shown in not getting our troops out of the citadel at Cairo and the Kasr-el-Nil barracks, and there was slowness in getting our troops out of Cairo and back to the Canal Zone. Then, as I have said, there was our lack of appreciation of Egyptian co-operation in the war. But above all, there was the lamentable story of Palestine, the disastrous wobbling of the British Government of that period, and our desertion of our responsibilities to the local inhabitants, whose rights we were pledged to observe under that Mandate, and the desertion of our responsibilities for the Holy Places of Christianity which we left to be fought over.

I find it hard to understand how Lord Stansgate can talk about morality. I have never been able to see the morality of the policy of getting out and allowing the peoples there to fight it out. There was a lot to be said for a policy in Palestine of partition and compulsory transfer of population. There was nothing to be said for getting out and allowing this ghastly refugee problem to be created, which has since bedevilled our relations with the whole Middle East. We did not win the affection of the Jews: they felt that they had won in spite of us. We did not win the affection of the Arab world: they felt that they had lost in spite of what they thought were our pledges. Incidentally, if we are talking about the Treaty, the 1936 Treaty pledges us to go to the help of the King of Egypt if he is ever involved in war. I did not notice that Lord Stansgate and his Government rushed to help King Farouk during the Palestine Campaign.

H.L. 73 D 17

We have suffered a loss of face with the Arab world, which has since felt that in the eyes of the United Nations possession is nine points of the law; and, no matter what Count Bernadotte and Doctor Bunch or other arbitrators said, whatever Israel could manage to grab, they could hold on to; and that their influence in Washington was great enough to prevent them from being pushed out again. Now, one million Jewish refugees have been pushed into Palestine, and nearly a million Arabs have been pushed out, leaving a refugee problem as big and as severe as before, only more concentrated, and involving a people less organised, less rich, and probably less public-spirited in their readiness to help each other. There lies the danger of Communism in the Middle East. Israel may be as Left wing as they like, but so long as they depend for their food during ten months of the year on private and public subscriptions from America, they are not going to go out of the Western camp.

I venture to suggest that our relations with the Arab world are the crux of the matter, and the Suez Canal problem only a part. Our aim must be to get strong, settled, united and prosperous Arab nations. We must go back to the war conception of dealing with this region as a whole. One of the tragedies of the Palestine episode was that it meant the virtual break-up of the Arab League. Now we have the ridiculous situation of Kuwait with more money than it can spend, and Jordan with no money but all the refugees. Her Majesty's Government must take some responsibility for this return to parochialism. During the war we had the Offices of the Minister of State and the Middle East Supply Centre, which dealt with the area as a whole, and did economic planning for the area as a whole. What happened? It was killed after the war by the Socialist Government. I do not blame them; of course, it was the Foreign Office who killed it, because the Foreign Office loathe all regional organisations. They always have done and they always will. One cannot blame them, they are intelligent, conscientious chaps, and they like to make a decision in their own rooms. If a decision is made either below them in Cairo or in a supra-national organisation in Luxembourg, they cannot help feeling that it is not being made as well. So we whittled down our

Reference:-

FO 371/102823

COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION

CUBBY ROOM VIEW

93014

6371/102823

93014

[Viscount Astor.]

entire regional organisation, and a minor official of the Ministry of Health replaced a member of the War Cabinet. If we are to tackle this refugee problem and win back the good will of the Arab world, I venture to suggest seriously to the Government that they should consider again having a Minister of Cabinet rank on the spot to view that important area as a whole.

They should also revive the Levant Consular Service in some form. Nowadays the Foreign Office like the all-purpose, utility diplomat, who can go anywhere and do anything; who can be First Secretary in Paris, Commercial Secretary in Caracas or Resident in Aden. But in an area like the Arab world, the advantage we had in the past of having specialists who spoke the language fluently, understood the people's mentality and background was very great, and we saw how, in Iraq during the war, there were times when the all-purpose diplomat got into trouble and the Foreign Office had to send for the Arab specialist again. We made a great mistake in abolishing that trained corps of Middle East specialists, and the Foreign Office might well think over that again. They must also make sure that the people they appoint in the Middle East, if we are going to try and revive our prestige by policy rather than by force, should be people of strong personality. It is not always the clever bureaucrat and scholar who makes the best person in the Arab world, but the man of outstanding personality and presence. If we get the machinery right, then we can tackle the refugee problem over the years. Once we have done that, the main obstacle to good relations with Israel, and good relations between this country and the whole Arab world, will have been taken away. Once we have done that, we can look forward to peace with Israel, though perhaps the Government of Israel will have to accept that they must give some compensation for the loss of private property. They are receiving compensation from Germany for the evils done to private Jews, so they also might give compensation for the hardship inflicted on private and in-offensive Arabs who have lost their ancestral homes in the Middle East.

If we are to adopt this policy of reviving our prestige, it is essential that we should maintain the closest co-operation

with the United States. In the war we saw the lamentable results of the divergence of French and British policies in this area. They diverged at the top and at the bottom, and both the Jews and the Arabs were remarkably skilful in playing off the French and the British, one against the other. They will do the same with the Americans and ourselves, unless at all levels we maintain a close co-operation on the formulation and execution of our Middle East policy. I think that with our experience of President Eisenhower during the war we may hope for loyal co-operation.

I apologise to your Lordships for having diverged from the point. Returning to the Canal, I feel that previous speakers have been inclined to confuse the Canal Convention with the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty. The Anglo-Egyptian Treaty was to safeguard the Canal against outside attack. It did not give us the power to station troops on the Canal to see that the Egyptians obeyed the letter of the Convention. These are completely different things. I know that we can prolong the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty by various devices in the text. But are we in such a strong legal position when, in fact, we have 80,000 men there, and the Treaty allows us only 10,000? Can we afford to sit and wait? There is no maintenance in progress on all the buildings and barracks in the Canal Zone. No roofs are being repainted; no gutters repaired. No money is being spent, and there is a deterioration of buildings and equipment and of morale. Are we quite sure that, with a hostile Egypt, we could keep the Canal working? From my humble experience in the war, I venture to doubt it. Is this Base, perhaps, like Singapore, a base which would have been good in the conditions of a previous war, but having little relation to the tactical and strategic necessities of any war in the future? In the end, Singapore fell, because its water supply had fallen into hostile hands. Every drop of water in the Canal Zone comes from the Nile, and it could well be diverted or tampered with in various ways. Do we believe that if a Russian ship left a delayed action atomic mine in the harbour of Port Said, we could continue to keep the Canal going? I cannot help believing that there are some grounds for thinking the Canal Zone might be as dangerous a trap as Singapore proved to be in the last war.

[Lord Winster.]
 Command. Five days before those proposals were presented, and although the Egyptian Government had been warned that they were on their way, Nahas Pasha tabled the unilateral abrogation of the 1936 Treaty. At that time there was a General Election here, but in spite of such outrageous behaviour, offending every canon of diplomatic procedure, the new Conservative Government said that they were still willing to negotiate. They could hardly have bent backwards further—not that I for one moment criticise them for doing so. I think that fact does show the spirit in which we have approached this matter. Let us bear in mind that we are not endeavouring to defend, or defending, selfish British interests in Egypt alone. It is an international interest. The International Convention at Constantinople in 1886—

LORD HANKEY: 1888.

LORD WINSTER: I am sorry; I am adrift by two years. I thank the noble Lord for the correction. The International Convention guaranteed freedom of passage for all nations at all times, in peace and war. That guarantee may be to some extent intertwined with our strategic affairs and I do not say for one moment it is not. I say it is the predominant interest, and our Governments have shown it so. The international side of the matter was emphasised by the Prime Minister in his speech of May 11, this year. He said:

"The duty . . . has fallen on us, and us alone, of safeguarding the interests of free nations in the Middle East and also preserving the international waterway of the Suez Canal."

Indeed, we have done that. During the riots of 1952 and the bestial violence which accompanied them, only the British Navy kept the international traffic through the Canal going. Throughout its history the Canal has in fact been kept open thanks to the presence of British forces. Even apart from that, experts have agreed that the Egyptians alone could not operate the Canal.

I hope I have not quoted at too great length, but I think the facts I have quoted are essential to an understanding of the situation. They are all, I believe, completely fundamental to the point. At this time, however, all who are concerned

H.L. 75 D 22

with British responsibilities and our interests in the Canal Zone are living in a state of considerable anxiety. Since Neguib seized power, he has consistently demanded that every British officer should quit the Zone. All I have heard, to my dismay, has left me under the impression that evacuation has already been conceded in principle, and that the only points left at issue concern how many European technicians may remain; for how long; who shall control them, and whether they may wear uniform or dungarees and "sneakers."

May I ask the noble Marquess one question: have the Dominion Governments been consulted at all stages on this matter? If we are to withdraw from the Zone, I fear that, following our retreat from Abadan, the blow to our world prestige will be a very heavy one, and there will be no minimising it. The concession under which the Suez Canal Company operates the Canal expires in 1968; but if British forces are withdrawn, that Company will replace the British forces as a target for abuse. The campaign will at once start an agitation for terminating the Company's concession. Neguib will then be in a position—if he is still in office—to levy toll on the world's trade. Abadan was bad enough, but it was, at any rate, mainly a British concern; the Canal concerns the world. I have no doubt that to get British forces withdrawn Egypt will promise anything; but history does not show that Egyptians have any great respect for Agreements which have ceased to be convenient to them.

Neguib has not been asked to do anything derogatory to Egypt's dignity. On the contrary, he has been invited to assume joint responsibilities which would give Egypt a world status to which, perhaps, her past history, and especially her past military history, do not entitle her. It is a very brittle and difficult situation, but I do not think we have much to fear, provided that we are firm and at the same time, as we always have been, perfectly reasonable. I do not think that Neguib's position is very strong. He reminds me of the story of the little dejected-looking man who was seen following up an unruly mob during the French Revolution. A friend said to him, "Whatever are you doing in this?"

FO 371/102823

93014

"Why are you here?" He answered, "I must be; you see, I am their leader." I feel at times that Neguib's position gets more and more like that.

But although, as I have said, I view these events with some dismay, I do not view them entirely without hope, since I saw some words which were used by the noble Marquess, Lord Salisbury—whose absence through illness to-day we all greatly regret. In speaking to the Conservative Party at the recent Conservative Conference at Margate, after warning his hearers that he could not say very much on the subject, to my great surprise he went on to make what I regarded as some extremely significant remarks. He defended the retention of the 70,000 troops in Egypt on the ground that (I am quoting from the Report in the *Daily Telegraph*, which is usually so accurate in these matters, but if there is a slip I apologise in advance to the noble Marquess):

"... in the view of our military advisers, that was the minimum with which we could maintain our position if faced by an unfriendly Egypt. This problem is different from Abadan."

Lord Salisbury went on:

"... there was a point beyond which we could not go. If the Egyptian Government cannot come so far to meet us we should have to face the necessity of a permanent continuation of the present position."

Those words seem to me to be quite inconsistent with any idea of evacuation of our forces from the Canal. I have always noticed that the noble Marquess, though he speaks firmly and strongly, never stretches his arm out any further than he has authority to do. On this occasion, moreover, his words were specifically endorsed by the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Eden. If I were called upon to give advice to the Government I should say, "Go back to Mr. Bevin: you are not going to come out of the Zone leaving a vacuum behind." In that connection, I would bear in mind the words of the Prime Minister, that:

"Once out, you will not be able to get back, whatever the crisis."

I would go back to Mr. Morrison and his very generous remarks and proposals. I would reaffirm those, and I would stand by what Lord Salisbury said when he was speaking at Margate.

H.L. 73 D 23

5.28 p.m.

THE EARL OF CROMER: My Lords, it is with considerable qualms that I rise to address you for the first time. I do so in the hope that the indulgence to newcomers for which your Lordships' House is well known will be extended to me in full measure, for I shall surely need it. I thought it appropriate that the first occasion on which I rose to address your Lordships should concern Egypt. We have had little information on the purposes or the progress of the negotiations which are taking place in Cairo. Therefore it may be hoped that it is not too late for the considered opinion of this House to be taken into account before the negotiations reach their final stage. In newspaper articles which have been published in this country—and there is little else to guide us—various suggestions have been made as to what terms will be acceptable to both sides. Which of these suggestions are most likely to be correct, if any, I should not care to guess; but in most of these articles it seems to be assumed that British troops will be withdrawn from the Canal Zone. This impression may be due to the reticence of those responsible here who, by their silence, have allowed inspired leakages of information in Cairo to take more than their fair share of publicity. This would not be the first time that such an occurrence has taken place in the long history of Anglo-Egyptian negotiations.

I would remind your Lordships that British intervention in Egypt, both civil and military, was most reluctantly entered upon. It was only on the insistent request of the Khedive that Her Majesty's Government appointed a Commissioner to the Egyptian Commission of Public Debt in 1877, from which grew British intervention in Egyptian civil administration. Again, it was only when Egypt was in an almost complete state of anarchy after the mutiny of the Egyptian Army—and not the first mutiny at that—that British troops were landed in support of the Khedive and defeated the mutineers.

During the period of British occupation of Egypt, from 1882 until the end of the First World War, Western ideas of Government and administration were gradually introduced and superimposed upon what was a backward Middle East country. Until this time it should be remembered that all the positions of

FO 371/102823

COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION

93014

Co 37/102823

93014

[The Earl of Cromer.]
authority in Egypt were occupied by other than Egyptians—for the most part, by Turks. It was, therefore, necessary not only to introduce a new system of administration and Government but also to educate and train sufficient Egyptians to make the system work. It is one thing to transplant Western ideas and systems which suit the Western mind and temperament to a Middle Eastern country and to install sufficient European officials to make them work according to the Western idea of how they should work; it is quite another thing to educate and train sufficient of the indigenous people of the country for them even to want to put Western ideas into practice, let alone to instil in them the ability to make them work.

Gresham's Law certainly applies in political thought. Debased popular ideas will always tend to supplant the sounder but less popular principles, and this is particularly so in a case where the educational standard is very low. There is, after all, a constant conflict of this nature in the highly civilised democracies of the West, in spite of the firm foundations on which the political edifices of the West are built. Where a large superstructure is erected on shallow foundations in sand, when the scaffolding is removed the building will start to slip before it eventually tumbles. In Egypt, the complaint is made that the scaffolding was not removed quickly enough and that, in any event, the contractors have left some of their equipment in the garden. Of course, this argument is not based on facts. It was, as has been mentioned this afternoon, Great Britain that freed Egypt from Turkish suzerainty, and it was after the Egyptians had failed to agree to the proposals of the Milner Mission who, by unilateral declaration, declared Egypt an independent sovereign State.

In spite of British recognition and appreciation of Egyptian aspirations for complete freedom, it took from 1919 to 1936 to negotiate a mutually acceptable Treaty and this probably would not have been possible, even then, had it not been for Egyptian fears of Mussolini's intentions in North Africa. Had British influence been withdrawn in 1919, as Egyptian extremists wanted, it is not improbable that the Egyptian question, in more or less the same form as it was known in the

latter half of the last century, would have been recreated. If nothing else was learned during the years between 1919 and 1936, the one lesson which stands out is that it is quite impossible to come to any satisfactory arrangement with the Egyptians in haste. The Treaty that was signed in 1936 was, as your Lordships are aware, signed by the leaders of the Government and by the leaders of all the chief political parties in Egypt, and was ratified by a freely elected Egyptian Parliament with an overwhelming majority. In spite of this, the 1936 Treaty was unilaterally denounced. To-day, there appears to be a suggestion that British troops should be withdrawn with the right of re-entry in certain circumstances. In view of the renunciation of the 1936 Treaty which, I should remind your Lordships, had wide popular support in Egypt—to such an extent, in fact, that on the news being announced of its signature, British troops were cheered in the streets by the Egyptian populace—surely it is not possible to rely on any arrangements which may now be made with a Revolutionary Government contingent upon the most indefinite circumstances.

The terms of the Treaty of 1936 are well known to your Lordships, but I am surprised that the point has not been brought out so far that the Treaty does not expire in 1956: it is perfectly specific in the Treaty that it comes up for review, and there is a large body of opinion in this country which does not seem to be aware of that fact. In Article 8 of the Treaty, although the Suez Canal is described as an integral part of Egypt, it is also described as a universal means of communication and as an essential means of communication between the different parts of the British Empire. I should like to remind the noble Viscount, Lord Stansgate, that, although he may not consider India and Pakistan as part of the Commonwealth to-day, our friends in Australia and New Zealand are not to be disregarded. Until such time as both parties agree that the Egyptian Army can, by its own resources, defend the Canal against an aggressor, then, as we know, British troops have a perfect right to be in the Zone. Surely, it cannot be said that the Egyptian Army is to-day fitted to defend the Canal against the only major Power who might wish to attack it.

FO 371/102823

93014

It is fashionable to-day to say that, in this age of air transport, the sea communications of the Suez Canal are not of the same importance as in years gone by. To a limited degree that argument certainly may be true, but the noble Lords, Lord Rennell and Lord Hankey, have both produced figures which portray very graphically the enormous importance of the Canal in communications to-day. In this connection, it should not be forgotten that the Canal was built by French inspiration and for the most part with French money, in the face of considerable opposition from Her Majesty's Government of the day; and when Great Britain decided to intervene in Egypt, she assumed responsibility for safeguarding the Canal. To make any agreement with Egypt affecting the Canal without prior consultation with the French Government would be highly irresponsible.

In 1936, it was considered that 10,000 troops and 400 pilots, together with an appropriate number of ancillary personnel, were adequate to safeguard the Canal against aggression. To-day, it is reported that there are between 70,000 and 80,000 British troops in the Canal Zone. I think it is agreed by everybody that it is impossible that such numbers of troops can be maintained there indefinitely. But surely this should not be necessary. British troops are not in the Canal Zone in time of peace to defend the Canal against attack by the Egyptians. We want the Egyptians as our partners in the defence of the Canal against an aggressor. In fact, far from wishing to violate Egyptian sovereignty, we want Egypt to play more fully her part in international affairs which, after all, was always the ultimate aim of British influence in Egypt. Egypt's refusal to accept the 1951 proposals was, I consider, an indication of her political immaturity, and showed that as a nation she had not yet learned the lessons which the Pashas, as individuals, had most unwillingly had to learn: that privilege carries with it responsibility. The leaning towards neutrality which is reported in *The Times* to-day is another indication of complete unreality.

In view of the international character of the Canal, it is, of course, logical that the responsibility for the defence of the Canal should be placed on an international basis under which Egypt, as

H.L. 73 D 25

would be her ambition, would play a full part. Until Egypt comes into an international organisation such as N.A.T.O. or a Middle East Defence Organisation, I am of the opinion that Her Majesty's Government would be failing in its responsibility if the British troops were withdrawn from the Canal Zone. British troops are in the Canal Zone as of right, and we should be failing in our duty if we threw over our responsibility for the empty satisfaction of being able to say that we have reached an agreement with Egypt.

