

Handwritten: *Handwritten* [VR 091/1021] ✓

Parliamentary Question

*116 Mr. Wedgwood Benn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, what assurances were sought by Her Majesty's Ambassador from the Government of Israel about the military objectives of the Israeli forces after they had crossed the armistice lines into the Sinai Peninsula; and whether this included any assurances about the limitation of hostilities near the Canal.

86

LA Bristol SE

3 DEC 1956

ANSWERED 3 DEC 1956
ATTACHED.

Flag A

Flag B

Flag C

H. M. Ambassador was not instructed to seek any assurances from the Israel Government after the Israeli forces had crossed into the Sinai peninsula.

At 4.15 p.m. on October 30 the Israelis were formally requested by H.M. Government to stop all warlike action forthwith and to withdraw all Israeli military forces to a distance of 10 miles east of the Suez Canal (F.O. telegram No. 1055 to Tel Aviv). The Prime Minister informed the House of this at the time (Hansard column 1279 of October 30).

The Israel Government accepted the request made to them, on the assumption that a positive response was also forthcoming from Egypt (Tel Aviv telegram No. 598). In fact the Government of Egypt rejected the request.

No other formal communications were made to the Israel Government, although both the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State said that it was H.M. Government's policy to ensure that Israel forces were withdrawn from Egyptian territory.

I submit a draft reply.

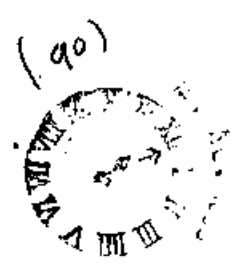
E. M. Rose
(E. M. Rose)
November 30, 1956

ajjv
1 Dec.

Military Operations, Sinai Peninsula

86. Mr. Benn asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what assurances were sought by Her Majesty's Ambassador from the Government of Israel about the military objectives of the Israeli forces after they had crossed the armistice lines into the Sinai Peninsula; and how far this included assurances about the limitation of hostilities near the Canal.

Mr. Dodds-Parker: The Answer to the first part of the Question is, "None." The second part does not therefore arise.



DRAFT REPLY TO
PARLIAMENTARY
QUESTION No.116
BY MR.WEDGWOOD
BENN OF DECEMBER 3

W. Dadds - Parker
The answer to the first part of the question is,
None Sir: the second ~~half~~ ^{part} of the question does not therefore arise.

Notes for Supplementaries

assd
1 Dec.

As the Prime Minister told the House on October 30 the United Kingdom and French Governments addressed an urgent communication to the Government of Israel in the afternoon of that day calling upon them to stop all warlike action forthwith and to withdraw their military forces to a distance of ten miles from the Canal. As the House will be aware Israel accepted this demand.

2. The House will be aware that it is H.M.Government's policy that Israeli forces should withdraw from Egyptian territory and should retire behind the Armistice Demarcation Lines as requested in the United Nations General Assembly Resolutions.

3. No further assurances of any kind have been sought from the Israel Government about the positioning of their forces.

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British Embassy,
Bangkok.

CONFIDENTIAL

1050/96/56

✓ R1091/1072
December 1, 1956.

Dear Department,

Would you please refer to our letter (1050/87/56) of November 14 about reactions to the Middle East crisis.

