

FO 371/118902

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FROM WASHINGTON TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Cypher/OTP

FOREIGN OFFICE
AND WHITEHALL
DISTRIBUTION

Mr . Coulson

J.
E1094/14^A

No. 2259
November 7, 1956.

D. 4.26 p.m. November 7, 1956.

R. 5.03 p.m. November 7, 1956.

PRIORITY

CONFIDENTIAL

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 2259 of November 7.
Repeated for information saving to: United Kingdom Delegation New York
My telegram No. 2223: Egypt.

It has been evident for the past few days that the original outburst of indignation in the Administration has been rapidly subsiding. Even at the worst period our personal relations with senior officials have been unaffected, though few of them support our action. Relief at our acceptance of cease-fire is deep and widespread, and there is general determination to repair the alliance as rapidly as possible.

2. The above has been confirmed to me by a number of sources, including the Canadian Ambassador, who has played a prominent part in negotiations relating to the United Nations' Force.

3. We should not, in my opinion, now hesitate to discuss as before our normal range of problems with the United States Administration. I do not say we shall always get what we want or necessarily find the same degree of helpfulness as before. But I think it important that contacts at all levels, which have inevitably been restricted in recent weeks, should be resumed as early as possible. In particular there should be the maximum exchange of political information while the present crisis lasts, as part of the long process of rebuilding confidence.

E.W.K.

Reference:-

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FROM FOREIGN OFFICE TO TRIPOLI

En Clair

FOREIGN OFFICE AND
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No. 460

November 1, 1956 D. 11.49 a.m. November 1, 1956

EMERGENCY

Addressed to Tripoli telegram No. 460 of November 1.

Repeated for information to Washington Paris
P.O.M.E.F. Benghazi

Your telegram No. 389: [Suez]

You may inform the Libyan Government in writing categorically that Her Majesty's Government do not intend to attack Egypt from bases in Libya and that they will fully respect the Anglo-Libyan Treaty.

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E109 ✓
E1094/11
L... ✓
Enter ✓

LIBYA

Flag A

On receipt of Tripoli telegram No. 834 attached, reporting Ben Halim's request for information about our intentions, it was proposed, after consultation with Mr. Dean, that Her Majesty's Ambassador should renew to the Libyan Prime Minister the assurance authorised on August 11 that we did not intend to ask the Libyan Government's permission to attack Egypt from Libyan bases. The draft authorised H.M. Ambassador to say that H.M.G. fully intended to abide by the Anglo-Libyan Treaty.

2. Mr. Ross consulted the Secretary of State: who agreed, subject to the approval of the Chiefs of Staff, that we ^{gave an assurance that we will} could not attack Egypt from Libyan bases.

Flag B

3. Since then we have received Tripoli telegram No. 389. The Libyan Prime Minister has now asked for a written assurance that we would not violate the Anglo-Libyan Treaty. *(This follows from the assurances mentioned above)* H.M. Ambassador earnestly requests authority to give this guarantee as categorically as possible by noon G.M.T. today.

4. Anything less than this will almost certainly lead the Libyan Government to abrogate the Treaty and possibly attempt, with Egyptian help, to evict us from Libya. A categorical assurance that we intend to abide by the terms of the Treaty will probably ensure that the Libyans do the same and we shall be able to preserve our bases there.

5. Recommendation That the attached draft be sent to Tripoli.

A. Dawson

November 1, 1956

This must be cleared with the Chiefs of Staff

Discussed by Sec 5

A. Dawson
H xi

and

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J

FROM NEW YORK TO FOREIGN OFFICE

(United Kingdom Delegation to the United Nations)

En Clair

E. 1094 / 12

FOREIGN OFFICE Mr. WHITCHALL

DISTRIBUTION

Sir P. Dixon

No. 1008

November 1, 1956.

D. 9.11 a.m. November 2, 1956.

R. 11.35 a.m. November 2, 1956.

IMMEDIATE

Egypt.