5.42 p.m.

VISCOUNT SIMON: My Lords, I deem it a very special pleasure to be allowed, I am sure on behalf of the Whole House, to congratulate the noble Earl on the thoughtful maiden speech which he has just delivered. He bears an honoured name, and when one thinks of the past connections of our country with Egypt we have reason to be proud of the list of names of men of our own race and stock who rendered immense public service to Egypt. Baring and Boyle, Wingate and Allenby, Lloyd, Russell Pasha, and Lampson—there is a list of names of men who outside our Island have contributed all that they could towards the progress of the Egyptian people. I am particularly glad that the noble Earl made the reference which he did to the Treaty of 1936. It was signed not only by the leaders of every Egyptian Party, but also by a long list of British names, in order to show that it was an Agreement reached with the full assent of representatives on both sides. I entirely confirm his account of the effect of the Treaty. I signed it, at Mr. Eden's request—and I never signed a document of which I was more sure that I understood its meaning and effect.

I rise, not for the purpose of joining in this general debate, but merely to raise two points, to each of which I hope the noble Marquess who speaks for the Foreign Office may make some reply. The first point is this. I read in the public Press that our Ambassador to Egypt is just returning there, and it is indicated that he is likely to take up again the discussions in which he was previously engaged, and carry on a certain negotiation. The topic of negotiation is said to be the settling of certain preliminary points, and in some quarters this is sharply distinguished from negotiating

Reference:-
FO 371/102823

COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION

93014

LC 371 / 102223

93014

[Viscount Simon.]
the Treaty itself. I want to put this question, and I hope the noble Marquess will be good enough to consider what answer he can give: what is the purpose of negotiating what are called "preliminary points," in order, I presume, to reach agreement, unless these points, when agreed, are to enter into the Treaty itself? Take, for example, the discussion as to whether there should be 4,000 technical people left in Egypt, and whether they should wear uniforms. That, I believe, is regarded as one of the preliminary points. Supposing that the discussion on this preliminary point is carried forward and agreement is reached, is not the inevitable effect that the decision on that point becomes part of the Treaty itself? Therefore, I get no comfort from being told that the Ambassador is not at present engaged on behalf of the British Government in negotiating the Treaty but only in adjusting certain preliminary points, because I cannot see how that preliminary discussion and negotiation is related to the Treaty which it is said at present is not being negotiated at all. If my noble friend the Marquess of Reading can explain this to me and satisfy me, I shall be grateful.

The other observation I venture to make is of a very general character. I would venture to put to the noble Marquess this question: is not the real lesson of the history of diplomacy in the last fifty or sixty years that, whereas in the old days when a State entered into a Treaty the obligations of it were regarded as being like commercial obligations, which bound the parties, a great change has now come over the scene? I recall having read that in 1872 there was an award in an arbitration between this country and the United States of America, which was called the Alabama Arbitration. The award was against this country, and was for the payment of over three millions of money. Mr. Gladstone in that day insisted that we must pay, and the reason we must pay was because this country had entered into a bargain with the United States and we were bound to stand by our bargain.

If I go back in my own memory to the first days of the first German War, I recall that vast numbers of citizens in this country supported the Government in their determination to go to war. Why?

Because they felt that this country was a signatory to a Treaty, and they were not prepared to repudiate a "scrap of paper." That was the old tradition, and I think upon the whole it was well observed by the practice of our country. In international affairs the proposition was truly asserted. The international law used to teach (I dare say it is in the books now) that a Treaty bound, because *pacta sunt servanda*—promises are to be kept. And the practice in the old days complied with the Biblical declaration about:

"He that sweareth unto his neighbour, and disappointeth him not:
Though it were to his own hindrance."

That was the ancient view of contracts made between State and State. Does not the noble Marquess think that in this last half century the sense of obligation has been frittered away? It may well be that the originator of this new view was Hitler himself. If Hitler made a pact of non-aggression with his neighbour, it was always the kiss of death, for he regarded the making of Treaties as a mere matter of policy.

Lord Winster referred just now to Abadan. I had responsibilities in negotiating the Treaty with Persia which was broken by the Persian Government. That Treaty contained a clause which bound the Persian Government, by its own signature, neither by its Parliament nor by its Executive to seek to nationalise the oil installation. That Treaty was ratified by the Persian Legislature. It was shamefully disregarded later on when it suited Persia. It appears to me that, unhappily, we have reached a position where the fact that something is promised in a Treaty is no sort of guarantee that the promise will be carried out. This observation of mine has a bearing on this question, because, I understand, we are invited to accept proposals for the withdrawal of British troops because the Treaty we are going to sign with Egypt will contain a promise that we are to be allowed to go back. I am afraid I regard such a promise in such a Treaty, whatever Government makes it, as open to some question. I referred just now to the "Alabama" case and how we paid the money. There was a subsequent arbitration with Albania, in which we claimed that they had no right to strew mines in the Corfu Channel and blow up our destroyers, and the award was in our favour. Has Albania paid?

6371/102823

93014

A NOBLE LORD: No.

VISCOUNT SIMON: I therefore feel that it is dangerous to build upon promises which are so easily disregarded. The present Prime Minister, I believe, has pointed out, in this very case of Egypt—I think the noble Lord, Lord Hankey quoted it—that Egypt would be in the greatest difficulty in fulfilling such a promise. Suppose some major Power, at the time, was threatening war, and suppose that Egypt was willing to keep her promise and let us go back: what would happen if the major Power informed Egypt that they would regard the re-admission of British troops as an unfriendly act? Those are the considerations which make me anxious as to what is now going to happen. I put the greatest confidence in the Prime Minister, Mr. Eden and their colleagues. But the value of debate in your Lordships' House is that, when we are filled with a reasonable anxiety, we should state the reasons for that anxiety, plainly and firmly and courteously. Those are the reasons why I am anxious about this situation, and why I am glad that my noble friend, Lord Rennell, should have raised this debate to-day.

VISCOUNT STANS_GATE: Before the noble and learned Viscount sits down, since he has emphasised—and we agree with him—the importance of the plighted word, would he make any observation on the fact that we plighted our word to restrict our troops to 10,000 and we are now occupying Egypt with 80,000?

VISCOUNT SIMON: I do not want to discuss that, but I think that the plain meaning of the Treaty of 1936 is that we are not required to leave the situation there when the Treaty itself expires, but that a new Treaty should be negotiated; and the number of troops now there, I presume, are there because it is felt that to discharge our other obligations under the Treaty such a force is needed. I do not offer an opinion on a military question, but I hope it is the case, and I believe it is the case, that my country is observing its Treaty obligations as I wish other people would observe theirs.

VISCOUNT STANS_GATE: May I draw the noble and learned Viscount's attention to the Treaty? It states quite plainly that the force which the King Emperor can maintain in the vicinity of the Canal

H.L. 73 0 27

shall not exceed a land force of 10,000 men. The noble and learned Viscount speaks about keeping our word: why do we not keep our word in this matter?

LORD KILLEARN: May I perhaps intervene upon that point? Is no regard to be paid to the attacks on British subjects and property in Cairo? Such attacks undoubtedly must call for reinforcement of our Forces. Surely, whatever the limitation in the Treaty, there is full justification for reinforcement of our Forces when there has been deliberate attack on the life and property of British subjects.

VISCOUNT STANS_GATE: What the noble Lord is saying is that the situation is such that we should invade Egypt independently of the Treaty, in order to protect our nationals.

LORD KILLEARN: I am saying "reinforce" not "re-invade."

VISCOUNT STANS_GATE: Reinforce in defiance of Article 8?

5.59 p.m.

LORD VANSITTART: Like the noble and learned Viscount who has just sat down, I intervene in this debate because my anxiety exceeds my reluctance; but in view of the thoroughness with which the ground has been covered already, I shall be extremely brief. I wish to confine my remarks to one point, which carries rather further something which the noble and learned Viscount has said. One essential point is that this proposed new Treaty should be considered in direct conjunction with the Sudan Treaty. In the Sudan Treaty we went far to mollify the irreconcilables. I fear, quite frankly, that we may have compromised the progress achieved in over fifty years by the finest and most selfless body of men in the world—the Sudan Civil Service. I fear that we may have let down the Southern Sudanese, because these primitive tribes know very well that they are not fitted to hold their own with the scheming politicians of the North, and they would have liked us to stay on for quite a considerable time, at least for ten years afterwards. I am afraid, also, that the Sudanisation of the whole administration in three years may prove to be a chimera, because the men are not there, and no miracle can make them.

Anyhow, those concessions were made, and what was the result? The Egyptians

Reference
 FO 371/102823
 COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION
 93014

10371/102 223

93014

[Lord Vansittart.]

flouted and violated that Treaty at every turn. The Foreign Secretary himself has given some particulars. Her Majesty's Government have protested, I think twice, but certainly once, without the least effect, because the tricksters had never the faintest intention of keeping their word. We have had one lesson. Are we going to court another with our eyes open? Doubtless we thought that acquiescence in the Sudan would bring sweet reason in Suez. But it has brought nothing of the kind. It has brought a snarling Anglophobia which goes so far as to hang and imprison for life those who have served their turn to us. I see from this morning's newspapers that "the Dancing Major" has even made violent anti-British propaganda out of our attempt to help his sick son. The noble Lord, Lord Rennell, alluded to what I might call the "Jelly boys." Until quite recently I thought that they were the sort of safe-blowers whom the Lord Chief Justice condemned to thirty-nine years in jail; but the Jelly Boys occupy a much superior social position in Egypt. The noble Lord, Lord Rennell, mentioned that an ex-Minister had pleaded as a virtue that he had been concerned in endeavouring to blow up a British ship, in order to block the Canal, but he omitted a significant feature, which was that when the ex-Minister had said that, the presiding judge bobbed up and said, "Look here, you are not going to get away with that. The real 'Jelly Boys' are me and my mates in the present Administration; and don't you forget it." I think your Lordships might also be unwise to forget it.

In the face of all that—and this is my chief apprehension—we are being asked to trust again. I cannot recollect offhand any parallel situation in diplomatic history. I have known heaps of broken Agreements—in fact, in dealing with totalitarians, I have never known anything else; and this is a totalitarian régime in Egypt: there is no doubt of that. What I have never seen before is a dupe doing what we have been doing over the Sudan Agreement, asking, in the full process of dupery, in mid-market and at midday, to be deceived again. I should like to refer to what the noble and learned Viscount, Lord Simon, said in relation to Hitler, and in that connection may I recall a phrase that I used over

H.L. 73 D 28

and over again in the 'thirties?—that those who ask to be deceived must not grumble if they are gratified. That, I fear, may prove to be our experience. I have never believed in concluding treaties when we know in advance that they are going to be broken. These are not Treaties they are traps. Therefore I feel that there is a great deal of force in what the noble Lord, Lord Rennell, said, when he suggested that the negotiations might at least be deferred until there is a little better evidence of good faith and good will. I do not intend to detain your Lordships longer, because you have already heard so much wisdom of others; but I think that point is at least worth bearing in mind.

6.4 p.m.

LORD KILLEARN: My Lords, the hour is getting late. I think your Lordships will agree that it is proved very desirable to have this debate on Egypt, rather than submerge the issue in a general debate on foreign affairs, as was originally suggested. Apart from anything else, it means that we cannot be told later on that we were slow in putting forward our point of view and our objections. As we know, our Ambassador is on his way to his post, and Parliament does not meet again until January 19, so I am sure your Lordships will agree that it is a good thing that we have this opportunity of making our views clear before we depart for the Christmas holiday. I spoke on Egypt in the foreign affairs debate on April 23 last. I still adhere to what I said then—that is, in paraphrase, that a friendly Agreement with Egypt is most desirable, highly desirable, but not at the cost of sacrificing anything which is vital to us; nor should it be at the dictation of the other party. From what we have seen in the newspapers (and they are our source of information—almost entirely from the Cairo end, may I say) it is not negotiation but dictation which we are experiencing.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS (VISCOUNT SWINTON): What is?

LORD KILLEARN: The terms which apparently, according to the Press, we are engaged in discussing. The reason I cannot put them specifically is that we at this end have not been told what they are.

CS 71/102823

93014

There are three main points in connection with this question of Egypt with which I should like to deal. The first is that there is a tremendous misunderstanding and ignorance about the date of the termination of the Treaty. It is astonishing how few people realise that the Treaty does not automatically lapse on December 22, 1956. It does nothing of the kind. It is true that it has been denounced, but we have denounced the denunciation, so to speak—we have said that we disregard it; we do not admit it. The terms of the Treaty are perfectly clear. No doubt your Lordships have them in mind. I have a copy of the Treaty here, but I do not propose to inflict the whole of it on your Lordships. I will put its contents shortly. The first Articles establish the alliance. Article 8 establishes the conditions under which our troops are to be in Egypt without the infringement of Egyptian sovereignty. The Annex to Article 8 lays down how many troops we can have there: 10,000 land forces and 400 pilots; together with the necessary ancillary personnel, apart from civilian personnel—clerks and so forth.

Finally Article 16 prescribes how the Treaty is to come up for revision and the way in which it is to be revised. I would call your Lordships' attention to the all-important proviso to that Article, which says:

"It is agreed that any revision of this treaty will provide for the continuance of the Alliance between the High Contracting Parties. . . ."

So far from the life-span of the Treaty coming to an end in 1956, the actual text provides for the continuance of the Alliance in some form or another. I know perfectly well that the Treaty is not necessarily the final authority; but at the same time I think it is very unfortunate, to put it mildly, that the general public have not the foggiest idea of when this Treaty does or does not expire and, entirely misunderstanding the situation, are firmly convinced that it naturally and automatically expires in 1956. It does not. I am sure that is correct, though I am not a lawyer: I think that will be borne out by other and better authority.

Bearing on this point, I have been looking up my papers, and I would remind your Lordships that in 1947 Egypt took the Treaty to U.N.O., in the hope of having it modified, or abolished. The

H.L. 73 D 29

matter came before U.N.O., and on that occasion we were represented by Sir Alexander Cadogan. I should like to quote from this small volume I have here, which I commend to your Lordships. It is Information Paper No. 19 published by Chatham House, entitled "Great Britain and Egypt 1914-51." From page 102 I take this summary of what Sir Alexander Cadogan said before the Council of Europe, when representing this country. He pointed out

"that the 1936 Treaty could legally be revised before its expiry in 1956 only by the consent of both parties. The Egyptian argument that the removal of the Axis threat to peace had altered the circumstances of the Treaty was an invocation of the *rebus sic stantibus* doctrine which would find no support in any international tribunal.

"As for the assertion that the presence of British troops in Egypt was contrary to the United Nations Charter, the wording of the resolution of 14 December, 1946, which Egypt had invoked had made an exception for the presence of armed forces by consent 'freely and publicly expressed in Treaties . . . consistent with the Charter.' He"—

that is, Sir Alexander Cadogan—

"demonstrated by a series of quotations that the Treaty had in 1936 been almost unanimously welcomed in Egypt; and the rule *pacta sunt servanda*"—

to which the noble and learned Viscount, Lord Simon, has just referred—

"was a primary principle of international law."

Then, later, Sir Alexander Cadogan spoke as follows—this is the official report from U.N.O., and it is worth quoting, as it is of some interest. He said:

"Nokrashy Pasha replies that the Security Council must not be 'stymied by the legal rights of the parties.' It"—

that is the Council—

"must put aside Treaty rights whenever the party to a given Treaty says that it dislikes its obligations enough to be ready to allow its people to create a menace to the peace rather than accept them. Egyptian politicians have been stirring up feeling against the Treaty with the deliberate intention of gaining their wishes. It is they who are creating the threat to the peace if there is any."

Those remarks apply with full force now. As your Lordships will remember, the Egyptian appeal to U.N.O. in 1947 was talked out, so I need not refer further to that matter.

I feel that I have adequately covered the Treaty position, and I will get on to my next point, which is the question of the reliability of the other side—what I

Reference:-

FO 371/102823

COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION

93014

1	
2	

60371/102023

43011e

[Lord Killearn.]
might call their credentials. The example of what I might call the bad faith (there is no other term for it) over the Sudan has already been brought up by the noble Lord, Lord Vansittart; in any case, it has been fully brought before Parliament by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. There can be no question about it. I am going to put to your Lordships what, so far as I know, is a new point in connection with the 1936 Treaty itself. The noble and learned Viscount, Lord Simon, and I were both signatories to that particular document, as also was the noble Earl, Lord Halifax, who is not present to-day. I make bold to say that anybody who signed, negotiated, or had anything to do with that Treaty had no other idea in mind but that, in the event of war, each country should come to the assistance of the other as a co-belligerent. There can be no doubt about that.

First of all, with whom was that Treaty signed? As the noble and learned Viscount, Lord Simon, has said, it was signed with a properly constituted, properly elected and representative Egyptian Government. It was counter-signed, if I may so put it, by the heads of every existing Egyptian political Party, who were fully competent and had established credentials. What happens? War looms up. The Egyptian Prime Minister is kept fully informed of developments, of threatening danger, and all the rest of it—as, of course, he should be. Then the time comes when war is on us. What happens?—I speak here with personal experience, because I was the fellow who had to do the job. The Egyptian Prime Minister comes along, and what does he say? He says, "Well, yes, but there are certain points we should like clarified"—I cannot even remember what they are. Home goes a telegram: "They are making these little difficulties. Can I meet them?" The answer is, "Yes, certainly." The telegram comes in very late at night, as I remember only too well. So I set out to Alexandria. I walk down this colossal corridor, with the room at the end where the Prime Minister is. I say to him: "Excellency, I have brought you the assurances you want." He says: "Well, I have just had a telegram from London." When I express some surprise, he says: "I have just had a telegram from London

describing a conversation between the Egyptian Ambassador and the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. In this conversation the Egyptian Ambassador elaborated the advantages which would lie in the neutrality of Egypt, as thereby Egypt would be able to serve as a bridge between you and the Americans." I need not say that I was considerably taken aback, but I said: "Anyhow, that does not really affect the matter: I have brought you your assurance." To "cut the cackle" (if I may use a vulgar term), the Egyptians were obdurate, and Egypt did not come in as a co-belligerent. That is historical.

The point of the incident I have put before your Lordships is this. We are now dealing with somebody who has no constitutional authority, so far as I know; whose régime, so far as we can judge within six months, or less, has gone back on an Agreement which they signed. Yet the Government, apparently, are going to sign with them something which seriously modifies the existing position. Even with a properly constituted Egyptian Government, look what happened. In such conditions are we wise in going ahead and dealing with the present régime? The facts I have given to your Lordships are quite accurate, and are on the official file. My point is that even a fully constituted, properly elected Egyptian Government, backed by all the political Parties, still goes back on its word. That is irrefutable, and it is not a good augury. So far as I know, this has not hitherto been revealed. Of course, on the question of the actual position, all we have is from the newspapers, and therefore we may be talking nonsense. On the other hand, it seems generally agreed that there are three particular points at the moment. One is the right of re-entry—I believe a horrible word called "reactivation" has been used. That has been dealt with already, and, in the words of the Prime Minister, I should think fully disposed of. I believe there is jibbing over whether war with Turkey should be adequate or not. There is the question of the duration. I am told it would be for seven years, but I do not know whether that is right or wrong. Lastly, there are the 4,000 technicians who apparently are not to be uniformed and not to be armed.