2. There was something of a lull in press coverage and comment on the Middle East with correspondingly greater emphasis on the Hungarian situation. The debates in the United Nations General Assembly and the Prime Minister's illness refocussed attention sharply on Suez. However, we regret to say that press reactions in this latest phase have been almost unanimously hostile. Our refusal to withdraw all our troops immediately in conformity with the United Nations resolutions is seen as an attempt to retain physical control of the Canal Zone. The practical reasons for our insistence on a competent U.N. force are brushed aside or not mentioned. Considerable attention has also been paid to the possible economic effects upon Thailand, though in general it was believed that the closure of the Canal would not necessitate any perceptible increase in the cost of living in this country, unless traders took the opportunity to put up prices.
3. Sir A. Eden's illness was interpreted as the first step towards his resignation. This was greeted with relief by certain papers who believed that it presaged a change in H.M.G.'s policy. The real reasons for Sir A. Eden's decision to take a few weeks' rest were given scant mention and where they were mentioned there was an element of Schadenfreude in the comment. One paper cited the Buddhist belief that bad actions bring about ill consequences to the perpetrator.
4. The Government remain studiously correct in their attitude and avoid taking a firm stand one way or the other by stating that they favour the United Nations as the means for providing a peaceful solution. The Prime Minister has made it clear that he maintains his policy of friendship with the U.K. At his last press conference, he said that he believed that the U.K. and France will eventually withdraw their forces from Egypt in accordance with the U.N. Resolution. He explained that, for practical reasons, withdrawal was not an easy matter and that the political situation in the U.K. had also to be taken into account.
5. H.M. Consul in Chiangmai has reported that the reactions in the North of Thailand have been similar though much less strongly marked. He has also met a number of Thais who have told him that they supported our action but generally private comments have been unfavourable. He also reports that his American colleague appears to be convinced that there was collusion between Britain, France and Israel.
6. We are copying this letter to Chancery, Singapore.

Yours ever,

CHANCERY.
MBC.

South East Asia Department,
Foreign Office.

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CONFIDENTIAL

1050/103/56



British Embassy,

BANGKOK.

December 19, 1956.

R 1091/1022A

VP 1091/1022

Dear Department,

Would you please refer to our letter (1050/96/56) of December 1 about Thai reactions to the Suez crisis.

2. In an interview with the Prime Minister before his departure to the Eden Hall conference, the Ambassador thanked Field Marshal Pibul for the fair attitude which he and his Government had shown towards our actions. The Prime Minister replied that he had been watching our situation with sympathy. He had sent a telegram to Sir A. Eden wishing him an early recovery. He also said that he had requested the American Ambassador to express the hope to his Government that the U.S. would not continue to place the U.K. and France in an awkward position. He hoped that close relations would be reestablished soon and ended by saying that relations between Thailand and the U.K. were very good.

3. Meanwhile press interest has continued to veer away from the Middle-East towards events in Hungary. Lately other international and domestic items have also received more coverage, having being almost entirely ignored during the early days of the two crises. We would expect that, provided the withdrawal of the Anglo-French forces goes according to plan, Suez will shortly receive no more than normal attention from the press.

4. We are copying this letter to the Chanceries at Singapore and Washington.

Yours ever,

CHANCERY
[Signature]

South East Asia Department,
Foreign Office,
S.W.1.

VR 1091/1023

Levant

✓

Parliamentary Question

* 74 Mr. Ness Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, how many units of the British forces have been engaged in military action by land, air, or sea, in the Sinai, Rafah, or Gaza area since 30th October.

28 NOV 1956

LA. Campbell

ANSWERED 28-11-56
REPLY ATTACHED.

Transferred to Min / Defence.

P.L.
23/11

(37)

Middle East (British Forces)

74. Mr. Ness Edwards asked the Minister of Defence how many units of the British Forces have been engaged in military action by land, air, or sea, in the Sinai, Rafah, or Gaza area since 30th October.

Mr. Head: During the recent action one cruiser, one "Daring" class ship and two frigates of the Royal Navy were operating in the northern Red Sea and the Gulf of Suez. There were no other British forces in the areas mentioned.



leave
Parliamentary Question *letter V*

*15 50 Mr. Swingle: To ask the Prime Minister, if he will consult with the French and Israeli Prime Ministers with a view to issuing a joint factual statement on the recent military operations in the Middle East so as to counteract allegations of collusion and conspiracy against Egypt.

*LA Newcastle under
Lyons*

Det. 29th NOV 1956

VR 1091/1024

**ANSWERED 29-11-56
REPLY ATTACHED.**

F.O. ARE ASKED TO ADVISE

The answer to this must clearly be in the negative.

2. I submit a draft reply

(E. M. Rose)
November 26, 1956

(63)

*H. B. C. 26/11
a J. D. C. 26 Nov.*

RECEIVED
C.P.
DEC 1956
7/12

MIDDLE EAST (MILITARY OPERATIONS)

50. Mr. Swingler asked the Prime Minister if he will consult with the French and Israeli Prime Ministers with a view to issuing a joint factual statement on the recent military operations in the Middle East so as to counteract allegations of collusion and conspiracy against Egypt.