Following is text of Mr. Dulles's speech at the special Assembly this evening.

Begins.

I doubt that any delegate ever spoke from this forum with as heavy a heart as I have brought here tonight. We speak on a matter of vital importance, where the United States finds itself unable to agree with three nations with whom it has ties, deep friendship, admiration and respect, and two of whom constitute our oldest, most trusted and reliable allies.

The fact that we differ with such friends has led us to reconsider and re-evaluate our position with the utmost care, and that has been done at the highest levels of our Government. Even after that re-evaluation, we still find ourselves in disagreement. Because it seems to us that that disagreement involves principles which far transcend the immediate issue, we feel impelled to make our point of view known to you and through you to the world. This is the first time that this Assembly has met pursuant to the Uniting for Peace resolution which was adopted in 1950.

I was a member of the United States Delegation and had the primary responsibility for handling that proposal in committee and on the floor of this Assembly. It was then, during the period of the Communist attack upon the Republic of Korea, and at that time surely we little thought it would be invoked for the first time under the conditions which now prevail.

What are the facts that bring us here?

/ There is

There is, first of all, the fact that there occurred, beginning last Monday, a deep penetration of Egypt by Israel forces. Then, quickly following up upon this action, there came action on France and the United Kingdom in subjecting Egypt first to a twelve hour ultimatum and then to armed attack, which is now going on from the air with declared purpose of gaining temporary control of the Suez Canal, presumably to make it more secure. Then there is the third fact that the matter, having been brought to the Security Council, was sought to be dealt with by a resolution which was vetoed by the United Kingdom and by France, which cast the only dissenting votes against the resolution. Thereupon, under the provisions of the Uniting for Peace resolution the matter came here under a call from the Secretary General, instituted by a vote of seven members of the Security Council, requiring that this Assembly convene in emergency session within twenty-four hours.

Now, Mr. President and fellow delegates, the United States recognizes full well that the facts which I have referred to are not the only facts in this situation. There is a long and a sad history of irritations and of provocations. There have been armistice violations by Israel and against Israel. There have been violations by Egypt of the Treaty of 1888, governing the Suez Canal, and a disregard by Egypt of the Security Council resolution of 1951, calling for the passage through that Canal of Israel ships and cargoes. There has been a heavy rearmament of Egypt under somewhat ominous circumstances. There was the abrupt seizure by Egypt of the Universal Suez Canal Company, which largely under British and French auspices had been operating that Canal ever since it was opened ninety years ago. There have been repeated expressions of hostility by the Government of Egypt toward other Governments with whom it ostensibly had, and should have, friendly relations.

We are not blind, Mr. President, to the fact that what has happened in the last two or three days comes out of a murky background, but we have come to the conclusion that these provocations, serious as they are, cannot justify the resort to armed force which has occurred within the last two and three days, and which is going on tonight.

/To be sure,

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To be sure, the United Nations perhaps has not done all that it should have done. I have often pointed out, particularly in recent weeks, that our Charter by Article 1, paragraph 1, calls for the settlement of these matters in accordance with the principles of justice and of international law, and it calls not merely for a peaceful solution but a just solution. The United Nations may have been somewhat laggard, somewhat impotent in dealing with many injustices which are inherent in this Middle Eastern situation. But I think that we ought, and I hope will, perhaps at the next regular meeting of this General Assembly, give our most earnest thought to the problem of how we can do more to establish and to implement principles of justice and of international law. We have not done all that we should have done in that respect, and on that account a part of the responsibility of present events lies here at our doorstep.

But, Mr. President, if we were to agree that the existence of injustices in the world which this organization so far has been unable to cure, means that the principle of renunciation of force is no longer respected, and that there still exists the right wherever a nation feels itself subject to injustice, to resort to force to try to correct that injustice, then, Mr. President, we would have, I fear, torn this charter into shreds and the world would again be a world of anarchy. And all the great hopes that are placed in this organization and in our charter would have vanished and we would be, as we were, when World War II began, with only another tragic failure in place of what we hoped would be - and still can hope will be - a barrier against recurrence of a world war which, as our preamble says, has "twice in our lifetime brought untold sorrow to mankind".