RO 371/102823

93014

I do not want to abuse the patience of your Lordships, but you will remember that our policy was outlined as long ago as 1924 in that celebrated dispatch—might I perhaps quote it to you?—from Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, writing as Foreign Secretary to the High Commissioner in Cairo. He said:

"It is no less true to-day than in 1922 that the security of the communications of the British Empire in Egypt remain a vital British interest and that absolute certainty that the Suez Canal will remain open in peace as well as in war for the free passage of British ships is the foundation on which the entire defensive strategy of the British Empire rests. The 1888 Convention for the free navigation of the Canal was an instrument devised to secure that object. Its ineffectiveness for this purpose was demonstrated in 1914 when Great Britain herself had to take steps to ensure that the Canal would remain open."

Then comes a phrase already quoted:

"No British Government, in the light of that experience, can divest itself wholly of its interest in guarding such a vital link in British communications. Such security must be a feature of any agreement come to between our two Governments, and I see no reason why accommodation is impossible given good will."

I devoutly trust that Her Majesty's Government will not commit themselves to the proposal to leave 4,000 unarmed technicians. I have to-day had a letter from a British subject of long experience and knowledge, and I cannot refrain from reading an extract because it does bear on this question. He said:

"Whatever the terms of any Treaty with Egypt, and if and when any Egyptian Agreement is reached, unless we are physically present (i.e., troops) there is virtually no prospect of the terms being carried out. The fact that an attack on Turkey is not acceptable as a case for re-occupation shows how utterly unrealistic they are. To hope that 4,000 technicians will be allowed to maintain the Base to our satisfaction is an absurdity. I need not describe to you—

he knows that I know—

"the procedure and methods likely to be adopted by the Egyptians to make the situation impossible. You will probably agree that in a very short time the 4,000 would find themselves unable to cope and we should have to withdraw them—possibly even rescue them—no doubt after we had perforce delayed action long enough for the Base greatly to deteriorate. It would then be a matter for abandoning the Base or rescuing it."

I saw another eminent member of the British community the other day, and he said very much the same thing. It is not very encouraging.

Your Lordships might well say: "It is all very well to get up and talk like

H.L. 73 D 31

this, but what course would you suggest?" That is a very natural question. I personally still hanker for the proposal to set up in all good faith a Middle East Command. I think it was a thousand pities that Nahas Pasha so summarily threw that down and trampled on it, obviously without even reading it. I should still have had hopes—they may be vain and ill-placed—that we might have got something of that kind, something which would save Egypt's face and, if you like, save our face, and establish what we want in the way of adequate security. I do not know, but it may be that we have gone too far. That would be a way out. Short of that, I myself should be tempted to announce that we were going to get back gradually to strict Treaty limits as regards numbers, *et cetera*. If, in the meantime, there were attacks—well, as the Prime Minister said in another place the other day, if the troops are attacked they know how to attack back. That is how I feel about it. Let me conclude. There are times for nations as well as individuals to take vital decisions, when it is a question of deciding between the natural instinct to prefer a quiet life and a resolve to stand on your rights and take the consequences. I believe this to be one of those occasions, for in my view what is at stake is not only our whole position in the Middle East but our position in Africa and our position in the whole world.

6.28 p.m.

EARL JOWITT: My Lords, this has been a most interesting and, indeed, remarkable debate—remarkable by reason of the fact that we have had two of the best maiden speeches I have ever heard. No one listening to the orators would have had the least idea that they were not accustomed to debates in our House, although I think it was Disraeli who said that persons who succeeded in one House nearly always failed in the other. I am happy to think that we shall hear both these noble Lords on many occasions dealing with matters such as this in the charming way they did.

I do not intend to keep your Lordships for more than a moment or two, but I thought it might be useful if I stated—although my noble friend Lord Stansgate has already stated quite plainly—what is the position of the Party with which I

Reference:-

FO 371/102823

COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION

93014

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	
14	
15	
16	
17	
18	
19	
20	
21	
22	
23	
24	
25	
26	
27	
28	
29	
30	

HULL & BARNETT PRINTERS

LC 371/102823

93014

[Earl Jowitt.]

am associated. I propose presently to initiate a few propositions in order to find out whether there is any difference between the view which the Government are taking and the view which we are taking. At the present moment I do not think there is. Much has been said about the dreadful conditions of to-day. Of course, it is a most deplorable thing that, instead of this strict observance of the principle *pacta sunt servanda*, it is only too common to find that they are not observed. That is a most deplorable feature of modern life. It happened occasionally in ancient times, too. That being so I ask: So what? Are you then going to say, "Treaties are no good; do not let us bother about Treaties any more. Let us bstride the world like a Colossus and then we shall be all right." But the trouble is that to bstride the world like a Colossus takes a great deal of money and a great many soldiers. To my mind, we have got to be realistic about this matter, and the prime merit that I found in the maiden speech of the noble Viscount, Lord Astor, was that he was being completely realistic.

What, then, are we to do? Are we to base ourselves in Egypt on a situation which we have arrived at by agreement with the Egyptians, or are we to base ourselves on a situation arrived at by force, whether they like it or not? Do be realistic and consider which it is to be. I find it a little difficult myself. It is not possible to place reliance on the Treaty, because the Treaty said quite plainly that the number of people we may station there was not to be above 10,000, and we have got about 80,000, because, as the noble Marquess, Lord Salisbury, said at Margate, it was found that that number was necessary to maintain ourselves safely there. It is a little difficult to rely upon a Treaty which says that the number must not be over 10,000 when you have got 80,000 there.

I find it difficult also to rely on the proposition that the Treaty does not come to an end. The provision in Article 16 is like an agreement to make an Agreement in the future. Therefore, what is the position of Her Majesty's Government? I think it is this. It is a mere platitude to say that the peace and

security of the Middle East is of the utmost importance to us, to the Commonwealth and to Western defence. That is obvious. I believe in trying to be a realist and I believe that that peace and that security can best be secured at present by friendship and co-operation between Britain and Egypt. That seems to me to involve that a Treaty, an Agreement, should be negotiated between the two Governments, taking care of certain points. The first point, I think, should be this: that the base itself and the stores it contains should be satisfactorily maintained and carried on, though for this purpose it is not necessary to continue the presence of British armed Forces. Indeed, if we are realists, we must recognise that, in present circumstances, the presence of these troops is a dangerously unsettling factor, causing feelings of resentment and hostility on the part of the Egyptian people. It may be deplorable that that should be so: I think it is deplorable; but if we are realists, we know that that is a fact. I think we shall probably find that Egypt is quite unwilling to extend the right for these troops to remain there.

What, then, must we do? We have to secure, so far as we can, that in case of war or imminent danger of war, we must have immediate and effective reactivation (that is the word, I suppose, one must use, though I know how horrible it is) of the Base secured. There must be a plain statement that the right of passage for all ships of all nations on their lawful occasions through the Suez Canal should be guaranteed. And, lastly, the Tripartite Agreement made in 1950 between the United States of America, France and the United Kingdom, the object of which was to secure the maintenance of peace between Israel and the Arab States, should be reaffirmed. But, as my noble friend, Lord Stansgate, has said, we must be careful to see that the balance of defence forces between Egypt and Israel is not disturbed so as to constitute a new threat to Israel, thereby endangering the whole peace of the Middle East. Believing, as I do, that those are the broad principles which Her Majesty's Government are going to try to secure, I have to tell them that if they go on these lines which I understand they are taking, they will have the support of Her Majesty's Opposition.

FO 371/102823

93014

3.35 p.m.

THE MINISTER OF STATE, FOREIGN OFFICE (THE MARQUESS OF READING): My Lords, this debate on the Motion moved by the noble Lord, Lord Rennell, has, I feel, been of considerable interest, and, I cannot help thinking also, of considerable enjoyment to a certain number of noble Lords to whom it has brought some degree of restoration to full health from the disabilities under which they have been suffering in the recent past. It has enabled them to get off their respective chests a weight of repressions and inhibitions, the departure of which I trust they will soon find greatly to their benefit. There have been two notable maiden speeches, as the noble and learned Earl, Lord Jowitt, said: one from a noble Lord whose title to speak for the first time on a Motion of this kind is best designated by the title which he himself bears; and the other from a noble Lord who has occupied a place, and has had great experience, in another place and who is now, obviously, going to bring to the debates in this House much valuable counsel and experience.

I am greatly obliged to the noble and learned Earl, for the speech which he has just delivered. I think there is little, if anything, between us on the main lines of the subject. The debate has at times ranged rather wide—and I think it was right and inevitable that it should. In my view, it would be wrong to look at the problem that we are discussing to-day, merely within the narrow limits of a discussion on Egypt itself, or within a limit which is perhaps less narrow, the context of the Middle East. It is a much wider problem than that; it is part of the problem of our relation to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation; it is part, indeed, of the world-wide pattern of our commitments and of our responsibilities. It is in that light, and not in the more parochial atmosphere with which it has been surrounded by some noble Lords, that I suggest we should look at and discuss this subject.

I think it is true to say that one of the main preoccupations of those concerned with foreign policy in these days is a preoccupation which may not have been equally present to Foreign Secretaries, and their assistants and coadjutors, in the more spacious and wealthy days of the past. To-day, one of the main problems of all foreign policy in this

H.L. 78 E 1

country is to match our resources and our responsibilities to the greatest advantage; and that test is one which we have endeavoured to apply in arriving at the lines which we are following, and propose to continue to follow, in regard to this particular subject. We have at the moment a considerable number of men under arms—larger, I suppose, than any number we have ever had before in peace time. We have men in Malaya; we have men in Kenya; and elsewhere overseas, though not engaged in active operations, we have a considerable force in Egypt. There, we have 80,000 men. Is it not obvious that, both on economic and on strategic grounds, it would be to our advantage to reduce the numbers of those men and the consequent expense involved if—but only if—we can do so by means of an Agreement which meets our essential requirements?

I go back for a moment to the quotation from my right honourable friend of the Prime Minister's memorable speech of May 11, in which he referred to this particular topic and said (OFFICIAL REPORT, Commons, Vol. 515, col. 886):

"Naturally, we do not wish to keep indefinitely 80,000 men at a cost of, it might be, over £50 million a year discharging the duty which has largely fallen upon us, and us alone. . . ."

He went on:

"If agreeable arrangements can be made to enable this latter service and also the solid maintenance of the strategic base to be discharged by agreement with Egypt, it would mean a great saving of our men and money."

So, obviously, it did; and although that was six or seven months ago, the situation has not materially changed. We should still wish for an Agreement, provided still that we can get that agreement on satisfactory terms. It is, I think, important that at this stage we should be quite clear, and your Lordships should understand, what it is that we are at present endeavouring to do. My noble friend Lord Rennell who moved this Motion devoted a good deal of time—though not by any means an excessive amount—to an interesting study of the situation with regard to the Suez Canal, and also with regard to the question of the Nile Waters. We are not, in the discussions which we are having with Egypt at the moment, trying to revive the Suez Canal Convention. We are discussing the Suez Area base. We are attempting in those discussions to try to

Reference:-

FO 371/102823

93014

COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION

EMILY DENVER WILLIAMS

1	
2	

6271/102823

93014

[The Marquess of Reading.]

find out, by comings and goings, and talks in the normal way, whether there is sufficient agreement between us on the fundamentals of the problem of our future relations to lead us to think that we can get a Treaty which would be satisfactory to us and equally satisfactory to the other side—because it is no good having a Treaty which is satisfactory to one side only. Those preliminary conversations, of course, are often—it is by no means unique—the most difficult part of the negotiations. Whether that proves to be the case in this particular instance, time may show.

My noble and learned friend Lord Simon found himself in some difficulty in understanding what was meant by the talk of "Heads of Agreement." It is not, I think, a matter of such difficulty to follow, because what we mean, and what we are trying to do, is, as I say, to start by seeing whether we can arrive at what I think is not unknown in similar circumstances in law as "Heads of Agreement": agreement on the main principles; and if we can get to that stage, then it will be necessary to fill up the inevitable gaps which have been left in dealing with those agreements alone, and to pursue the matter on different lines until, at some stage, it takes on, as we hope, the actual form of a Treaty. There is, I think, nothing sinister or very difficult to understand in the particular procedure which has been followed, a procedure which was followed, if my recollection is right, at the instance of the Egyptian Government, who said that they would prefer to conduct the negotiations on that basis, rather than have a more formal full-dress discussion in the early stages. That is what we have done and, with certain interruptions, we have been making progress.

There has been an hiatus now for some time, but the Ambassador is on the point of returning—I think, in fact, he has actually returned now—and we shall see whether it is possible to resume. The return of the Ambassador leads me to this slight digression. Two noble Lords have made some capital out of the fact that our recognition of the Egyptian Government is, so far, only *de facto* and not *de jure*. If it is any satisfaction to them—I am not sure that it will be—with the return of the Ambassador who will then present his credentials, that will constitute a *de jure* recognition. The Egyptian

Ambassador here has already presented credentials, so that the mutual steps will then be complete.

The noble Lord who opened this discussion, pleaded, although he realised the expense, in men, materials and money, of keeping a large force in Egypt, for what he called the maintenance of a police force. The noble Viscount, Lord Stansgate, also made some reference to this idea. It is one which appeals to a certain number of people, but if it means keeping the present number of people for the Base as it stands, and if the Base as it stands is not considered as usable, or likely to remain usable, with a smaller number, then I cannot understand what part in the defence of that area a police force—which must anyhow be a skeleton force, compared with the forces that we have now—can play.

VISCOUNT STANSGATE: I did not make that suggestion.

THE MARQUESS OF READING: I did not suggest that the noble Viscount did. I said that he made some reference to what my noble friend Lord Rennell had said in his opening speech. These negotiations on the basic position have, as I said, been going forward. I do not propose to-day, although reference has been made to them on a somewhat speculative basis by a certain number of noble Lords who have spoken, to enter into any of the details of the terms which are being discussed. I think that at this stage of the negotiations it would be unwise and improper so to do. That does not mean that I have any fears of revealing anything that is being discussed. It simply means that, when you are negotiating, it is an act of folly to disclose everything that is being talked about, because you bring all sorts of outside complications in and make the whole matter more difficult.

I confess, having listened to a number of noble Lords' speeches during this debate, that I was rather surprised at the sort of suggestion which came up time after time: that in some way, if we entered into these negotiations, we should be weakening British prestige in that part of the world. I should have thought, and I should have imagined that noble Lords would have taken the same view, that British prestige was reasonably safe in the hands of the present Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and the Minister of Defence; and I confess that with me that

FO 371/102823

93014

argument carries very little weight indeed. The Base is a very large organisation and it would be a mistake, if we needed it again in time of war, to wait until that war arrived before we did our best to make some arrangement to take it over again. That has been the basis upon which we have been proceeding with these negotiations. We must know in advance what the position will be if a moment comes when the Base has to go through that ugly-sounding process of being reactivated in time of war.

A number of your Lordships have taken up points with which I will try to deal very briefly in passing. The noble Lord, Lord Rennell, was disturbed because no offer was made to the Sudanese of some new form of condominium which, as I understand, should be an Egyptian-British-Sudanese combined condominium. One reason why no such suggestion was made was that it was reasonably clear, long in advance, that the Sudanese would never have looked at it. It is the express wish of all Sudanese to have their own representative institutions, through which they themselves should gradually assume control of the government of their own country and decide for themselves on their own future, and any suggestion of re-establishing even a tripartite condominium would surely have been regarded by them as a retrograde and not a progressive step. The noble Viscount, Lord Stansgate, dealt with much of the history from fairly intimate experience of a great deal of what had happened. There is only one passage in his speech upon which in particular I should like to take him up, and that was where he talked about there being nothing more colossal than the failure of our policy in the Sudan. I think one should be perhaps a little restrained and hesitant in talking about the colossal failure of our policy in the Sudan. All that the elections which have just taken place have done has been to set up a Legislature in the Sudan. What comes later, and at any time in the three years that the Sudanese so command, is the step which will lead to self-determination.

VISCOUNT STANSGATE: Would the noble Marquess allow me to say that what I meant was that the candidates who stood for us were defeated, but the candidates who stood for Egypt were victorious—and I have not the least doubt that

the presence of the Lincoln bombers in Kenya made its contribution to that result.

THE MARQUESS OF READING: My Lords, if I may suggest it, it would perhaps be wiser not to talk yet about the candidates who stood for us and the candidates who stood for Egypt, but about the candidates who stood for different parties of Sudanese who have their own future to work out when the time comes. I think the noble Viscount was also concerned with the position of Egypt in regard to Israel. That is a point which we have to keep very much in mind, and that we fully recognise. But, again, what we are discussing here is the problem of the Suez Base, and although I agree that it might have repercussions on a wider scale, still we are not for a moment forgetting that that tripartite declaration to which this country and the United States and France put their names is in existence, and that that is not only a guarantee of the position but is also a prohibition against an arms race being entered upon. We have every intention of seeing that that agreement is preserved from both these points of view.

Some of the speeches which have been made this afternoon have dwelt upon our departure from Egypt and have suggested that the whole area will be left unprotected, that there will be nothing and nobody there and that we are thereby abandoning our rights and our duties. My Lords, why assume, that even if we did, by agreement, move out of the Canal Base, it means that we are going to disappear from the Middle East? If we moved out, one of the objects might well be to redeploy our forces. I have said nothing, and I do not think noble Lords would find anything elsewhere in any other speeches on this subject, to indicate that the intention is to surrender either our international or our Commonwealth obligations in that part of the world and to move right out of that area. Yet a number of noble Lords who have spoken this afternoon have seemed to indicate that they thought that that was the next step. I think the noble Lord, Lord Winster asked me a question in regard to the position of the Dominions. The Commonwealth Governments have been kept closely informed of the course of these negotiations, and indeed, from time to time, certain of them have offered advice and counsel in regard to the

FO 371/102823

COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION

93014

10371/102823

93014

[The Marquess of Reading.]
matter to which we have always been very glad to listen to.