Mr. R. A. Butler: I have been asked to reply.

No; Her Majesty's Government have already countered these allegations. The other Governments named in the hon. Gentleman's Question have made their own statements.

29-11-56

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DRAFT REPLY TO
PARLIAMENTARY
QUESTION NO.45 BY
MR. SWINGLER ON
NOVEMBER 27 1956

No Sir. H.M. Government have already made quite plain that they have neither conspired nor acted in collusion with Israel against Egypt. The action they took was, of course, taken jointly with the Government of France.

NOTES FOR SUPPLEMENTARIES

[Hansard col.1573]

1. The Foreign Secretary stated in the House on October 31 that it was quite wrong to state that Israel was incited by H.M. Government. There was no prior agreement between us about it. He also denied emphatically the allegation that H.M. Government instigated the Israel attack before the United Nations General Assembly on November 23.

[New York tel.no.1380
- Flag A]

2. The Israel Ambassador in London categorically denied any suggestion that Israel had been a party to some other arrangements and objectives outside their own at a press conference in London on November 2.

[Flag B]

3. The French Ministry of Defence denied on November 20 that French Air Force pilots had taken part in the Israel military operations against Egypt, as had been alleged in certain British and foreign newspapers. A similar denial was made by an Israel Foreign Ministry spokesman.

[Flag C]

[Tel Aviv tel.306
+ Flag D]

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4. Mr. Butler told Mr. Wigg on November 13
'that the Prime Minister would not move to
appoint a select committee to report on events
leading up to the recent operations.

[Flag E]

Levant Information Research
Parliamentary Question *Levant*

**5* Mr. Arthur Lewis: To ask Mr. Attorney General, whether his attention has been drawn to the statement made in the News-Letter, issued by Commander Stephen King-Hall, that he has evidence of the Prime Minister having been informed on 16th October of the impending attack by Israel on Egypt; and whether, as this has been denied by the Prime Minister, he will take action against Commander King-Hall for causing disaffection and unrest among Her Majesty's subjects and servicemen. *V*

LA West Ham N

3 DEC 1956

VR1091/21025

**ANSWERED 3 DEC 1956
REPLY ATTACHED.**

GO. ARE NOT ASKED TO ADVISE.

854/6

**"NEWS-LETTER"
(STATEMENT)**

5. Mr. Lewis asked the Attorney-General whether his attention has been drawn to the statement made in the *News-Letter*, issued by Commander Stephen King-Hall, that he has evidence of the Prime Minister having been informed on 16th October of the impending attack by Israel on Egypt; and whether, as this has been denied by the Prime Minister, he will take action against Commander King-Hall for causing disaffection and unrest among Her Majesty's subjects and Service men.

The Solicitor-General: No. My right hon. and learned Friend has no evidence that Commander King-Hall has committed a criminal offence.

Mr. Lewis: Has not the Solicitor-General's attention been drawn to the *News-Letter* which Commander King-Hall has sent out stating that he has irrefutable evidence that the Prime Minister was informed on 16th October of the impending Israeli attack on Egypt? Is he not aware that this *News-Letter* has been circulated to Her Majesty's Forces and, of course, to Members of Parliament? Surely the Solicitor-General ought to take some action to charge this man or at least to get him to withdraw the statements.

The Solicitor-General: The hon. Member should recognise that neither a charge of seditious libel nor one of incitement to disaffection turns upon the truth or falsity of the statement in respect of which it is made.

Mr. E. Johnson: Would not my hon. and learned Friend agree that none of the statements made by Commander Stephen King-Hall is as likely to cause disaffection among Her Majesty's subjects as some of the Questions asked by the hon. Member for West Ham, North (Mr. Lewis)?

Mr. Lewis: On a point of order. Is it in order for an hon. Member to insinuate or infer that another hon. Member is putting down Questions to cause disaffection among Her Majesty's Forces, particularly when that statement is completely untrue?