Now, Mr. President, this problem of the Suez Canal, which lies at the base perhaps in considerable parts of the forcible action now being taken, has been dealt with over the past three months in many ways and on many occasions. I doubt if in all history so sincere, so sustained an effort has been made to find a just and a peaceful solution.

When, on July 26, the Universal Suez Canal Company was abruptly seized by the Egyptian Government, all the world felt that a crisis of momentous proportions had been precipitated. Within, I think, three days after that event the Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom and France met together in London to see what to do about the situation. Already at that time there were voices raised in favour of an immediate resort to force to attempt to restore the status quo ante the Egyptian seizure. But it was the judgment of all three of our Governments that that resort to force would be unjustified, certainly under the then conditions, and that first efforts should be made to bring about a peaceful and just solution.

/Instead of

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UKDel New York telegram No. 1003 to Foreign Office

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Instead of any resort to force at that critical moment, the three Governments agreed to call a conference of the principal users of the Suez Canal - twenty-four nations representing the clearly surviving signatories of the Convention of 1888, eight countries who principally used the Canal and eight countries whose pattern of traffic showed particular dependence upon the Canal. And twenty-two of those twenty-four nations met. Egypt declined. Out of the twenty-two, eighteen agreed upon what they thought were sound principles for arriving at a peaceful solution which would be just and fair and which would secure for the future the open use of this waterway.

That agreement of the eighteen was carried as a proposal to Cairo and presented to President Nasser, who rejected it.

Then the eighteen met again in London and again considered a proposal to create an association a cooperative group of the users. We felt that that association might be able to work out on a practical provisional basis with the Egyptian Canal Authorities an acceptable arrangement for assuring the operation on a free and impartial basis of the Canal. Then, while that was in process of being organized - The Users' Association - the matter was brought to the Security Council of the United Nations by France and the United Kingdom. There six principles were unanimously adopted with the concurrence of Egypt, who participated in the proceedings though not a member of the Council. Those principles were in essence the same principles that had been adopted by the eighteen nations at London. There was a second part of the resolution which looked forward to the implementation of these principles. That part failed of adoption, this time by a veto of the Soviet Union. But despite that fact there occurred, under the auspices of the Secretary General, to whom I would like to pay tribute for his great contribution in this matter to a just and peaceful solution, there occurred under his auspices exchanges of views as to how to implement these six principles. I do not think it is an exaggeration to say what I am quite sure he would confirm that very considerable progress was made. It seemed as though a just and peaceful solution acceptable to all was near at hand, and it was hoped that those negotiations would be continued.

/ I recall

- 5 -

I recall that at the close of our session of the Security Council, I made a statement which was concurred in, or acquiesced in, by all present, stating that the Security Council remains seized of the problem and that it was hoped that the exchanges of views with the Secretary General and the three countries most directly concerned - Egypt, France and the United Kingdom - that those discussion and exchanges of views would continue.

They did not continue, although I am not aware of any insuperable obstacle to such a continuance. Instead, there developed the events which I have referred to, the invocation of violence, first by Israel and then by France and the United Kingdom, the events which again brought the matter to the Security Council and which, in the face of the veto, has brought the matter here to us tonight.

Surely I think we must feel that the peaceful processes which the Charter requests every member to follow had not been exhausted. Even in the case of Israel, which has a legitimate complaint due to the fact that Egypt has never complied with the 1951 resolution of the Security Council recognizing Israel's right to use of the Canal - even there, there was a better prospect because the principles adopted by the Security Council, with the concurrence of Egypt, called for the passage of ships and cargoes through the Canal without discrimination, and provided that the Canal could not be used or abused for the national purposes of any nation, including Egypt.