On or two noble Lords took up another line. They said: "You are only appeasing the Egyptians. All that is going on is that you are being dictated to in Egypt." They are taking the line that we were out only to conciliate the Egyptians. My Lords, if we had been content to appease (whatever that word means in that context) or to be dictated to by the Egyptians, we could presumably have done that last April, when the discussions began. But, as it is, we have continued these discussions from April until now, with various intervals when relations were a little chilly, and we have continued them because, although we wanted to get agreement in the end, if we could get a proper one, we were not prepared either to appease, or to be dictated to by, the Egyptians; and to say now that all the negotiations have shown is a desire to appease is surely a complete contradiction of the position. I think I have dealt with the first of the points raised by the noble and learned Viscount, Lord Simon, as regards the Heads of Agreement. The noble and learned Earl, Lord Jowitt, I thought dealt very effectively with the second point.

A number of noble Lords who have spoken in this debate have said that we ought to stay where we are at all costs. Others have said: "You have chosen the wrong moment: you ought to wait until a suitable moment occurs: you ought to break off your negotiations for the moment, and wait patiently until the time comes when you can resume negotiations with the Egyptians in a better atmosphere, when the Egyptians have become more friendly and amiable and forthcoming." I wish I felt that that was a probable happening. For my own part, so long as the present situation continues I am afraid that I do not see that change in the relations coming unless we come to some satisfactory agreement with the Egyptian Government. And in the present circumstances, to wait for the situation to improve seems to me, unfortunately, to mean waiting for something that is not very likely to occur.

There is, of course, in many of the countries of the Middle East, at the present moment, an outbreak of what we are often tempted to call "nationalism."

H.L. 73 E 4

It is epidemic in some of those countries, and we hope that it will not become endemic. However little we may like it, however poor an opinion we may have of it as a force, we cannot disregard it. We cannot treat it like a tiresome insect, which can be brushed away with the hand, and go on our way undisturbed. It must be treated seriously. We cannot just attempt to stamp it out by violence or other means. We do not consider that it would be right, or indeed possible, to take the line of trying to suppress a movement of this kind or forcibly to eradicate it. Therefore, we hope that, if we arrive at the kind of Agreement which we have in mind, we shall produce a situation in Egypt not dissimilar from situations which we have produced by following not dissimilar policies in other countries. We once had a Mandate over Iraq. We have gone from Iraq, which is now an independent country; but still our relations with that country are of the friendliest. We made an undertaking during the war with Libya. Libya is now an independent country, and we have recently had the gratifying situation in which she has, of her own free will, as an independent country, entered into an arrangement with us. The making of those arrangements is a great deal firmer assurance for the future than any of the, perhaps, more obsolete methods which some people might, from time to time, wish to adopt.

It is said that it is impossible to enter into an agreement with this particular Government of Egypt. It is said that they have done this, and that they have done that. Certainly we have had some unattractive experiences of their activities in the recent past, and I must just pause to say this. I saw a report, to which some reference has been made to-day, in which it was indicated that one member of the Egyptian Government took the view that we had allowed a British doctor to treat a child of his only as a matter of subtle policy and intrigue. My Lords, whatever the limits nationalism may attain, medicine, fortunately, remains international; and if it was possible for a British doctor to attend to that particular child, it was willingly done in the name of science and humanity, and not obscurely done as a matter of subtlety and intrigue.

FO 371/102823

93014



The whole of the basis upon which we have acted is, as I have said, that it is a better policy to try to conclude an Agreement with the existing Government of Egypt. Although we have had to make protests about the Sudan elections, it is worth remembering that this was the first of all the Governments with which we have tried to deal in recent years that had sufficient sense of realism and courage—although there had been agitation in Egypt in the very recent past, and, indeed, expressed determination not to consider any conditions which did not recognise the Sudan as part of the Kingdom of Egypt—to say: “We are not going to persist in that determination,” and to say, at a later date, “We should like to discuss the question of an Agreement with you on the Canal Base.” If we are going to carry on our international relations, we have to do it by means of agreement. I suggest to your Lordships that in discussing the earlier stages of this Agreement we have been and are fully justified.

May I now, after various digressions, come back to the actual Resolution which is upon the Paper. The noble Lord who moved it drafted it, no doubt intentionally, in very wide terms—so wide that although I may, and indeed do, disagree considerably with the content of a number of speeches which have been made in support of the Resolution, I can accept it in the form in which it stands upon the Order Paper. Indeed, to reject it, might be taken to imply that Her Majesty's Government do not propose to maintain, in regard to Egypt, a position which is in our estimation, “consistent with our commitments and responsibilities,” whereas the maintenance of such a position has been, is, and will remain, the essential basis upon which our discussions with the Egyptian Government proceed.

But I would add this. The fact that I accept a Motion of this very general kind, will not hereafter entitle anyone, in this House or elsewhere, to seize upon some aspect of the situation which he may, in his own mind, choose to regard as one of our commitments or responsibilities, and to assert that, by accepting this Motion, I have agreed to accept any and every individual view of what is or is not consistent with our commitments

and responsibilities, and, therefore, essential to the maintenance of our position. As I think the House will agree, it is not for individual noble Lords, or others, to interpret to Her Majesty's Government their various versions of these commitments and responsibilities. It is the duty and the task of Her Majesty's Government to come to their own conclusions as to what those responsibilities and commitments are, and to take what action they consider necessary to uphold them. If an Agreement is ultimately reached, it will be one which, in the view of Her Majesty's Government, is consistent with those commitments and responsibilities, and it will then be for Parliament to say whether it accepts that view. I think it is scarcely necessary for me to add that in all their dealings with this matter Her Majesty's Government will be vigilant, zealous and resolute in safeguarding what in their judgment constitute the vital interests of this country and in discharging their manifold obligations to the free world.

7.11 p.m.

LORD RENNELL: My Lords, at this late hour obviously it would be out of place to comment on the many interesting speeches that have been made, whether I agree with them or not. Therefore I should like to say only this: that, for my own part, I accept fully everything that the noble Marquess has said in accepting the Motion. It can be the responsibility only of Her Majesty's Government to determine what their responsibilities and commitments are and how they can best be incorporated in whatever arrangements are come to in Egypt. I should like to leave this debate and this last day in your Lordships' House this season on the note which was echoed in the remarks of the noble and learned Earl and very much brought out in the remarks of the noble Viscount, Lord Astor, of how much most of us realise the value of the friendship of Egypt. We appreciate the services that Egypt has rendered to our cause and hope that whatever the negotiations and whatever the outcome of them, they will contribute to the renewal of those friendly relations which we have had in the past.

On Question, Resolution agreed to.

House adjourned at twelve minutes past seven o'clock.

Reference: FO 371/102823

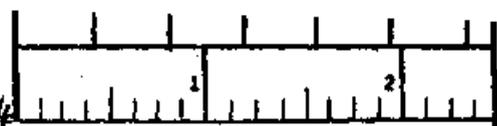
FULL-SCALE REELS

93014

COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION

FO 371/102823

930/6



COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION

House of Lords

P.W.

Parliamentary Question *Notion*

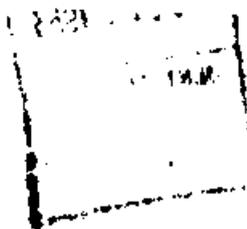
The Lord Rennell -- To move to resolve, That in any new arrangement with Egypt it is essential for this country to maintain a position which is consistent with our commitments and responsibilities.

Ans. to day named

16 DEC 1953

Q371/10282-3

93014



LODGE READING - END OF SPEECH.

This resolution is drafted, no doubt intentionally, in the widest terms, so wide that, even though I may disagree violently with the content of some of the speeches made in support of it, I can accept it in the form in which it stands upon the order-paper. Indeed, to reject it might be taken to imply that Her Majesty's Government do not propose to maintain in regard to Egypt a position which is in our estimation consistent with our commitments and responsibilities, whereas the maintenance of such a position has been, is and will remain the essential basis upon which our discussions with the Egyptian Government proceed. But I would add this.

The fact that I accept a motion of this very general kind will not entitle anyone here or elsewhere to seize upon some aspect of the situation which he may in his own mind choose to regard as one of our commitments or responsibilities and to assent that in accepting the motion I have agreed to accept any and every individual view of what is consistent with our commitments and responsibilities and therefore essential to the maintenance of our position.

It is not for Parliament to interpret its version of their commitments and responsibilities to Her Majesty's Government. It is for Her Majesty's

/Government

2.

Government to come to their own conclusion as to what they are and to take what action they consider necessary to uphold them.

If an agreement is ultimately reached, it will be one which in the view of Her Majesty's Government is consistent with those commitments and responsibilities and it will then be for Parliament to say whether it accepts that view. It is scarcely necessary for me to say that in all its dealings with this matter Her Majesty's Government will be zealous and resolute in safeguarding what constitute in their judgment the vital interests of this country and in discharging their obligations to the free world.

From: Air Commodore J.B.L. Wallis, O.B.E.

Enter G. 9

10371/102823

43014



AIR MINISTRY, (D.Admin.Plans)

PRINCES HOUSE,

KINGSWAY,

LONDON W.C.1.

TOP SECRET

MS. 1520/53/D.Admin.Plans | 1547

JE 1192 / 662

17 December, 1953.

Dear Mackworth-Young.

In your letters to Prince, JS.1192/567G of October 27th and JE.1192/574G of October 29th, you asked for departmental comments on your draft letters to our Delegation and to your revised draft texts of Annexes "A" to the Defence Agreement and of the three Exchanges of Notes.

Annex A

2. In your draft letter covering the revised draft text of Annexes "A" we would like you to annotate the reference to "Hospital, Abyed or Fayid" under "Appendix I: C. Royal Air Force" as follows :-

"The requirement for a R.A.F. hospital at Fayid did not emanate from the Air Ministry, but was included in your first draft, presumably at the instance of H.Q. M.E.A.F. You should ask H.Q. M.E.A.F. whether there is still a requirement for this hospital in view of the latest position on air matters given in Cairo Telegram 1427 of October 10th. There appear to be adequate Army hospitalisation facilities."

JE 1192 / 91-G

3. Our comments upon your revised draft text of Annexes "A" are as follows:-

4

- (a) In sub-para.3(a) (ii) "Appendix I" should read "Appendix II". This looks like a misprint.
- (b) We do not understand the first sentence of sub-para.4(a)(i) and we think that "Base Commander" is meant and not "British Commander".
- (c) In sub-para.4(a)(i) "Appendix II" should read "Appendix I". Again an apparent misprint.
- (d) In sub-para.4(b) "Appendix II" should read "Appendix I". Again an apparent misprint.

Each Note

4. With regard to para.3(b) of your letter of October 29th and to para.6 of your draft letter covering the revised texts of the three Exchanges of Notes, we now disagree, upon reconsideration of this point, with your suggestion that Exchanges of Notes No.3 should be dis-associated from the Agreement. We adhere to the view that it is militarily desirable to do whatever is possible to improve the efficiency of the air defence of the Base Area, and that the exchanges of squadrons proposed in Note 3 would contribute to this end. We doubt whether, in practice, it would be practicable to negotiate an issue of this kind except as part of the Main Agreement. For these reasons, we would not like to see this Exchange of Notes abandoned without at least being put to the Egyptians unless, of course, the Foreign Office is convinced that this course would do harm beyond our power to repair by subsequently abandoning the Note if necessary. We consider, therefore, that para.6, which invites the Delegation to abandon Note 3 forthwith, should be deleted from your draft letter.

R. C. Mackworth-Young, Esq.,
Foreign Office,
Whitehall,
London S.W.1.

TOP SECRET

THIS GRADE IS TO BE MAINTAINED BY:

SIGNATURE

[Signature]

BRANCH OR UNIT *0218* RANK OR GRADE *4/c*

15.

FO 371/102823

93016

1	2
---	---

COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION

TOP SECRET

Excl. Notes

JE 1192/574/567E

5. We agree with the point made in Prince's letter of the 3rd November (headed "Egypt Negotiations") about signals facilities, and adhere to the comment made in para.2(c) of our letter of the 26th September, but point out that Abu Sueir should now be substituted for Fayid in the light of Cairo Telegrams 1426 and 1427.

6. We agree with the points made in Prince's other letter of the 3rd November, and in particular with para. 2 about other aircraft under R.A.F. control.

JE 1192/460E

JE 1192/90E

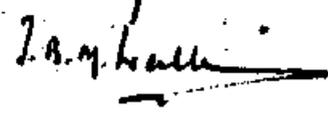
JE 1192/918/567E

7. We are not satisfied that the question of Customs facilities is being given sufficient consideration. We are concerned to secure not only waiver of customs duties on imports needed for the support of the R.A.F. party after withdrawal, but also for the export of oil stocks from Feners for the support of R.A.F. forces elsewhere in the Middle East. This last is bound to be on a considerable scale and the financial implications will be serious if duty has to be paid.

8. We would like to be assured, therefore, that a Note regarding Customs facilities separate from that at para.2(c) of Note No.1, will be provided in due course.

9. I am sending copies of this letter to Prince at the Ministry of Defence, Armstrong at the War Office, Talbot-Smith at the Admiralty and Allen at the Treasury.

Yours

Sincerely,


RECEIVED
 18 DEC 1953

FO 371/102823

930/11

COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION

BRITISH TRANSPORT COMMISSION

Elli J

THE CHAIRMAN.

Tel: Ambassador 7711.

829, MARYLEBONE ROAD,

LONDON, N.W.1.

PERSONAL

E. 1142/680 16th December, 1953.

Dear Secretary of State

I feel that I should let you know that in my discussion with the W.F.'s at Lennox-Boyd's house last night I was pushed into a corner on one point.

In the course of the discussion I was pressed to say whether 4,000 technicians represented "a Force". I could not honestly say that they would; it is not true. Four thousand men in the administrative services, armed with personal weapons only, cannot properly be regarded as a Force in relation to even the Egyptian Army.

I agreed, of course, that any body of soldiers can loosely be referred to as a Force, but that is a different matter from what we soldiers understand by the word, which means a Force so organized and armed that it can deal with organized opposition.

I hope that this matter will not cause you further difficulty, but in any case feel that I should warn you about it.

*Yours sincerely**Ernest H. Johnson*

The Rt. Hon. R. Anthony Eden, M.C., M.P.

FO 371/102823

930/11

COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION

Not despatched
by air

Mr. R Allen
Africa Dept.
18/12
18/12

PERSONAL

December 17, 1953.

JE1192/680

OUTFILE

Thank you so much for your personal letter of yesterday's date and for your warning about the technicians. It is certainly useful to me to know of this in case it should crop up during today's Debate, and I am very grateful that you should have thought to write and tell me of it.

(Sgd.) ANTHONY EDEN

General Sir Brian Robertson.
G.C.B., G.B.E., K.C.M.G.,
K.C.V.O., D.S.O., M.C.

Registry No. JE

6571/100223

13014

XXXXXXXXXX
Secret
XXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXX
IMMEDIATE
XXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXX

(Date) _____
Despatched _____

Draft.
Telegram to:—
CAIRO

[Security classification] _____
—if any

SECRET

Suspend

No. _____

[Codeword—if any] _____

(Date) _____

Addressed to CAIRO

And to:—

telegram No. _____ (date) _____

repeated for information to Washington, B.M.E.O. (Fayid) and Paris

Repeat to:—
Washington
B.M.E.O. (Fayid)
Paris

Your telegram No. 1724 [of December 17: Egyptian Christmas initiative].

We could suppose that this sensational Egyptian initiative might take one of the following forms:

Broderick
18/12

XXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXX
Cypher

(a) A proposal for a non-aggression pact between the Arab League and the Soviet Union. You will have seen secret reports in this sense.

(b) New attacks on Her Majesty's Forces in the Canal Zone; or

(c) As you suggest, further measures against British subjects in Egypt.

Distribution:—

Copies to:—
F.O. Secret 4
Wni. Secret

2. Any of these measures would not only make the Americans' flesh creep, but also make it practically impossible for us to continue serious negotiations in the immediate future. I hope you will find suitable opportunity to tell the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Colonel Nasser that although I have said the negotiations with Egypt will continue, despite strong feelings in Parliament that they should be suspended, it might be exceedingly difficult for me to continue to give such assurances in the face

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

GENERAL INFORMATION: 20,000 (2 UP) 1181
SECRETARY: 20,000 (2 UP) 1181

Egypt. Negn. ditto

FO 371/102823

930/1

of some new and blatant affront during the
Christmas recess.

6371/102223

43014 SECRET

JE 1192 / 655

IRGH CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Cypher/OTF

FOREIGN OFFICE SECRET AND WHITEHALL
SECRET (CABINET) DISTRIBUTION

Mr. Hankey

No. 1724

December 17, 1953

D: 7.47 p.m. December 17, 1953

R: 8.05 p.m. December 17, 1953

IMMEDIATE

SECRET

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 1724 of December 17.

Repeated for information to Washington

B.M.F.O.

Paris

Paris telegram No. 562 to you.

Counsellor of the American Embassy spoke on the lines of paragraph 2 yesterday saying that he had information suggesting some sensational Egyptian initiative before the end of the month, and (after giving due weight to the invariable Egyptian tactics of making the Americans' flesh creep) I think it quite likely that Egyptians have been considering proposals on these lines. In his final interview with Mr. Hankey yesterday Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs said rather ominously, that we would soon learn that storms can blow up in other places besides London and that he hoped that when the storm arose we should get through it quickly without any lasting damage. I can only think that this remark refers to proposals of this kind and that Fawzi himself is probably opposed to them.

2. In addition to the points mentioned by Mr. Dulles, the United States embassy think that the committee may be contemplating further measures against British subjects in Egypt and some kind of intrigue against certain Western-minded Arab Governments such as Iraq by addressing an appeal to the peoples of those countries over the Governments' heads. The Iraqi Ambassador here thinks that this is the likely trend.

3. Colonel Nasr's views expressed at a private dinner party on December 15 (see Cairo telegram No. 99 to Egyptfor - JE 1192 not repeated to all) were on the other hand consistent with Egypt's continued desire to reach an agreement, and gave the impression that in his mind some progress was possible on the

/ lines of

SECRETCairo telegram No. 1724 to Foreign Office

- 2 -

lines of a global war formula for availability. He did say however that he thought the régime had exposed itself to great criticism by going as far as it had, and in particular by agreeing to the continuance of a British base.

4. After the meeting on October 21 the Egyptians can have no real doubts as to what has been agreed so far and what are the points still to be settled. (They were then explicitly asked to discuss further the other points, and refused). But they may be somewhat confused in their recollections and they are probably apprehensive that we will continue to press the other issues even if availability and uniform can be settled.

5. I agree with last sentence of paragraph 4 of your telegram from Paris, but it will be necessary at some time in our informal talks to give the Egyptians in writing a list of the points on which we consider agreement has already been reached and our own requirements in respect of other points. I do not think this should be done now, and certainly not before I have made some soundings at my first meetings with Fawzi and Neguib. It seems to me very important to find out more about what appears to be in the wind.

Foreign Office please pass Washington and Paris as my telegrams 387 and 61 respectively.