Mr. Speaker: It is an insinuation. I thought it was rather light-heartedly made, but if the hon. Member for West Ham, North (Mr. Lewis) thinks it was meant seriously, I think it would be better for the hon. Member for Blackley (Mr. E. Johnson) to withdraw it.

Mr. Johnson: Further to that point of order. I made no insinuation. I merely asked a question.

Mr. Speaker: There was an insinuation in the question.

Mr. Johnson: If you think I should withdraw it, Mr. Speaker, I have great pleasure in doing so.

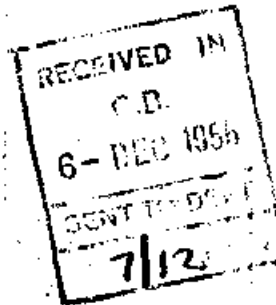
Mr. P. Noel-Baker: Is the Solicitor-General aware that it is generally believed all over the world that Her Majesty's Government had foreknowledge of the Israeli attack? That is generally believed. Will he represent to those senior Ministers who deal with the matter that it is vitally important—

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is not a question for the Solicitor-General.

Mr. Paget: Is it not a fact that this *News-Letter* clearly constituted a criminal libel? Is it not further a fact that it would be a defence to that libel that the words were true and in the public interest? Is that why a prosecution has not been preferred?

The Solicitor-General: The Question which I answered was addressed to taking action for causing disaffection and unrest among Her Majesty's subjects and Service men. If the hon. and learned Member likes to put down a Question directed to something else, I shall have great pleasure in answering it.

3 DEC 1956



VRJ09/102/6

Levant ✓

Parliamentary Question

La. *[initials]*
 West Ham. N.

~~Mr. Arthur Lewis~~ Mr. Arthur Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, if he will publish as a White Paper all the communications which passed during the latter half of October 1956 between Her Majesty's Government and the United States Government relating to the situation in the Middle East.

rec. add. P.M. TRANSMITTED 4 DEC. 1956

ANSWERED 4 DEC 1956
 REPLY ATTACHED.

If Mr. Lewis refers to written communications, there were none.

2. H.M. Government were of course in touch with the U.S. Government through the Delegations in New York about the situation on the Israel-Jordan border, which Jordan referred to the Security Council during October. There were also Tripartite consultations in Washington on October 28 and 29 about Israel mobilisation. These have already been referred to in answer to previous questions in the House.

3. I submit a draft reply.

[Signature]
 (E.M. Rose)
 November 30, 1956

TRADE NON-ORAL
 3/2
 a J.V.
 9 Dec.

ANGLO-AMERICAN COMMUNICATIONS (MIDDLE EAST)

Mr. Lewis asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he will publish as a White Paper all the communications which passed during the latter half of October, 1956, between Her Majesty's Government and the United States Government relating to the situation in the Middle East.

Mr. Dodds-Parker: No.

(111)

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DRAFT REPLY TO
PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION
NO. 11 BY MR. ARTHUR LEWIS
ON DECEMBER 4, 1956

W. J. Dods-Parker

No, Sir.

*add
4 Dec.*

NOTES FOR SUPPLEMENTARIES

1. It is not H.M. Government's practice to disclose the nature of confidential communications with another Government whether oral or written.

2. Israel-Jordan border

H.M. Government naturally kept in touch with the U.S. Government and other friendly governments through their delegations in New York over the reference of the Israel-Jordan situation to the Security Council by the Government of Jordan.

3. Discussions on Israel mobilisation

Nothing to add to the statement made by the Secretary of State on October 31 [Hansard col. 1572] and answers to previous Parliamentary Questions.

Letant

Parliamentary Question

V

*142 39 Mr. Wedgwood Benn: To ask the Minister of Defence, to what extent Supreme Allied Command established for the Anglo-French forces at the Headquarters in Cyprus extended its authority to French personnel in Israel.

5 DEC 1956

LA Bristol SE

ANSWERED 5 DEC 1956
BY ATTACHED.

VR 1091/1027

O. ARE NOT ASKED TO ADVISE.

French Personnel, Israel

39. Mr. Benn asked the Minister of Defence to what extent Supreme Allied Command established for the Anglo-French forces at the Headquarters in Cyprus extended its authority to French personnel in Israel.