So, Mr. President, and fellow delegates, there seemed to be peaceful processes that were at work and which, as I say, had not yet, it seemed to us at least run their course. And while Mr. President, I would be the last to say that there can never be circumstances where resort to force may not be employed - and certainly there can be resort to force for defensive purposes under Article 51 - it seems to us that under the circumstance which I described, the resort to force, the violent armed attack by three of our members upon a fourth cannot be treated as other than a grave error, inconsistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter and one which if persisted in would gravely undermine our Charter and undermine this organization.

The question then is: What do we do?

/It seems

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U.K. Del. New York telegram No. 1008 to Foreign Office

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It seems to us imperative that something be done because what has been done in apparent contravention of our Charter has not yet gone so far as irretrievably to damage this organization or to destroy it. Indeed, our Uniting for Peace Resolution was designed to meet just such circumstance as has arisen. It is still possible for the United will of this organization to have an impact upon the situation and perhaps to make it apparent to the world, not only for the benefit of ourselves but of all posterity that there is here the beginning of a world of order. We do not, any of us, live in societies in which acts of disorder do not occur. But we all of us live in Societies where, if those acts occur something is done by constituted authority to deal with them. At the moment we are the constituted authority. And while we do not have, under the charter, the power of action, we do have a power of recommendation, a power which, it is reflects the moral judgment of the world's community, of world opinion, will I think be influential upon the present situation.

It is animated by such considerations, Mr. President, that the United States has introduced a resolution which I should like to read to you:

"The General Assembly.

"Noting the disregard on many occasions by parties to the Israel-Arab Armistice Agreements of 1948 of the terms of such agreements, and that the armed forces of Israel have penetrated deeply into Egyptian territory inviolation of the General Armistice Agreement between Egypt and Israel;

"Noting that armed forces of France and the United Kingdom are conducting military operations against Egyptian territory;

"Noting that traffic through the Suez Canal is now interrupted to the serious prejudice of many nations;

"Expressing its grave concern over these developments;

"1. Urges as a matter of priority that all parties now involved in hostilities in the area agree to an immediate cease-fire, and as part thereof halt the movement of military forces and arms into the area;

/"2.

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UKDel New York telegram No. 1008 to Foreign Office

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"2. Urges the parties to the Armistice Agreements promptly to withdraw all forces behind the armistice lines, to desist from raids across the armistice lines into neighbouring territory, and to observe scrupulously the provisions of the Armistice Agreements;

"3. Recommends that all members refrain from introducing military goods in the area of hostilities, and in general refrain from any acts which would delay or prevent the implementation of this resolution;

"4. Urges that upon the cease-fire being effective, steps be taken to reopen the Suez Canal and restore secure freedom of navigation;

"5. Requests the Secretary General to observe and promptly report on the compliance with this resolution to the Security Council and to the General Assembly for such further action as they may deem appropriate in accordance with the Charter;

"6. Decides to remain in emergency session pending compliance with this resolution."

That Mr. President, is the proposal of the United States Delegation.

Now I recognize full well that a recommendation which merely is directed to a cease-fire to getting back of the armistice lines the foreign land forces in Egypt, which so far as we are aware today are only those of Israel, of stopping attacks by air and not bringing new belligerent forces in the area, and then, as rapidly as possible of the reopening of the Suez Canal - that a resolution which puts primary emphasis upon these things is not an adequate or comprehensive treatment of the situation. All of us, I think, would hope that out of this tragedy there should come something better than merely a restoration of the conditions out of which this tragedy came about. There must be something better than that. Surely this organization has a duty to strive to bring about that betterment.

If we should do only that, we too would be negligent and would have dealt only with one aspect of the problem.

I have said and deeply believe that peace is a coin which

/ has two sides -

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UKDel New York telegram No. 1008 to Foreign Office

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has two sides - one of which is the avoidance of the use of force and the other is the creation of conditions of justice - and in the long run you cannot expect one without the other. I do not, by the form of this resolution, want to seem in any way to believe that this situation can be adequately taken care of merely by the steps that are in this resolution. There needs to be something better than the uneasy armistices which have existed now for these eight years between Israel and her Arab neighbours. There needs to be a greater sense of confidence and security in the free and equal operation of the Canal than has existed since three months ago, when President Nasser seized the Suez Canal Company. These things I regard of the utmost importance.