[Repeated to Washington and Paris]

ADVANCES TO:

Sir I. Kirkpatrick

Private Secretary

Mr. R. Allen

Head of African Department

Resident Clerk

G G G G

J

AFRICAN DEPARTMENT

JE.1192/668

1953

OM
 Bureau, Cairo,
 African
 Department
 Confidential
 10423/740/536
 recd Dec. 17
 received in
 registry - Dec. 21

Neutrality and Reactivation of the Suez
 Canal Zone Base
 Statements made by Colonel Haines at
 a dinner party on December 14 for
 General Berenson.
 (Copied to Tom, Paris, Ambrose, B.M.E.O. Fayid)

References to former relevant papers

JE.1192/668

MINUTES

The repudiation of any idea of
 neutralism is possibly the most
 hopeful feature of this quite satisfactory
 meeting.

Ambrasin
 23/12

Discussed with Mr. Boodle.

Re
 2/1

(Print)

(How disposed of)

(Action completed)

2814/1

(Index)

WF
 19-3-54

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

CONFIDENTIAL
(1043/740/53G)



BRITISH EMBASSY
CAIRO

December 17, 1953.

JE.1192/668

Dear Department,

At the suggestion of Major Salah Salem, the Oriental Counsellor had a dinner party on December 14 for General Benson to meet some of the leading members of the Council of the Revolutionary Command. The Charge d'Affaires, Mr. Groswell and Brigadier Dove were the other British guests with General Benson, while on the Egyptian side Colonel Gamal Abdul Nasser, Major Salah Salem and Colonel Zakaria Mohieddin were present.

2. In the course of conversation about the informal talks on the future of the Canal Zone Base the question of "availability" was discussed. Colonel Nasser began by taking the usual line that the Egyptians had gone to the extreme limit by accepting the commitment in respect of an attack on an Arab State and that they could not go beyond what previous Egyptian Governments, such as the Wafd, had been prepared to undertake. He argued as usual that consultation should prove adequate in the event of any other emergency not involving direct attack on an Arab State. The result of such consultation would in fact be automatic and the Egyptians would have no choice but to come in on the side of the West and reactivate the Base. Neutrality was impossible and as a soldier he said he realized that in the event of hostilities there would be a race to the Suez Canal by the major powers. At present, however, Egyptian public opinion could not accept any commitment beyond the Arab States. He said he wished loyally to defend any agreement reached and was therefore most anxious not to give the opponents of the Regime, such as the Communists, any excuse for attacking the agreement and particularly an excuse that Egyptian public opinion would consider justifiable. He mentioned especially that no guarantee could be given in respect of Turkey.

3. Colonel Nasser maintained this attitude for some time but eventually showed interest in the global war formula to which he himself referred in talking. His first point was that "global war" could not be adequately defined. After some discussion, however, he appeared to recognise that a definition might be possible and left the impression that when talks were resumed a move in this direction might be expected. There seemed no doubt that the Minister for Foreign Affairs had had some talk with the Council of the Revolutionary Command about this global war formula (see our telegram No. 1672).

JE1192/629

/4. ...

African Department,
Foreign Office,
LONDON S.W.1.



- 2 -

4. Colonel Nasser seemed to be inclined to regard a guarantee for reactivation of the Base in the same light as a Middle East Defence Organisation and indeed to consider it in that context; he said repeatedly that all these matters would be easy to settle after the withdrawal of British Forces and mentioned in particular "staff conversations" on Middle East Defence.

5. He strongly denied a suggestion that the Egyptians had deliberately broken off the talks in October for reasons unconnected with the question under discussion (i.e. the Sudan elections). He said that they had in fact been ready to reach agreement at that time.

6. All this talk unfortunately does not seem to have led to much progress but it does seem of interest in view of the way in which the neutrality line has been plugged recently in Egyptian publicity. Throughout the evening the attitude of the Egyptian guests was perfectly friendly.

7. We are sending copies of this letter to the Chanceries in Washington, Paris, Ankara and B.M.E.O. Fayid.

Yours ever,

CHANCERY

6

CONFIDENTIAL

FROM FOREIGN OFFICE TO PARIS

Cypher/OTP

FILES

No. 2066

December 14, 1953.

D. 6.15 p. m. December 14, 1953.

EMERGENCY
CONFIDENTIAL

Following for Secretary of State from Lord Reading:-

Lord Killearn has put down the following question for answer on December 15: To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they can give an assurance that they will not enter into any commitments designed to modify their rights under the Treaty of 1836 with Egypt without prior discussion in Parliament.

2. I propose to reply as follows:- If the Noble Lord's question means that he is asking for an assurance that Parliament will be given the opportunity to discuss the terms of any agreement that may be arrived at with the Egyptian Government before it is signed, I can certainly not give any such assurance. But it is Her Majesty's Government's view that any such agreement should contain a provision for ratification, and in that case the agreement would not come into force until the process of ratification had been completed. Before that occurred it would be the intention to afford Parliament full opportunity to debate the matter.

EEE

6.571/6223

93014

E. 1192/679

Enter J
by
19/12

FOREIGN AFFAIRS DEBATE: DECEMBER 17, 1953

NOTES FOR SECRETARY OF STATE'S SPEECH

EGYPT AND THE SUDAN

1. What are the facts about the situation in Egypt?

Short statement of elements from which our policy flows:

- (a) We are in the Canal Zone by virtue of the 1936 Treaty. Juridical position: Treaty still valid. Wafd Government purported to abrogate it in 1951, but no provision for termination in the Treaty. Treaty revision, by arbitration, if both sides fail to agree on satisfactory revision, after 1956. Difficult for Egyptians to ask for revision under Treaty Article 16 in view of their abrogation, but we must take account of world opinion as expressed in the United Nations.
- (b) We are maintaining an army of 80,000 men in the Canal Zone at a cost of something like £50 million a year. We are doing so in order to maintain our rights under the Treaty. We can go on doing so, but it is obviously uneconomical.
- (c) We are doing this because we believe that the maintenance of an effective base in the Canal Zone is in the interests of the free world. Not a national interest only; certainly not as imperialistic one.
- (d) Egyptian Government spokesmen have made many offensive statements about this country. The behaviour of the Egyptian Government over the recent elections in the Sudan is not in keeping with the spirit of the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement of February 1953 over the Sudan. Strongly deprecate Egyptian behaviour, but it is stupid to blind ourselves to the fact that the majority of Egyptians want to see British forces withdrawn from the Canal Zone, which is Egyptian territory.

2. How can we make a synthesis of these elements? Best way is to negotiate a new agreement with Egypt which will provide for the withdrawal of British forces in an orderly manner. But it is an essential element of any such agreement that the base should be maintained at a level which the best military opinion considers adequate, and that it should be available for use without delay in an emergency. Moreover it is important that, parallel with any such agreement, British forces should be redeployed so that they can, if necessary, contribute at short notice to the defence of the Middle East. They must also be redeployed in such a way that Her Majesty's Government are able to fulfil the obligations they have undertaken in the Middle East under their treaties with Iraq and Jordan and under the Tripartite Declaration of 1950. As the Prime Minister said last May, a satisfactory agreement with Egypt would "render possible the reduction of the British forces in the Canal Zone from 80,000 to a small fraction of that number. There will be left technical personnel discharging their functions with the goodwill of the Egyptian monarchy, republic, oligarchy, dictatorship, or whatever it may turn out to be."

3. We have been trying to find, in consultation with the Egyptians, a form of words to express this conception. We have offered them reasonable terms. The Egyptians have not accepted those terms and since October 21 our Delegation in Cairo have not been able to hold any further conversations with representatives of the Egyptian Government. The Egyptian attitude seems to be if an emergency arose likely to involve a war in the Middle East, Egypt would certainly ask us to reactivate the base. If this is so, why will the Egyptian Government not say so in plain terms and in writing? They cannot expect us,

/in

60721/102327 42014

in a matter of this importance, to rely upon a vague assurance that, at some unspecified date, maybe years ahead, it will be "all right on the night". We are determined to play our full part, whatever it may be, in the defence of the Middle East, and we cannot accept anything which does not expressly allow us to carry out our intentions. Once we have left the Canal Zone, we shall not go back there unless we have to, but we must be able to if it is really necessary.

4. One word about the Suez Canal. The freedom of navigation through the Canal is a matter which is linked to the question of the maintenance of a base, but it is a separate issue. Freedom of transit through the Canal is governed by the international Convention of 1888. It is a matter which concerns all nations whose shipping uses the Canal. We do not condone, and will not condone, restrictions placed by the Egyptian Government on cargoes bound for Israel. The Security Council on September 1, 1951 called on Egypt to lift those restrictions: she has not done so. But British troops are not in Egypt for the purpose of compelling Egypt to comply with the Resolution of the Security Council. They are there ultimately to ensure that the Middle East and the Suez Canal are defended against outside aggression. Transit through the Canal is a matter for international action. ~~But if Egypt were so ill-advised as to try (while our troops are still there) to interfere with the working of the Canal as a whole, as she did in 1951, that would be another matter and British forces might have to be used, as they were in 1951, to keep the Canal open for the benefit of all nations.~~

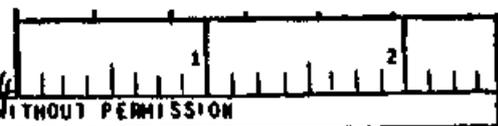
5. Her Majesty's Government believe therefore that an agreement with Egypt, which will provide for the continued maintenance

/of

FO 371/102823

930/6

of the base, and which will encourage Egypt to maintain the freedom of transit of the Canal is still the best arrangement. But, as I have indicated, it must be an agreement which Her Majesty's Government can recommend to this House, to the country, and to the free world, as being in the best interests of all those concerned. If we cannot get such an agreement, then we shall have to reconsider our whole position in the light of both our needs and our obligations, and our course of action must be based primarily upon the interests of ourselves and our allies as we see them.



Minutes.

Mr. Roger Allen

The Secretary of State would be very grateful if you could let him have, by Tuesday night's bag at the latest, some notes for his winding up speech in the foreign affairs debate about Egypt, the Canal Zone and the Sudan.

We shall no doubt be trying to work out the lines of a speech ourselves but we should be most grateful for anything you can contribute.

It seems to me that this is a major event politically for the Secretary of State and that we should try to produce a powerful, positive defence of the policy of reaching agreement with ~~Egypt~~ over the Canal Zone. I am sure you will have some bright ideas. If you want more guidance than this, please do not hesitate to ring me up in Paris.

The sort of point we shall want to know is how much we can say about the present state of the negotiations without defeating in Egypt the ends which we are trying to obtain in London.

Ch. S. Llewellyn

December 12, 1953.

African Dept.

Pl. draft soon, & discuss with me.

I think we shd. use a good deal of Brian Robertson's undelivered speech.

RA 14/12

B: 7/10/22

43014

1-5

E. 1142/674(H)

CONFIDENTIAL

Egypt:

Foreign Affairs Debate

Mr. Burroughs of P.U.S.D. informed the Department that the Secretary of State had indicated he would like to use the Sidki-Bevin proposals to illustrate the thesis that Her Majesty's Government's present policy was a continuation of the policies pursued by Her Majesty's Government in this country ever since the war.

2. It might be dangerous to go into too much detail about the Sidki-Bevin agreement, since it gave ^(except for the evacuation time-table) the Egyptians far more than we are now prepared to concede.

3. The Department attach the draft of a passage on this point which might be suitable for inclusion in the Secretary of State's speech in the Foreign Affairs debate.

4. Lord Stansgate has sometimes suggested that we were bound by the terms of the abortive Sidki-Bevin agreement and the Egyptians are entirely consistent in attempting to pin us down to the furthest point we have previously reached at the start of each successive round of negotiations. If Lord Stansgate or any Labour member of the House of Commons were to suggest this, it might be as well to say that the documents comprising that agreement never got beyond the stage of being agreed ad referendum, and that they are not now binding on anybody.

E. C. [Signature]

December 16, 1953

*I should have thought this might be something
but it agree with the above minute, if
the Secretary of State wants to include something.*

*Private Secretary (with you keep against the P's return,
or send down to Mr. Burroughs?)*

*Roger Allen
12/12*

P. return to African Dept. RAB/B 12/12

627/102823

13014

Top Secret.
Secret.
Confidential.
Restricted
Open.

Draft.

Flag A

Cmd 7179

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

Flag B

Flag C

Members on both sides of the House have tried to suggest that Her Majesty's Government are in their present policy towards Egypt making some new departure. Ever since the Egyptians at the end of the war put forward their request for a revision of the 1936 treaty, it has been the policy of Her Majesty's Government to seek by negotiation agreement on some means of replacing that treaty. As the House is aware, agreement ad referendum was reached in 1946 between the late Mr. Bevin and the late Ismail Sidki Pasha. In the event that agreement fell down on the Sudan issue; but the basis on which Her Majesty's Government sought agreement on the question of defence was the withdrawal of British fighting forces and suitable provision for co-operation between the two countries in the defence of the area in case of war. Although changing conditions - and the most important of these was the deterioration of East-West relations into a state of cold war - have made it necessary to adjust our views of what is suitable provision for the defence of the area, these two ideas have remained the basis of Her Majesty's Government's policy in seeking to negotiate an agreement with Egypt. I would refer the House to the proposals made by the late government to the Egyptian government in April, 1951. Again, the same ideas were fundamental to the four-power proposals of October, 1951, which were endorsed by the present government when we took office. My Hon. and Gallant Friend, the member for Leicester, appears to believe that it would now be possible to negotiate an agreement on some ^{totally different} other basis. I fail to understand what grounds he has for such a belief.

CONFIDENTIAL

430/4
(Mr. for Mr. R. Allen - P.W.)
put in S/S's office
(in the room)

E.1192/674(B)

Egypt: Foreign Affairs Debate

Incidents in the Canal Zone and Persecution of British Subjects

Since the protests delivered to the Egyptians here and in Cairo on November 26 and November 30, there has been a noticeable decline in the incidents in the Canal Zone.

Mr. Hankey's telegram No. 717 of December 15 reports progress towards securing our aim of Anglo-Egyptian co-operation to prevent lawlessness there.

2. At the time when our protests were delivered, on the Secretary of State's instructions, we deliberately refrained from giving full publicity to the incidents. We have always kept publicity for the incidents in reserve, and the Egyptians know of and are to some extent influenced by this fact.

3. It would not help us, therefore, for a Minister to be drawn into detailed comment on the incidents in the Canal Zone in the Foreign Affairs Debate. All we could produce would be global figures covering casualties and robberies during the past year. On December 2 the Minister of State told the House, for example, that there had been 102 attacks by shooting or with the use of explosives on British installations or civil or military personnel in the Suez Canal during the past year, and commented that this was "a very bad record." Mr. Dodds-Parker said on December 10 that there had been a considerable increase in the number of incidents in the latter half of the year, adding "it is now up to the Egyptian Government to take the necessary measures to restore law and order in the Canal Zone. If they should fail to do so, our forces are fully capable of protecting themselves." It looks as if the Egyptians may indeed now take the necessary measures, but of course it is premature to say so.

/Similarly

4. Similarly, regarding the persecution of British subjects by the Egyptian authorities, there has been an improvement since we made our protests. The deportation orders against Squadron-Leader Hindle James and Mrs. Lord have not been rescinded, but they have both been given longer notice. One more British subject, a Cypriot called Yannou, has been arrested on a charge of having entered the country illegally; he was employed in the Canal Zone and apparently did not have an Egyptian visa.
5. It is rather far-fetched to say that the editors of Al Gomhouria, which published Mr. Bevan's articles, are in league with terrorists in the Canal Zone. Like all Egyptian newspapers, they say that the British should be driven out. Colonel Anwar el Sadat, the Director General, said on December 8, 1952, "The object of our national solidarity is to drive the British out of Egypt." But that is no less than is said almost every day by some member of the Egyptian Government.

Red (edwan)

December 16, 1953

Mr. Boodin has seen & agreed with above.

Mr Duff.

CONFIDENTIAL

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

LC 371/102023

43914

Cypher/OTP.

FOREIGN OFFICE AND
WHITEHALL DISTRIBUTION

Mr. Hankey

No: 717

December 15, 1953.

D: 9.00 p.m. December 15, 1953.

R: 10.35 p.m. December 15, 1953.

CONFIDENTIAL

Addressed to Egypt for telegram No: 99 of December 15
Repeated for information to: B.M.E.O. Foreign Office.

For Fasting from Hankey.

General Benson, Creswell and I had a long talk last night over dinner with Gamal Nasr and Zakaria Mohi-Eddin. We pointed out that continuance of lawlessness in the Canal Zone might prove fatal to negotiations and we thrashed out the whole question very thoroughly. We pressed in particular for removal from Canal Zone of men with criminal records and for effective prevention of carriage of arms by civilians.

2. The Egyptians made a rather feeble attempt to argue on the usual lines disclaiming responsibility and complaining about us, but we formed the impression that they would now definitely try to damp things down and Nasr actually instructed Mohi-Eddin accordingly in our presence.

3. Contrary to expectations they did not say much about a quid pro quo. The Firdan Bridge was not once mentioned. Reference to road blocks was extremely feeble and only points they pressed were:

(a) Your training marches which they thought were to continue until March.

(b) Delay in notifying Egyptian police of incidents.

4. They seemed worried by a report about troops having gone through a village some days ago, and as regards continuance of marches Creswell repeated to them answer Creswell gave to Fawzi on December 3 (Cairo telegram No: 1667 to Foreign Office paragraph 4).

5. We think it would be worth while to resume notifying Egyptian police immediately incidents arise in normal cases. If situation then improves and police cooperation convinces us that the Egyptians intend improvement to continue it might pay us to begin handing over suitable delinquents to the police and reducing number of training marches.

6. We also.....

FO 371/102823

93014

CONFIDENTIALCairo telegram No: 717 to Foreign Office

- 2 -

6. We also talked about Egyptian Press and hostile speeches, and Nasr's attitude was reasonably friendly on both topics.

B.M.E.O. pass priority to Egypt for as my telegram No: 99.

JJJJJ

FO 371/102823

93014

HOUSE OF LORDS

Thursday, 17th December, 1953

The House met at three of the clock, the LORD CHANCELLOR on the Woolsack.

Prayers

CONSOLIDATED FUND BILL

3.7 p.m.

THE PAYMASTER GENERAL (THE EARL OF SELKIRK): My Lords, this Bill is in the usual form. It is the third Consolidated Fund Bill of the year. If your Lordships agree, I should like to take it through all the remaining stages this afternoon. I beg to move that it be read a second time.

Moved, That the Bill be now read 2^a.
(The Earl of Selkirk.)

On Question, Bill read 2^a: Committee negatived.

Then, Standing Order No. XXXIX having been suspended (pursuant to the Resolution of December 10), Bill read 3^a, and passed.

BRITAIN AND EGYPT

3.8 p.m.