But Mr. President, and fellow delegates, if we say that it is all right for the fighting to go on until these difficult and complicated matters have been settled, then I fear a situation will have been created such that no settlement will be possible, that the war will have intensified and may have spread, that the world will have been divided by new bitternesses and that the foundation for peace will have been tragically shattered.

These things that I speak of need to be done. I believe that they are in process of being done because the Security Council is already seized of these matters and has been working upon them in a constructive way. But I think we must put first things first. I believe that the first thing is to stop the fighting as rapidly as possible lest it become a conflagration which would endanger us all - and that is not beyond the realm of possibility. As president Eisenhower said last night the important thing is to limit and extinguish the fighting insofar as it is possible and as promptly as possible.

I hope, therefore, Mr. President and fellow delegates, that this point of view, reflected in this resolution, will prevail.

/ I fear...

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U.K. Del. New York telegram No. 1008 to Foreign Office

- 9 -

I fear that if we do not act and act promptly, and if we do not act with sufficient unanimity of opinion so that our recommendations carry a real influence, there is great danger that what is started and what has been called a police action may develop into something which is far more grave. Even if that does not happen, the apparent impotence of this organization to deal with this situation may set a precedent which will lead other nations to attempt to take into their own hands the remedying of what they believe to be their injustices. If that happens the future is dark indeed.

We thought when we wrote the Charter in San Francisco in 1945, that we had seen perhaps the worst in the war, that our task was to prevent a recurrence of what had been, and indeed what then had been was tragic enough. But now we know that what can be, will be infinitely more tragic than what we saw in World War II. I believe that at this critical juncture we owe the highest duty to ourselves, to our peoples, to posterity to take action which will assure that this fire which has started shall not spread but shall promptly be extinguished. Then we shall turn with renewed vigor to curing the injustice out of which this trouble has arisen.

ADVANCE COPIES TO:

Private Secretary
 Sir I. Kirkpatrick
 Mr. Ross
 Mr. Pink
 Head of United Nations Department
 Head of African Department
 Head of News Department

NEWS

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FROM WASHINGTON TO FOREIGN OFFICE

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10/11/56

Cypher/OTP

FOREIGN OFFICE AND
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Mr. Coulson

No. 2223

B. 12.58 a.m. November 2, 1956

November 1, 1956

R. 1.40 a.m. November 2, 1956

PRIORITY

CONFIDENTIAL

RECEIVED
11/2/56

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 2223 of November 1.
Repeated for information to UKDel New York.

My telegram No. 2217. Egypt.

Today's press shows some recognition of the reasons for our policy and action in Egypt, but the general consensus remains that our judgment was wrong and our action too dangerous to be justifiable. There are a few favourable comments, e.g. from Walter Lippman, but these must to some extent be discounted by the opposition of their authors to President Eisenhower and Mr. Dulles. However, all in all, it could be worse.

2. We are of course keeping Consulates and Information Officers as fully informed as possible. Your last night's speech is very helpful, and we are making full use of its denial of "collusion".

3. It is still too early to assess public opinion in the country generally. There has at least been no great exhibition of antagonism and Information Officers are not being overwhelmed with enquiries, as has sometimes happened in the past.

4. Our contacts with the State Department are normal at the working level. There is, as usual, a large fund of good will towards us in this country which, during the last two days, has been demonstrated by many spontaneous acts of kindness by individuals towards members of this Embassy. This will always be helpful but it must not be confused with approval of our action. Most people (including Mr. Murphy, the Deputy Under Secretary of State to whom I took an opportunity to make our case this afternoon) stress the need for a speedy outcome of our operation; it is obvious that this will be the most effective remedy for the present crisis in our relations.

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FROM WASHINGTON TO FOREIGN OFFICE

En Clair

FOREIGN OFFICE AND WHITEHALL

Mr. Coulson

DISTRIBUTIONNo: 2226

D: 12.21 a.m. November 2, 1956

November 1, 1956

R: 10.03 a.m. November 2, 1956

PRIORITY

Suez.

In a nation-wide television and radio broadcast tonight, Mr. Stevenson declared that the Administration's Middle Eastern policy was at "an absolute dead end" and had led to "the establishment in the Middle East of Russian influence" and "the breakdown of the Western alliance". He blamed the Administration for having built up Nasser and "pressured" Britain to move out of the Canal Zone "without making adequate provision for international control of the Canal".

Mr. Stevenson, nevertheless, said that he "would not condone the use of force even by [America's] friends and allies". He thought the United States should use "our great potential moral authority and the weight of our economic power to bring about solutions to the whole range of complex problems confronting the free world in the Middle East".

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E1094/3

J.

M. Pineau and I received the EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR and transmitted to him the Note destined for the Egyptian Government.

2. On reading it the Ambassador said he was horrified at its contents. He did not consider this was a note which should be addressed to a country which was the victim of aggression. As an Egyptian he felt that the demands were quite unacceptable. I asked him which demands were unacceptable. He replied the third. He went on to say that it was unworthy of the authors of the Tripartite Declaration to address this ultimatum to Egypt and he wondered whether he ought even to receive the Note. M. Pineau said that Egypt had really repudiated the Tripartite Declaration and had no business to invoke it. He strongly advised the Egyptian Ambassador to transmit the communication and give his government an opportunity of deliberation. The Ambassador said he would do so.

3. I then told the Ambassador that it was our intention to exercise our right under the 1888 Treaty to send a warship to Port Said. He said he took note of that.

4. The Ambassador, after making a further protest against the contents of the Note, took his leave.

J. Aitchison

October 30, 1956.

W

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Levant Department.

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J

I had quite a pleasant interview with the American Ambassador. I showed him both the messages to the President, and gave him the text of the declarations handed to the Israel and Egyptian representatives to-day.

2. The Ambassador said that a message from the President was coming in. But he was afraid it was overtaken by events, since it consisted merely of an exhortation to do nothing hasty.

3. After reading the second message to the President the Ambassador observed that he thought we had made the very best case we could for our action. But he added sadly that he was afraid that there would be hell to pay.

J. Philpotts

October 30, 1956.

W

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FROM TRIPOLI TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Cypher/OTP

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E1094/2

Mr. Graham

No. 389

October 31, 1956

D. 9.31 p.m. October 31, 1956

R. 9.40 p.m. October 31, 1956

EMERGENCY

CONFIDENTIAL



Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 389 of October 31,
Repeated for information Saving to Washington, Paris, P.O.M.E.F.
and Benghazi.

My telegram No. 384: Suez.

Libyan Prime Minister summoned me immediately on my return tonight. In the course of long complaint about Anglo-French attack on Egypt he asked for written assurance that we would not violate the Anglo-Libyan Treaty by use of Libyan bases against Egypt. I said that my talks in London today had convinced me that there had been no change of heart in London but that I could not give [group undec ? on the spot] written assurance without specific authority. He urged me to telegraph for authority. In order to maintain internal security he intended to issue public proclamation but unless he could quote from our declaration he would hardly be able to control the situation.

2. I earnestly request that I may be authorised to give the required statement in as categorical terms as possible and if possible by noon G.M.T. November 1. Very strong feelings have been aroused and nothing less than the required assurance can have any effect. I will telegraph further account of interview during which the Prime Minister and also newly appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs criticized British policy in strongest terms.

Foreign Office pass Paris, Washington and P.O.M.E.F. as my Saving telegrams Nos. 15, 37 and 42 respectively.

[Repeated Saving to Paris, Washington and P.O.M.E.F.]

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| Mr. Dean | Resident Clerk |
| Head of African | |
| Department | |

ZZZZ