LORD RENNELL rose to move to resolve, That in any new arrangement with Egypt it is essential for this country to maintain a position which is consistent with our commitments and responsibilities. The noble Lord said: My Lords, the Motion which stands in my name on the Order Paper, or rather the wording of it, is inspired by a remark made by the great Lord Cromer, the founder of Modern Egypt. He said:

"A great nation cannot throw off the responsibilities which its past history and its position in the world have forced upon it."

What are the commitments and responsibilities, referred to in the Motion which is the subject of the debate in your Lordships' House this afternoon? To my mind, they fall into two categories. The first is the Suez Canal and what that means as an international waterway—and I will come back to that. The second is the Nile Valley and Nile water, and what that means.

H.L. 75 D 3

In speaking, as I propose to do, on the Suez Canal and the Middle East Base in that neighbourhood, I want to touch only on what that means to a world that is at peace, or more or less at peace. I do not want to raise the military implications of the Middle East Base—no doubt other speakers will do so. To my mind, however, what transcends in importance every other subject in Egypt and in the Middle East is the Suez Canal itself. It has practically no parallel or analogy in the world, except possibly the Panama Canal, and there is a vast difference between the two. They have this in common: that they are a link in international traffic and international world trade. But the Suez Canal, from that point of view, is vastly more important than the Panama Canal.

When the Panama Canal was first conceived by Lesseps, who built the Suez Canal, it also was conceived as an international waterway which would remain open to the whole world for ever. Lesseps and the original company did not finish the canal: it had to be finished by the United States of America; and it is worth pausing a moment to contrast the handling of affairs relating to the Suez Canal and the handling of affairs relating to the Panama Canal. The Panama Canal, when it was built and completed by the United States, was, in fact, annexed by the United States; and the Panama Canal Zone became the sole responsibility, militarily and otherwise, of the United States, who proceeded to fortify it, garrison it and govern it. In view of the strategic importance of the Canal to the United States, I think that few Members of your Lordships' House would quarrel with that decision. But it was not the original conception.

The Suez Canal, when it was completed, was of paramount military, strategic and economic importance to this country—more so then, probably, than it is now. We maintained a garrison in Egypt, it is true, having assumed responsibility for the reorganisation of the Egyptian Government as a Government under the suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire; and we still have a garrison there. But we never annexed or even internationalised the Canal Zone, which remains an integral part of Egypt. In the course of the years which have elapsed since those early days the Canal has been kept open to those who wished

Reference: -

FO 371/102823

93014

COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION

Q371/102823

93014

[Lord Rennell.]
 to pass through; and it is perhaps worth while to remind your Lordships that at a time when Egypt was under the suzerainty of Turkey, neither the Turkish Government nor the Turkish representatives in Egypt, nor the Egyptians themselves, showed any desire, or made any move, to close the Canal, even during the Italo-Turkish War of 1911 and 1912. It will be within your Lordships' more recent recollection that even during the period of sanctions against Italy over the Abyssinian war the Suez Canal was not closed to Italy. The Canal was never closed on those occasions, or on occasions since, to the legitimate passage of people who could get there, including neutrals of all countries during the two great world wars, thanks to the police force which we kept in that country, which kept it open. The Suez Canal was more important to us than the Panama Canal was to the world, or perhaps even to the United States.

May I remind your Lordships that the Panama Canal, in the last year for which figures are complete—that is to say, from July, 1952, to June, 1953—had 8,700 ships transiting. The Suez Canal had 12,000. During that same period, the Panama Canal carried 36,900,000 (say, 37,000,000) tons of cargo. The Suez Canal carried 83,900,000 (say, 84,000,000) tons. Of the ships passing through the Canal to-day, approximately 30 per cent. are under the British flag. Probably the next highest, and perhaps even the highest—it is difficult to say—after that are United States ships, not necessarily under the American flag. A great deal of American tonnage, as your Lordships know, sails under the flags of Panama, Colombia and Liberia. One of the principal users of the Canal, in fact, is the United States, for the very good reason that the United States, like ourselves in this country, has come to depend more and more on the oil wells of the Persian Gulf, Arabia and Iraq. It is possible that one of these days pipe-lines from those areas to the Mediterranean coast will substantially diminish the oil traffic through the Canal, which amounts to about two-thirds of all the shipping tonnage that goes through.

Nevertheless, so far as we can see, the value of the Canal as a means of communication for international trade must

go on many years after all of us have passed away. The effort to keep that Canal in condition, requiring as it does the most highly trained technical organisation possible, staffed from countries all over the world, needs above all for its effective maintenance and its effective operation the security of the personnel there. Without that security, families of nations from all over the world are unlikely to want to go on living there—indeed, the occurrences on the Canal in the last two or three years have already had the effect of causing premature resignations of people who, for fear of what may happen, are asking for their pensions to go home before their time.

The first break in what might be called the neutrality of the Canal has occurred within the last few years, when the Egyptian Government have applied sanctions against Israel in the administration of the Canal. That first break in what might be called the neutral and the impartial administration of the Canal is one which can easily go a great deal further; and it requires, I submit, a police force which is not subject to the control of a fickle and mercurial Government to ensure that that neutrality is preserved. The second event, which perhaps is a small one but which has a distinct bearing on what I have said, is the evidence which has been produced in the Press of the trial of Serag ed-Din in Cairo. As a defence against the charge of corruption, Serag ed-Din boasted of the effort which he had contributed to stirring up trouble on the Canal at Ismailia and elsewhere; and he went so far as to claim credit for a plan to mine a ship in the Canal, effectively to block it, so as to put pressure on us.

I do not want to make too much of an incident like that. Serag ed-Din does not necessarily represent the Government, or any other Government, in Egypt; and a loud-mouthed speaker does not represent or mean a Cabinet, or even a shadow Cabinet. None the less, it is evidence of the way in which for only too long minds have been working in Egypt. That alone seems to me to justify the maintenance of a police force there to secure, not only for us but for the world generally, what the Canal was intended to be—the greatest international waterway and means of communication between India, the Far East and the Antipodes. Happily,

9371/102823

93014

with modern methods of communication, we ourselves are less dependent on the Canal than many others. Transport by ship to Australia round the Cape is only a few days longer than through the Canal and down the Red Sea. As is well known to your Lordships, passenger communication is now substantially, and will inevitably be increasingly in the future, by air; and it will be possible to overfly Egypt and all its troubles. But there are countries, including the United States, with its oil interests in the Persian Gulf, in India, with its vast trade in raw materials for Europe, which are intimately dependent upon the maintenance of that waterway as a free communication to all who come. I believe that free communication can be maintained only by an effective police force.

The second group of responsibilities and commitments which are referred to in the Motion which stands in my name, are those which affect the Nile Valley as a whole. The Nile is a problem for Egypt, but the Nile is not an Egyptian problem. Egypt depends entirely on the waters of the Nile, but Egypt depends on the water which comes down from the Sudan, as the Sudan depends on the water which comes down from Abyssinia, from Upper Egypt, from the Upper Sudan (which is substantially a different country from the Lower Sudan, and inhabited by different people) and, finally, Uganda and the Great Lakes. This question of the Nile and Egypt, and, I submit, our responsibilities and commitments there, involve all the inhabitants of the Nile Valley from end to end recognising that the Canal cannot be the responsibility of any one Power or any one nation. Both we individually, and communities as a whole, are never independent of each other; we are all interdependent. As Egypt is dependent upon the Sudan and the Sudan on what goes beyond it, so we are dependent on the trade and the relations which we have with the Nile Valley, and they with us. There is no such thing in the world to-day—probably there never has been—as any country or any community being independent of anyone else; it just does not happen any more.

With your Lordships' permission, I want to say something which is perhaps personal. My friends in Egypt are, and

H.L. 73 D 5

have been, numerous. It is said that if you have ever drunk of the waters of the Nile you will always go back and drink them again. I am told—I have no distinct recollection of it—that I first drank the waters of the Nile when I was six weeks old, and I have been there, back and forth, ever since. I have had some of my best friends in Egypt, and I am one of those who have always liked the Egyptians. I have been happy there; I have got on with them, I think. I do beg of all my friends in Egypt, and all those people who live there, to accept what is so painfully obvious: that they are not, and cannot be, independent about what goes on, above stream and below it. I believe that the Nile Valley, or Eastern Africa, can be run only as a partnership between all the many people involved; and among those people are ourselves.

I do not believe—I never have believed—that all the agitations which, unfortunately, have been the common form in Egypt for the last twenty years, becoming growingly aggravated, necessarily represent what the Egyptian people really think. It has been the experience of all those who have had to deal with Egypt that agitations against us are notoriously the product of the political bankruptcy of any Government which is in power. It has always been the last resort, when that Government has felt that it can no longer carry its majority or its authority, to turn on the tap of propaganda which, illogical as it may appear (and I suppose that all human politics are to some extent illogical, but nowhere more so than in Egypt), reflects a sort of veneer of emotion, but does not reflect, as I believe, the true feelings of people in Egypt. Nevertheless, with the effect that it has on public opinion in this country and elsewhere, it inevitably has a damaging and difficult influence on efforts to work out what is obviously an extremely difficult problem. The experience which we have had in the last few months has been substantially aggravated by that veneer of emotionalism which I would beg the Egyptian Government to call back under control. We have done what we can to make agreements possible. We went a great deal further than some of us, either in this country or elsewhere, thought it was proper to go in the Agreement over the

Reference:-

FO 371/102823

93014

COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION

[Lord Rennell.]

Sudan; and that went a great deal further in result than perhaps we expected.

To me it seems strange that in the offer made to the Sudanese about their political future, only two effective alternatives were offered: one was independence and the other was a closer link with Egypt. Why was the third course of an Anglo-Egyptian-Sudanese condominium not offered as another possibility? Having regard to the position of Egypt, and trying to put oneself, as far as one can, in the place of an Egyptian, it is apparent that an independent and a possibly hostile Sudan was a solution which could not be acceptable. The condominium which was instituted in the Sudan after the last decade of the last century was perhaps a brilliant, and a brilliantly successful, practical solution. Is it not one that might have been continued? Is it not one that might have been offered as a possibility? The responsibility for that, to an undue extent, lies at the door of Her Majesty's Government.

In effect, what has been the outcome? The outcome has been an intensification of the vilification of this country in Egypt, of incident after incident, which I know, as your Lordships know, cannot conduce to better relations. It is idle for certain Egyptian leaders and politicians to say: "You know I have to say these things. I do not really mean them. I have to say them because that is what is expected of politicians here." If the Government in Egypt to-day are strong enough to make a new agreement, they are strong enough to give leadership to the people of Egypt. Unwillingness to do so must throw doubt on the ability of the Government to maintain themselves without the propaganda on which other Governments have attempted to base their strength, and must also create doubt, which is widespread, I believe, in your Lordships' House and in many other parts of the country, of either the ability or the willingness of the present Egyptian Government to carry out an agreement after it has been entered into. The first principle of an agreement involves two parties being willing and able to implement it. Do Her Majesty's Government believe that the present Egyptian Government, whom they have recognised only *de facto*—as the noble Marquess told us

H.L. 73 D 6

in June last—and to whom no *de jure* recognition has yet been accorded, are able and willing, in the face of the symptoms, in the face of the propaganda which they are individually carrying on, to make an Agreement? It is that doubt in many people's minds, including my own, that leads me to wonder whether the present moment is the right moment to continue discussions preliminary to an Agreement.

Having tried to outline the reasons for this Motion, and the commitments and responsibilities, as briefly as I am able, and without going into further detail, I must come to the last part of what I am going to say, which is—where do we go from here if you feel as I do about it? It appears to me that there are, in fact, only two courses open. The first is to maintain the *status quo*, with a garrison on the Canal and a great Middle East base, until such time as spirits are more reasonable in Egypt, and they can assure us that they are willing to enter into an Agreement which takes account of facts, of our necessities and of other people's necessities as well as their own—the other people's necessities that I have outlined in what I have said previously. The second course is to clear out. I have no doubt which course I should like to see followed—that is, to maintain the *status quo* and wait for things to quieten down, if they do, and not to try to negotiate an Agreement which, if negotiated, would be negotiated with people who are under the stress of violent emotion and who, on the evidence available to us to-day, do not appear likely to play their part in maintaining an Agreement.

The alternative of a compromise solution is not one which commends itself to me, and I believe it will commend itself little to most of your Lordships. The compromise solution is one that has been aired in various parts of the world in the Press. It is progressively to remove the troops we have in Egypt and to leave the Middle East base with, it is said, a body of some 4,000 unarmed technicians—with what security for them?—and, for our own strategic purposes and those directly connected with the defence of Western Europe and the Allies of the N.A.T.O. group, to maintain a military force, in bits and pieces, scattered about in the neighbourhood of the Canal, such that no one piece without the other would

FO 371/102823

93014

be an effective military force. The second course, to clear out, means, to my mind, the removal and the dismantling of the Middle East base within the period when the existing Treaty comes to an end in 1956, say, in about two and a half years' time. That, to my mind, means removing the base, taking away everything which is worth removing, and in no circumstances leaving an unarmed force of technical people at the mercy of a Government which may be fickle and may institute the so-called "police measures" advocated by Serag ed-Din—namely, sending into the Canal Zone so called policemen in order to agitate. What guarantee is there that, in those conditions, either the technicians or the Forces would be safe?

One alternative, I repeat, seems to me to be to clear out, and to begin clearing out now. The first alternative, as I have said, is to come to an agreement about the maintenance of troops on the Canal and the Middle East base, for the purposes which I have tried to describe, and that involves an agreement with a willing party on each side of the table, and a party on the Egyptian side of the table which is willing and strong enough to carry it out. I have no doubt, in my own mind, which of the two alternatives I should prefer. I am fully aware that my argument involves the discontinuance of negotiations in the present atmosphere and in the present frame of mind. May I remind your Lordships of what is perhaps relevant at this moment and in this debate, that we are not willing to exclaim as Mark Antony did to the Queen of Egypt:

"I have offended reputation,
A most un noble swerving."

I should not like to see anyone in this country a party to clearing out and abandoning responsibilities and commitments we have inherited from the past, and which we cannot rightly hand over. May I add that I hope never to have to say of this country, as also Mark Antony said to the Queen of Egypt:

"O, whither has thou led me, Egypt? See
How I convey my shame out of thine eyes
By looking back what I have left behind
Stroy'd in dishonour."

I beg to move.

Moved to resolve, That in any new arrangement with Egypt it is essential for this country to maintain a position which

H.L. 73 D 7

is consistent with our commitments and responsibilities.—(Lord Rennell.)

3.42 p.m.

VISCOUNT STANS GATE: My Lords, a good deal has been said in the political world about a Government difficulty and a Government crisis. The Prime Minister is reported to have told his own supporters that in times when a Party is in office with a small majority those who hold strong views, as the noble Lord, Lord Rennell, does, must be prepared to make concessions in the interests of the stability of the Government. That is not the case to-day. Perhaps noble Lords have noticed that in another place a Motion was put down yesterday by a number of Members of Parliament—to wit, 100—pledging themselves to support the Government in their present policy of attempting to make a reasonable settlement with Egypt. So one argument that cannot prevail is that if we do not concede what the noble Lord asks we are in some way endangering the life of the Government. That cannot be the case because the Government are assured of an enormous majority should it put the issue to another place, which, of course, is the governing body.

I listened to the noble Lord's speech with great attention. It was majestic and, of course, sincere, but it was a speech that was at least fifty years out of date. The only thing Egyptian about it was the Egyptian night in which the noble Lord's mind appears to dwell. He spoke as if the existence of a convenient trade route gave anyone the right to take it. He spoke as if the fact that the Nile ran through several countries gave an outside country the right to dominate it. Finally, he spoke as if we could make no agreement in any case with the Government of such a country, proceeded to say that we must go on as we are, and added, I thought rather optimistically, that we must wait until things quieten down.

I have put down a note to mention moral issues but I will not do so, because it will probably embarrass this debate: instead, I will take up the practical difficulties of what the noble Lord proposes. He says that we must stay in Egypt. If so, we must have a police force. How many? Has the noble Lord any idea? It has been found that to maintain our position there requires a force of 80,000 soldiers. Does the noble Lord agree that

Reference:-
FO 371/102823

93014

COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION

6371/102 223

43011

[Viscount Stansgate.]
 that is the right number when he talks about adequately maintaining our police on the Canal—although it has little to do with the Canal? How many does the noble Lord mean? It is no good criticising the Government unless you have some practical plan to put in the place of their policy.

Then, if we have a force there, and have a Base there, I would ask: is it of any military value? Of course, I am standing in the presence of the greatest living British soldier. No doubt he can explain this, but even Field Marshals have to work with civilians in uniform when war comes, and as one who has been a civilian in uniform I think I am entitled to express an opinion in these matters. What is the value of this Base which requires 80,000 men to maintain it in peace, with none over to fight the Russians? That is what I cannot understand. The communications, the sweet water canal, the food supply?—I do not know what the population of Egypt is, but if there are, say, 19,000,000 Egyptians all sabotaging our efforts, is this Base of any value at all? What about this wonderful dump, the area of which, I am told, is eighty miles by twenty miles? I should like to hear the noble Viscount, Lord Trenchard, on this point. I think that even an American pilot could hit a dump like that. I wonder what is the value of it. If it is going to be defended, who is going to defend it? Is it going to be defended by aircraft, or by anti-aircraft artillery; and if the latter, are they going to be left behind? There are no answers to these questions—merely a rumbling in the Conservative backwoods. There is no intelligible idea brought forward as an international policy.

These are not merely difficulties that have occurred over the last year. They occurred after the First World War. I remember that General Bullfin had the task then of clearing up all the mess of sabotage that existed all over Egypt, and I remember how difficult and how costly in casualties that task was. I have heard soldiers say that if we want to have a strong point in Egypt—and there is no nation since the time of Napoleon which has not coveted a strong point in Egypt—it would be much better to send an army to take it when we want it rather than

H.L. 73 D 8

attempt to maintain this absolutely indefensible mass of troops all the time, of no practical value and at an enormous cost—I think it cost about £60 million a year.

These are my ideas about what might occur. But we are not working in a mental vacuum; we are working in a world of realities. We have had all this before. This little tragedy was played out last year. At the beginning of the year we had the encounter of Centurion tanks in Ismailia. It is good country for tanks, sandy and flat, but rather hard on the Egyptians, if armed only with sticks and stones and rifles. But the Centurion tank is the best way of exhibiting "firmness." The tanks pushed down to a village somewhere down Suez way. Later, in Ismailia, there was a police force, together with a force of auxiliary police, about 600 out of the 700. They were attacked by tanks in a building called the Bureau Sanilane, and after two hours of hard fighting, a number of men, mostly armed with rifles, emerged. Forty-four were killed. We could not have a better example than that of the type of firmness for which the noble Lord, Lord Rennell, asks.

What was the result? And what did it advantage us? What was the sequel? There was a police strike. The auxiliary police said that they were not going on when they were not supported, and when Cairo was burned, the police looked on. All this is on record in the Press. The sack of Cairo resulted in the revolution—in the dismissal of Farouk and the setting up of a military dictatorship under General Neguib. The setting up of the military dictatorship and the defection of one who was supposed to be one of our greatest friends, Abdul Rahman, resulted in the loss of the Sudan. Now it is this military dictatorship, unquestionably backed by unanimous public opinion, which demands certain rights for their country.

I should like to ask the noble Lord, Lord Rennell, this question, as he has great experience of civilian administration after a war. It was contemplated in January, 1952, I think, or 1953, that we should set up an administration in Cairo and take over Cairo. *The Times* said:

"Plans are being developed for an advance into Cairo should conditions there deteriorate still further."

Q 371/102 827

93014

[Viscount Stansgate.]
 were put in a British gaol. That was the beginning of the Arab movement in the Arab world. That was where the mistake was made. People had got into the way of trampling on Egypt, and thought that the best thing to do was to continue trampling on Egypt.

If I may digress for a moment: Egypt is a small country, but Egypt is a proud country. The record of the dynasty of Mahomet Ali is a remarkable record. I mentioned the fact that Ibrahim nearly took Constantinople. His achievements in Syria were majestic. As a matter of fact, in the last war we fought against the Russians—I put this in to please noble Lords opposite—the Egyptians took part on the Turkish side in the trenches at Plevno and even sent troops to support the Emperor Maximilian in Mexico, which was French Indo-China in those days. Ismail Pasha had rather modern views on finance and introduced the Welfare State in Egypt rather before its due time. They are a proud people. But all you did was to say that they were part of the Empire, and a Protectorate, until Lord Allenby declared that it was impossible, and that you could not go on. You gave them independence, and you reserved the four points that constitute the independence of any State.

If you look back—and I can look back over that country; it is fifty years since I first climbed the Great Pyramid—you will see that the failure was one of moral conception. We should have seen that the Arabs were coming forward, and British policy should have been gradually to lay aside the policy of arms of past generations, and to take up the policy of the spirit of emancipation. If we had been friendly with the Arabs, then most of the problems of the Middle East would have been solved. But instead of that, we hung on to this antiquated notion that somehow we had to have a strong point somewhere in those parts; and the Foreign Office played the Arabs and the Israelis the one against the other, which has been a devastating failure. But the idea was that we had to keep a hold in the Arab world in Egypt. We could not let go there. All we could do to please the Arabs was by being a little harsh with the Israelis.

Let me tell you, my Lords, something said to me by a famous diplomat—he is

H.L. 75 D 10

dead now, so let no one ask me his name. He said, "You know I am a church warden and I have to read lessons in church. When I read that passage about 'the ransomed of the Lord shall return, it sticks in my gizzard.'" He went on, "As a matter of fact the Old Testament has been a disaster for British policy in the Middle East." The truth is that, had we had enough foresight to see what could be done, not only should we have inherited the same sort of moral strength that we now have in South Asia, but we should have done something to solve the Arab and Israeli problem.

I want to say a word about this matter, because I agree with what the noble Lord, Lord Rennell, said about the Canal and the blockade. Friendly, as I am with the Egyptians, I say quite clearly that you cannot make a Treaty with Egypt if you are going to make her stronger to pursue a vendetta against Israel. As a matter of fact, there is not a hard way out: you could let the blockade fade away; you could have the list of contraband made so small that it did not matter. Certainly under the Tripartite Agreement of 1950 you could not do anything to increase the arms of the Arabs without correspondingly increasing the arms of the Israelis. But what a ridiculous thing it would be to start a little arms race in the Middle East in order to equalise the mistakes in your policy! Can we have peace? We have to go a long way back for this, and certainly it is impossible at present. The most we can hope for is a sort of armistice and quietness. The real thing would be to try to go back to the conceptions of Weizmann and the Emir Feisal thirty years ago. I do not want to worry your Lordships with a number of extracts, but there is the famous letter written in 1919 from the Emir Feisal to Dr. Weizmann in which he says:

"We are working together for a reformed and revived Near East, and our two movements"—

that is, the Arab movement and the Israeli movement—

"complete one another. The Jewish movement is national and not imperialistic. Our movement is national and not imperialistic; and there is room in Syria for us both. Indeed, I think that neither can be a real success without the other."

That letter was written a long time ago, but if that spirit could be recaptured,

10371/102823

93014

what a wonderful victory it would be for peace in the world and for understanding in the Middle East!

The Jews have never suffered from the Moslems. It is not the Moslems who have persecuted the Jews; it is the Christians who have persecuted the Jews. The Egyptians have never persecuted the Jews. Neguib himself has shown a most remarkable tolerance, especially in the difficult circumstances of the day, towards the Jewish subjects in Egypt. You may call this theorising, but at the same time, I am perfectly certain that it is the only way in which British influence—to which we attach so much importance—can be used for the good of the world. I recognise the glorious Gladstonian rotundity of the noble Lord's Motion. I could not make out what it meant. It is going to be accepted by the Government, and no Motion which is accepted by the Government can possibly have very much meaning. I was hoping that this debate would invite the Government to pursue their course and lead us towards something which will be a real and just peace in the Middle East.

4.4 p.m.

LORD HANKEY: My Lords, speaking in support of the Motion, in spite of what my noble friend who has just sat down has said, I want to insist that in any future negotiations on the Suez Canal Zone Her Majesty's Government should pursue a much robuster but not less friendly attitude than hitherto. I want a policy more consistent with the proper discharge of our commitments and responsibilities in the future than in the past, and consistent also with our position as the head of the Commonwealth and as one of the leaders of the free world. Before I come to that, if I may make a slight personal explanation, I want to say that my remarks do not reflect in any way on any of the distinguished public servants who have been faithfully carrying out, under considerable difficulties, the Government's policy in Cairo. Secondly, I want to say that I am not speaking as a director of the Suez Canal Company or on behalf of that company, or that I have any authority to speak on their behalf. As the President of the company has frequently said publicly, the company takes no part in political questions, and its relations with the Egyptian Government are governed by statutory

H.L. 73 D 11

instruments which were brought up to date in the Agreement of 1949. I speak, then, solely on my own responsibility as a Cross-Bench Peer with more than fifty years of varied experience of Egyptian problems in their British, imperial and international aspects, and I rely solely on public sources of information.

As a sincere friend of Egypt, with many Egyptian friends in all grades of the population, and as a firm believer in Anglo-Egyptian co-operation, I deeply regret, and still regret, that on assuming office General Neguib and his colleagues felt constrained to treat this country as public enemy number one instead of Egypt's most sincere friend, as I believe we are. But they were in a difficult position, as heirs to formidable problems, including a violent anti-British agitation, and they had few assets or resources to back their negotiations. So not long after receiving British *de facto* recognition, the General and his adherents started openly and without any concealment to shout us out of the Canal Zone by repeating every day, *ad nauseam*, the stale old slogans of the Wafd: "Immediate, total and unconditional evacuation of the British Forces," with threats of forcible expulsion if we did not go voluntarily, and war-like preparations, including the formation of commandos under German Nazi officers. Reiteration is the secret of conviction, and this method of cold warfare made great progress. The statements were never contradicted, and before long public opinion, and even our own friends in Egypt, began to think that the story was true.

That was the situation which confronted me when I visited Egypt last January. The British Forces were indignant—some furious. They said some very harsh things about those responsible here, which I shall not repeat to-day. I felt that there must be some explanation, but I was not reassured by a brief visit to Cairo. The Sudan negotiations were continuing without the least apparent realisation that all the time all over Egypt, from the Upper Nile to the Delta, from the Western Desert to Sinai and Gaza, public opinion was being poisoned against this country. The most fanatic elements in the population were being whipped up to danger point, and the pitch was being completely queered for the coming negotiations on the Suez Canal

Reference:-

FO 371/102823

93014

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION

[Lord Hankey.]

Zone. A more humiliating prelude to a great negotiation on vital national and international interests it would be difficult to conceive. It was an attempt on Egypt's part to get a settlement by what Mr. Lloyd George at the Paris Peace Conference called "public clamour," which he never would stand for. The Egyptian negotiators, by their slogans, inhibited themselves from any give and take: it had to be a very one-sided negotiation.

Just before I left Egypt, General Neguib publicly took an oath to the constitution which began in this way:

"Oh God, thou lovest the strong and detestest feeble-characters"

and ended with an appeal for "Unity, Discipline and Strength." Obviously, that was not the man, for all his amiable qualities (to which I can personally testify), to deal with on a basis of appeasement. I felt I had to do something; and on arrival home I reported to Ministers that we were heading for catastrophic disaster. That was my first warning. Some protests were made against Egypt here in Parliament, and by others in Cairo; but naturally they had very little effect without a sanction. I felt then and I feel now that negotiations ought to have been stopped, for a time at any rate, or else transferred to London—as has happened again and again, as I am sure the noble Lord, Lord Killearn, will remember.

Soon after that, the Prime Minister took charge of the Foreign Office owing to the Foreign Secretary's illness; and there was an immediate improvement here and in Egypt. Very reassuring in his speech in another place on May 11 (OFFICIAL REPORT, Commons, Vol. 515, col. 886) were the references to

"... the duty which has fallen upon us, and us alone, of safeguarding the interests of the free nations in the Middle East and also of preserving the international water way of the Suez Canal"

and the observation that

"if agreeable arrangements can be made to enable this latter service"—

that is to say the Canal—

"and also the solid maintenance of the strategic base to be discharged by agreement with Egypt, it would mean great saving of our men and money."

H.L. 73 D 12

Even more heartening was the absence, apart from a laudable desire for a large reduction of numbers, of any hint of the withdrawal of the whole of the British fighting forces and also his advice (col. 888) that

"... we may await the development of events with the composure which follows from the combination of patience with strength."

If we had acted on those precepts, I think the situation would have been very much better now. But alas! the Prime Minister also fell ill, and during the Recess, when the Parliamentary watch-dogs were scattered, the situation seemed to drift. We seemed to be on the verge of dangerous concessions on points of principle. Once more, on September 5, I felt constrained in the public interest to warn the Ministers of catastrophic disaster approaching. That was my second warning. The consternation of other people interested in this question was as great as my own, and was reflected in the correspondence and leading articles of important newspapers and magazines, at the Conservative Conference at Ramsgate and, a little later, in Parliamentary debates in another place. Your Lordships will see in a moment why I had to make this rather long digression.

I come now to the results of the talks, so far as we know them. The object of these so-called "informal" talks was not to prepare a Treaty but only to establish some agreement on principles as a basis for a formal Conference to draft a Treaty. But, of course, if you agreed on principles and they were embodied in the Treaty, it would be exceedingly difficult to get away from them. We got very little information from Her Majesty's Government—practically none—on the trend of these discussions, and public relations officials gave the impression that their function was to conceal rather than to inform. I cannot help thinking that that was a mistake, because, whereas the Egyptians have tried to whip up tremendous public opinion against us, our public were not sufficiently informed to express themselves until comparatively recently, so that the Egyptian negotiators would get the impression that there was not much public opinion behind our negotiators.

I come now to vital interests. I do not think there is any doubt about those. Here I differ a little from the noble Lord,

Return to African Dept.

SECRET

WE. 1192/678

Egypt Negotiations:

Concentrated Base Area.

I have been over with Brigadier Baker, Director of Plans at the War Office, the notion which I understand Captain Waterhouse is putting to the Foreign Affairs Committee this evening, that a solution to our present difficulties might be found by concentrating a much smaller number of troops than we have at present in a small section of the base area. Brigadier Baker has just been briefing Mr. Head for this evening's discussion. The following are the main points:-

- I The area has no self-contained portion, as a reference to the attached map will show. At great expense and with Egyptian good will a sort of miniature base area could be constructed which a small number of troops might be able to defend successfully for an unspecified period.
- II There is no such miniature area at present.
- III The consequence of such a concentration, should finance and the Egyptians permit us to make one, would presumably be either the destruction or abandonment of the rest of the base, and with it our last hope of anything that would be any use in a future world war.
- IV Given these conditions, there is no practicable middle course between the plan we are anxious to secure by means of a defence agreement and total abandonment of the base.

22 DEC 1953

371/102223

14

23/12

V Up to the point at which we declare that the latter is our policy, our existing strength in the Canal Zone is the minimum required to protect ourselves, and a smaller number, if we accept the hope of "concentration" as illusory, would be in real danger of destruction.

E. B. Buckley

December 16, 1953

This is a hopeful idea, & we may have to deal with it in the S/S's speech. The short answer is, this is not a matter of precise military calculation. We maintain ourselves in Egypt because the Egyptians are afraid of us. They are afraid of us because we have overwhelming power. If they ceased to be afraid of us (and still hated us) they would soon hurry to get out of us.

Therefore we must maintain overwhelming power; or else get out - either on agreed terms, or completely, in our own time (- I shouldn't like to be among the last 10,000).

The practical difficulties of concentrating the force are secondary.

Doger Allen 16/12

Mr. Guff (in case H/S wd. like to see before this evening's discussion) Thanks you.

See 2 or 3/12

6371/102823

SECRET

JE1192/684

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Cypher/OTP.

FOREIGN OFFICE SECRET AND
WHITFIELD SECRET (CABINET)
DISTRIBUTION

Sir R. Stevenson
No: 1750
December 27, 1953.

D: 12.45 p.m. December 27, 1953.
R: 1.27 p.m. December 27, 1953.

IMMEDIATE
SECRET

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No: 1750 of December 27
Repeated for information to: Washington, U.K.Del. New York.
B.M.E.O. Ankara.
and Saving to: Paris. U.K.Del. Paris.

Your telegram No: 2333 and my telegram No: 1751.

Following from delegation.

JE1017/230

Private and informal talk took place last night as arranged with Colonel Gamal Nasr, Salah Salem and General Hakim Amr.

2. All outstanding points were discussed and some slight progress was made on several of them (my immediately following telegram) . On availability, however, Egyptian attitude appears to have hardened and Gamal Nasr said several times that they could not give an undertaking for automatic reactivation except in the event of an attack on one of the Arab States. For all other wars - including the outbreak of a global war - the maximum the Egyptians would concede was an undertaking for "consultation".

3. It is evident that, unless the Egyptians on further reflection change their minds on this, no agreement is possible. It is important however from our point of view that if a break comes it should be clearly on the question of availability. We agreed therefore to have another private talk on Tuesday next (again of course without commitment) - in order to make sure that we are in broad agreement on all aspects of the problem other than uniforms and availability.

4. I trust there will be no leakage to Press in United Kingdom or elsewhere revealing that this meeting took place.

Foreign Office pass Washington, U.K.Del. New York and Ankara as my telegrams Nos: 392, 25 and 114 and Paris and U.K.Del. Paris as my saving telegrams Nos: 533 and 8 respectively.

[Repeated to.....

*Extraneous to ref*SECRETFROM FOREIGN OFFICE TO CAIROCypher/OTP and
By BagFOREIGN OFFICE AND
WHITEHALL DISTRIBUTIONNo. 2335

December 24, 1953

D:8.46 p.m. December 24, 1953

IMMEDIATESECRETAddressed to Cairo telegram No. 2335 of December 24.

Repeated for information to: Washington [Immediate]

Ankara

New York (U.K.DEL.) B.M.E.O.

and saving to: Paris No. 3310

My telegram No. 2333 [of December 24].

Please be careful in particular not to commit yourself to the possibility of any withdrawal starting before the conclusion of the formal agreement. There can be no obligation on us in regard to this.

CONFIDENTIALFROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Cypher/Gr

JE. 1192/681

FOREIGN OFFICE AND
WHITEHALL DISTRIBUTIONSir R. Stevenson
No. 1742
December 23, 1953.D.4.55 p.m. December 23, 1953.
R.6. 6 p.m. December 23, 1953.PRIORITY
CONFIDENTIAL

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 1742 of December 23

Repeated for information to:-

Washington

U.K. Del. New York

B.M.E.O.

Ankara

And Saving to Paris

U.K. Del. Paris

My telegram No. 1734: Anglo-Egyptian negotiations.

My United States colleague called on me this morning and showed me a telegram which he had sent to the State Department after a talk which he had had with the Egyptian Foreign Minister yesterday. In the course of this talk he had pressed the Foreign Minister very hard on the question of availability of the base which he had made clear was a major interest of the United States. He had made it equally clear that Egyptian efforts to restrict automatic reactivation to a case of an attack on a member of the Arab Mutual Collective Security Pact was not (repeat not) good enough. He had also impressed on the Foreign Minister the difficulties of the Parliamentary situation in Britain and emphasised the conviction of the United States Government that these difficulties were very real.

2. Minister for Foreign Affairs had drawn attention to recent efforts of Egyptian leaders to maintain restraint in their public utterances, a matter on which the United States Embassy had been very insistent of late.

3. Minister for Foreign Affairs said he expected a calm period to supervene and promised my United States colleague who is leaving today on a short Christmas vacation that nothing would happen for a week or ten days. He added that he hoped that informal conversations with us would start in the first week of next month.

SECRET

FROM: G.H.Q. MIDDLE EAST LAND FORCES
 TO: MINISTRY OF DEFENCE, LONDON

2E1192

683

ROUTINE

INFO: CINCMED
 EMBASSY CAIRO

IZ 11760
 TOO 221311B
 (221111Z)
 TOR 221813Z

893/CCL.

22nd December, 1953.

For Chiefs of Staff From BDCC(ME).

1. We have examined our redeployment plan in the light of the proposal that withdrawal from Egypt is to be completed within 15 months of the date on which the agreement comes into force "S Day".
2. The redeployment of army major units can be completed with this 15 months period after S Day and need not therefore begin within the period between agreement in principle "P Day" and S Day. It will be necessary however for the R.A.F. to start redeployment shortly after P Day if all R.A.F. units are to be withdrawn within the period.
3. Our existing plans have assumed that there would be a period of not less than three months between P Day and S Day. During this period the R.A.F. would (A) Move out of the Canal Zone one A/W fighter squadron and one P.R. squadron. (B) Disband two fighter squadrons (one DF/GA and one A/W) and one transport squadron and thereafter close R.A.F. station Shallufa. This would however still leave two DF/GA squadrons and one F/R squadron in the Canal Zone and facilities to operate additional squadrons should it be necessary to reinforce the Canal Zone. We are satisfied therefore that we should be able to meet any military requirement which might arise during the period prior to the agreement coming into force as a result of a breakdown in security or Egyptian intransigence.
4. Unless the R.A.F. are able to start the moves listed in para three above on P Day they will not be able to complete their redeployment from the Canal Zone by S plus 15 months.

CIRCULATION

TOO 221311B

Foreign Office
 War Registry Admiralty
 Message Control War Office
 Registry Telegrams Air Ministry
 Mr. P.H. Dean, Foreign Office
 Mr. E.B. Boothby, Foreign Office
 Mr. R.C. Mackworth-Young, Foreign Office
 Major General W.H.A. Bishop
 Mr. Armitage Smith

FO 371/102823

930/1

COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION

CONFIDENTIAL

FROM : G.H.Q., MIDDLE EAST LAND FORCES
 TO : MINISTRY OF DEFENCE, LONDON

ROUTINE

IZ 11744
 TOO 211656B
 (211456Z)
 TOR 220609Z

A

E 1192/683G

48814/MIL

21st December, 1953.

Lovegrove from Hatch.

1. In planning details of redeployment the following nicknames are now in use here.
2. The day on which agreement on principles is reached with the Egyptians. F(Peter) day.
3. The day on which agreement comes into force. S(Sugar) day.
4. This is for your information as we may be using these terms in telegrams in the future.

CIRCULATION

TOO 211656B

Foreign Office
 War Registry, Admiralty
 Message Control, War Office
 Registry Telegrams, Air Ministry
 Mr. P.H. Dean, Foreign Office
 Mr. E.B. Boothby, Foreign Office
 Mr. R.C. Mackworth-Young, Foreign Office
 Major General W.H.A. Bishop
 Mr. Armitage Smith
 D.C.O.R. "B"

CONFIDENTIAL

1	2
---	---

TOP SECRET

TE1192/683

(P.W.B.)

EGYPT: DEFENCE NEGOTIATIONS

Flag A

It appears from telegram number 893/CCL from the British Defence Co-ordinating Committee (Middle East) to the Chiefs of Staff that the Royal Air Force may not, in certain circumstances, be able to complete the withdrawal of its personnel from Egypt within fifteen months. This raises serious implications, since we are committed to the fifteen month period (see Cairo telegram number 1490 of October 21, paragraph 6 (a)). The Secretary of State has expressed concern at this.

Flag B

2. It may well be that with a little pressure the Air Ministry can be persuaded to compress their programme a little so as to enable the withdrawal to be made within the period to which we are committed. As a first step, we might ask the Ministry of Defence at a high level to state exactly what the position is.
3. A draft letter is submitted.

Remy Loung

January 14, 1954.

Dr. Edwards

15/1

OUT FILE

FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

(JE 1192/6830(1953))

January 16, 1954.

TOP SECRET*My dear Powell,*

In their telegram No. 893/COL of December 22, the British Defence Co-ordination Committee (Middle East) say that their redeployment plans have been drawn up on the assumption that there would be a period of not less than three months between "P Day" and "S Day". They also state that the Royal Air Force would have to start redeployment shortly after P Day if all R.A.F. units were to be withdrawn within a period of fifteen months following S Day.

2. While three months is a realistic guess, there is a possibility that the interval between P and S days may be as short as one month. There would then be a few weeks, say three, further grace before the start of the fifteen months period, as this does not begin until ratification. Even so, there would be in the worst case only an interval of seven weeks between P Day and the start of the fifteen months period. In this case, it would presumably not be possible for the Royal Air Force, under existing plans, to complete their withdrawal by the end of that period. If this is so, the implications are serious, since we are now committed to the fifteen-month period (see Cairo telegram No. 1490 of October 21, paragraph 6(a)).

/s.

R. R. Powell, M.C., K.B.E., C.B.,
Ministry of Defence.

3. The Foreign Secretary has expressed his concern at the possibility that we may have entered into a commitment which we may not, under certain circumstances, be able to fulfil. I should be grateful if you could let me know, for the information of the Foreign Secretary, what the position is.

*Yours sincerely,
Basil Boothby*

(B. B. Boothby)

TOP SECRET

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Cypher/CTP.

FOREIGN OFFICE SECRET
WHITEHALL SECRET DISTRIBUTION

Mr. Hankey

No: 1490

October 21, 1953.

D: 7.30 p.m. October 21, 1953.

R: 8.22 p.m. October 21, 1953.

IMMEDIATE

TOP SECRET

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No: 1490 of October 21

Repeated for information to: B.H.E.O. Washington. Ankara. Pa

My telegram No: 1488.

Following from Delegation.

We started by making comprehensive review of all outstanding points, taking those mentioned in your telegram No: 1754 one by one and emphasizing that this represented a final and generous attempt by Her Majesty's Government to reach a composition of the points of difference.

2. We gave the Egyptians typed copies of the following formulae:

- A. Suez Canal. (Cairo telegram No: 1414).
- B. Uniform. (Foreign Office telegram No: 1805).
- C. Consultation. (Foreign Office despatch No: 234).
- D. Availability. (Foreign Office telegrams Nos: 1745 and 1778).

3. Speaking of the period of withdrawal we said we could inform them that we should begin a substantial withdrawal of troops after agreement on principles had been reached. This was not a commitment on our part but something which we were telling them for their information. The extent of this immediate withdrawal would depend upon the state of affairs in the Canal Zone. We should expect complete reduction in tension, cessation of commando training, prevention of carriage of arms by unauthorized persons and complete cooperation from the Egyptian authorities.

4. On uniform we said that we were proposing a solution which made reasonable allowance for the common sense and forbearance of those who would be operating the agreement. It would not be understood in our country, nor would it be acceptable, that our men should

be denied.....

Cairo telegram No: 1490 to Foreign Office

- 2 -

be denied the right to wear the uniform of the service to which they belonged. On the other hand, care would be taken in the selection of the man who would be in command of our technicians and he would be given special guidance to ensure that this question of uniform was handled sensibly and in a manner which would not facilitate the efforts of mischief-makers. We reminded the Egyptians that this question of uniform would only become relevant after our forces had been withdrawn from the Canal Zone. At that time, if the assurances which they had repeatedly given us were of any value at all, an entirely different attitude would prevail towards our men.

5. Final phase. We did not, at this juncture, mention figures. We said we were prepared to settle provided the principle were observed that the base in this phase also should be maintained as a going concern.

6. The Egyptians then retired for one-and-a-half hours. On their return they gave their views as follows:-

(a) They agreed to the fifteen months' withdrawal period from the date of the signature of the agreement.

(b) They agreed to seven years' duration from the date of signature, but said that it must be clearly stated that the agreement would then terminate.

(c) They agreed to 4,000 technicians for the first four and a half years.

(d) For the last period they proposed 1,000 technicians for one year followed by 500 for one and a half years.

(e) On availability they accepted the formula with the exception of phrase (c) concerning recommendation by the United Nations. They rejected this phrase and offered nothing to explain it. They repeated that they were loyal members of the United Nations and would honour their obligations but they would not accept mention of any commitment other than the Arab security pact.

(f) On uniform they produced the following:

"Outside the base area and when off duty within it, British personnel will wear civilian clothes. When on duty within the installations, and in transit between them, they will wear a unified civilian dress to be agreed upon. They may carry a pistol for their personal protection".

They explained.....

Cairo telegram No: 1490 to Foreign Office

- 3 -

They explained that if the unified civilian dress carried rank distinctions they must be non-military. They suggested cork helmets, overalls or shorts and shirts (non-khaki).

(g) On the air question they assured us of satisfaction and repeated that they would give us most favoured nation treatment but they did not mention the formula drafted at the meeting on October 10.

(h) They agreed to the Suez Canal formula.

(i) On consultation they produced the following concoction:-

"The parties will consult together not later than two years before the end of the period specified for the duration of the agreement concerning the remaining British owned property. If they are unable to agree on this question the British Government shall, before the end of the specified period, withdraw or otherwise dispose of the remaining British owned property".

7. We replied that we could only express extreme disappointment. All our work appeared to have been wasted. The two main issues were availability and uniform. On the former we had offered something which we thought it impossible for them to refuse. The Egyptians had asked for our final word and had been given it. They had also been given our final word on uniform. We had made it clear that a denial of the right to uniform would not be understood or accepted in the United Kingdom.

8. We said that we could only report this to our Government as being the Egyptian position. We should not accompany our report by any recommendations.

9. We said that we were not authorized to agree that the agreement should come into force on the date of signature. This was a procedural matter to which our Government might or might not agree. All parts of the agreement must come into force together.

10. We were prepared to discuss technicians in the last period. The Egyptian figures were too low.

11. We were also prepared to discuss the consultation clause. Their new draft appears to turn this clause into something of a different nature.

12. The.....

TOP SECRETCairo telegram No: 1490 to Foreign Office

- 4 -

12. The Minister for Foreign Affairs said that we had clearly reached the point where each side must report. They had gone as far as they could. Particularly on availability they could go no further.

13. We then discussed publicity. Salah Salen proposed a simple statement that we had failed to reach agreement. His colleagues suppressed him firmly and accepted the text in my telegram No: 1489. He interrupted again to make a speech on availability saying that agreement was impossible until that was settled.

14. Comments in my immediately following telegram.

Foreign Office please pass Washington, Ankara and Paris as my telegrams Nos: 360, 95 and 50 respectively.

[Repeated to Washington, Ankara and Paris]

ADVANCE COPIES:

Private Secretary.

Sir W. Strang.

Mr. R. Allen.

Head African Department.

JJJJJ

SECRETCairo telegram No. 1738 to Foreign Office

- 2 -

for the first time at the October meeting. On this question it became quite clear that the Egyptian Government would in no circumstances accept an "open ended" agreement. I pointed out that at some moment it would be obviously necessary to consult about the future of the base. They agreed, but said this should take place two years before the end of the agreement in order to give time for the necessary arrangements to be made. There was no discussion of either "availability" or the "uniform" points. I said that I could assure them that we would raise no points which had not already been mentioned either in the general remarks made by General Robertson or myself, or which had not arisen in the course of our previous discussions. It seemed to me that the most difficult of the outstanding points was that of the jurisdictional status of the technical personnel remaining in the base.

Foreign Office please pass to Washington, Ankara, New York (U.K.DEL.) as my telegrams Nos. 390, 112 and 23 and saving to Paris and Paris (U.K.DEL.) as my telegrams Nos. 530 and 6 respectively.

[Repeated to Washington, Ankara and New York (U.K.DEL.) and saving to Paris and Paris (U.K.DEL.).]

ADVANCE COPIES TO:

Sir I. Kirkpatrick
Private Secretary
Mr. R. Allen
Head of African Department

FO 371/102823

93016

Trinfalgar 7080
225

JE 1192

Enter, JG.

o JE 1192

XXXXXXXXXXXX

Ref: M/1489/53/P.1

XXXXXXXXXXXX
Metropole Building,
Northumberland Avenue,
London, W.C.2.

14-December, 1953.

JE 1192/5390

TOP SECRET

JE 1192/675

Dear Humphreys-Davies,

At the meeting of the Working Party on Middle East Redeployment held on 15th October the Air Ministry was invited to consider what financial arrangements would be appropriate for the R.A.F. use of staging facilities at Abu Suair under any new defence agreement concluded with Egypt.

This has now been done and I am attaching for your information a copy of an Air Ministry note on the question. As requested by the Working Party, this has been sent to our Financial Adviser, M.E.A.P., for his guidance in advising the negotiators in any discussion of the matter. In making this study, we have been guided by the general principles set out in the Ministry of Defence "Memorandum on Financial Aspects" dated 17th October and your letter to my of the same date.

Handwritten note: [unclear]

I am sending copies of this letter and its attachment to Ledward (Foreign Office) and France (Ministry of Defence).

Yours sincerely,

(F. W. VERBY)

JE 1192/5010

Handwritten: Air Ministry

G. P. Humphreys-Davies, Esq.,
Treasury Chambers,
Great George Street,
S.W.1.

TOP SECRET

6391/102223 93014
TOP SECRET

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS AT ABU SUeir AFTER THE
CONCLUSION OF AN ANGLo-EGYPTIAN AGREEMENT

We hope to secure indefinite staging rights at Abu Suoir, and financial arrangements must, therefore, have an eye to long term developments as well as the immediate future particularly in view of its value as a VHB airfield. The main factor to be envisaged in the long term is the progressive replacement of British by Egyptian staff, although if Mauripur and Negombe can be taken as precedents this process may be a very much slower one than the Egyptians at present imagine.

2. We consider three possible cases, of which the last is, in our view, the most probable.

- (A) The Egyptian Air Force may take over Abu Suoir as an active R.A.F. Station on conclusion of the agreement and the R.A.F. would be reduced to lodger status.
- (B) Abu Suoir may remain to all intents and purposes an R.A.F. Station with a nominal Egyptian Station Commander and a small staff of Egyptian Customs, Immigration, and Medical Officers.
- (C) After starting as in (B) above, the Egyptian Air Force may move in squadrons and/or effective maintenance control and administrative staff at a later date.

3. We consider below the financial implications which should, in our view, apply to each of these cases.

- (A) Abu Suoir taken over effectively by the Egyptian Air Force at the start

Pay. Each force would pay for its own staff. If the main agreement provides that we are responsible for air traffic control and other technical services of a common user nature, we should resist any demand that we should pay the Egyptians for Customs, Immigration and Medical staff.

Locally engaged civilians. Each force would pay for local civilian staff engaged to meet its agreed responsibilities. There may be some difficulty about civilian guards and the camp might have to be sub-divided into areas of specific responsibility. There will inevitably be certain common areas, such as the runway itself, where cost-sharing arrangements for guards would have to be worked out.

Rent. We should not agree to pay rent for buildings which remain in R.A.F. occupation on the grounds that in ~~the past~~ ~~the past~~ to the Egyptians no account had been taken of the buildings and facilities concerned. This value would far off-set any reasonable rental. (The position might, of course, be different if the Egyptians were to make a substantial payment for the buildings).

Maintenance. There may be no alternative in this case to Egyptian responsibility for maintenance of the airfield as a whole. We should hope to be able to bring pressure to bear through the Base Command H.Q., where we should retain a small supervisory Works staff (see para. 3B below) to keep maintenance up to an acceptable standard. We are far less likely to achieve adequate maintenance if we agree to the payment of a regular annual contribution to maintenance costs. The best arrangement would be to pay in arrears for the value of work actually done on our behalf, i.e. full payment in the case of buildings solely

/occupied

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

occupied by the R.A.F. and an agreed contribution, when possible on the basis of extra costs only, to common maintenance expenditure. A less satisfactory alternative would be to agree the payment of a fixed annual sum in arrears, which would at least give us the opportunity of threatening to withhold payment if the work had been scamped or neglected.

Services - i.e. Electricity, Water Supplies, Sewage, etc.
We should pay at an agreed rate for our share of the cost of these services, either on a broad consumption basis or on a per capita basis (see also para. 3e below).

(B) Abu Sueir as an effective R.A.F. Station under nominal Egyptian Command.

The same arrangements as in Case A would apply to rent and to pay of staff and of locally engaged civilians.

Maintenance. We would continue to maintain the airfield and all buildings at our expense. The cost might be between £25,000 and £40,000 a year but we should regard this expenditure as being justified, bearing in mind not only the value of the Abu Sueir to us in war and peace as an effective operational station, but also the considerable difficulties we have experienced at Mauripur on account of the financial limitations imposed by the local government. The staff employed would continue to be locally recruited Egyptians supervised by A.M.D.G.N. staff. We estimate that 11 U.K. based supervisory staff will be required, as follows:-

- (i) 2 officers and one other at Base H.Q. (We hope these would be provided in any event).
- (ii) 4 of non-officer status at the airfield itself.
- (iii) 4 of non-officer status at the Power House.

Services. We should retain responsibility, including financial responsibility, for the provision of services, and if the Egyptian staff were, in fact, limited to a small Station Commander's office and to Customs, Immigration, and Medical staff we should not propose to ask for repayment in respect of accommodation provided for and services used by them, on the grounds that they are being provided to facilitate R.A.F. use of the airfield. The value would in any event be insignificant unless the Egyptians unreasonably increased their establishment when the question of repayment would have to be reconsidered.

(C) Abu Sueir after having started as an R.A.F. Station is progressively taken over by the E.A.F.

The arrangements for rent and pay of staff and of local civilians would be as in (B).

Services and maintenance. When the Egyptians make firm proposals for moving in E.A.F. Squadrons or for taking over effective maintenance control of the airfield, our first reaction should be to suggest that we should continue to be responsible for services and maintenance and that they

/should

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

should make a pro rata contribution towards the cost. It can be shown that, excluding buildings, the cost of maintaining the runway and hardstandings would be no greater and might indeed be less if Egyptian aircraft use the airfield, because the life of an asphaltic runway is improved and prolonged by constant use. We should, therefore, be prepared to waive an Egyptian contribution to runway maintenance if this would help in negotiations. We should, however, expect the Egyptians to take over responsibility for the maintenance of buildings used exclusively by them and we should at least try to recover identifiable extra costs incurred elsewhere on the airfield on their behalf. We should charge for electricity, water, etc., on a consumption or per capita basis.

4. If the Egyptians insist on assuming full responsibility for maintenance and services on taking over effective control we should have to fall back on the arrangements described under Case A above.

5. A general point which will apply to all three cases is the question of capital replacement, e.g. for new generating plant at the Power House. If we maintain the airfield and services we should accept the cost of necessary capital replacement for common user facilities to meet R.A.F. requirements. If the Egyptians take over we should expect them to accept the cost and would argue that it was precisely with this question of capital replacement in mind that we agreed to pay our share of common services (see para. 3(A) above). This is eminently logical since if, in the latter case, there were any question of capital replacement, we should refuse to pay for any capital element of the running cost of the services on the grounds that the initial capital cost had been met by the British taxpayer anyway. We must recognize, however, that in practice the Egyptians would almost certainly refuse to play, that we should have to install replacement equipment at our own initial cost, and that the question of recovery would be a long drawn out and doubtful argument.

20 November, 1953

FO 371/102823

930/11

COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION

CONFIDENTIALCairo telegram No. 1734 to Foreign Office

- 2 -

Government.

4. It was decided to inform the press merely that I had paid a courtesy call on the Foreign Minister and in answer to possible questions to say that as was natural, Anglo-Egyptian relations had had been discussed in a general way and to answer in the negative any question about whether a meeting of the delegations had been fixed. If pressed about my expectations of a possible resumption of contact, to refer to your statement in the House of Commons mentioned above.

5. Foreign Minister is arranging for me to be received by General Neguib early next week.

Foreign Office pass Washington and Ankara and Saving to Paris as my telegrams Nos. 389, 111 and 528 respectively.

[Repeated to Washington and Ankara and Saving to Paris].

666666

FO 371/102823

93016

1	2
---	---

COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION

SECRET

FE 1192/655

A (P.W.N.)
95/1192/655

Cairo telegram No. 1724 below.

We can only guess at what the sensational Egyptian initiative might be, but some sort of non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union is perhaps the most likely. We can only instruct Sir R. Stevenson to tell the Egyptian Government how disastrous such a development would be to the negotiations, and to the possibility even of keeping our present offer open.

I attach a draft telegram to Cairo. - C

K. P. [Signature]

December 18, 1953

*he had better do nothing.
Let us speak.*

18 Dec 18

now see Cairo tel No. 1724. §3.

FE 1192/655

22/12