Mr. Head: To no extent whatever.

Mr. Benn: In that case, can the Minister of Defence please tell the House why the Anglo-French Command in Cyprus authorised French pilots to fly from Cyprus to Israel to train the Israeli Air Force, after the ultimatum had been given?

Mr. Head: I know of no such authorisation from Cyprus.

1240

CONFIDENTIAL

SAVINGRAM

TO: FOREIGN OFFICE

FROM: COPENHAGEN.

No. 59

of December 5, 1956.

CONFIDENTIAL

Addressed to Foreign Office Saving telegram No. 59(8) of December 5 repeated for information SAVING to:

OSLO ... No. 69 (8)
STOCKHOLM. No. 69 (8)
U.K. DEL.

PARIS No. 23 (8)



In my Tel. No. 345 I have an account of early reactions in this country to Anglo-French intervention in Egypt and I have from time to time reported Danish Press comment on subsequent developments in the Middle East. In view of forthcoming meeting of Atlantic Council it may be opportune to try to provide an up-to-date assessment of Danish opinion.

2. The position taken up by the Danish Government has been consistently moderate, especially in comparison with the anxiety and irritation which they betrayed when the original proposals for a Users' Association were announced. Their prompt and practical support for the despatch of a U.N. force was evidence of their desire to help in any way they could to bring about an acceptable settlement. As things now stand, the Government seem chiefly concerned to see the Atlantic Alliance restored to full strength.

3. Not all members of the Social Democratic Party subscribe to the criticisms of Anglo-French action appearing in the party newspaper, Social Demokraten. Its "Labour" editor has said in private conversation that he and the political editor and three other members of the editorial committee were strongly in favour of our action, although a majority of the committee deprecated it. The Head of the Party's Information Centre has told the Labour attaché that he thought our military intervention in Egypt was fully justified but that it should have been undertaken earlier and completed. The Chairman of the Women's Union expressed similar views. On the other hand, this approbation reflects in some measure the widely held conviction in Denmark that major questions of foreign policy should not be approached from the angle of party. It is certain too that many in the Danish Labour Movement continue to regard our action as inexplicable and inexcusable. The neutralist and "anti-colonial" Radicals have also been consistently critical.

4. Of the Opposition Parties, the Conservatives and the Henry Georgists have firmly supported our action from the outset. A prominent Conservative member of the Folketing has told us that at the Party Congress held from the 16th to the 18th of November the great majority approved of our intervention and cheered each mention of Sir Anthony Eden's name. The Venstre Party have been more cautious and the mood of its dominant representative in the Foreign Affairs Committee - Mr. Thorkil Kristensen - though not unsympathetic has been one of sorrow and reproof.

5. The C.-in-C. of the Danish forces, Admiral Vistgaard, was alarmed and critical at the outset. Most other senior officers have expressed warm approval and sympathy as have a number of former leaders of the Resistance Movement.

.../6.

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6. In the Industrial field, the Director of the Employer's Federation has said that he considered our action justified but that the reasons advanced for it do not convince him. The Chairman of the Danish Federation of Trades Unions told the Labour Attaché that he feels in his heart that the British action was right but finds in business circles generally the great majority seem to consider our intervention justified though many regret that operations were halted before the whole Canal Zone could be occupied. The inconveniences of petrol rationing and oil shortages have been accepted with surprisingly good grace and there is no noticeable tendency to blame it on the British.

7. To sum up, I would say that there is very little deep seated resentment at our intervention in Egypt and a substantial measure of popular support. Danish realism, the great goodwill to enjoy in this country and sympathy for Israel have all played a part in generating it. There seems, too, to be a widely held belief that Her Majesty's Government's decisions both to launch the expedition and to order the cease-fire were due to compelling reasons that cannot now but one day will, be revealed. In the meantime the decision to halt the operations is regarded as mysterious and regrettable. Many people attribute it to American pressure and there is a strong tendency to criticize American policy before and during the crisis. Mr. Hammarskjöld is also frequently blamed for having been too soft with Nasser. A remarkable number of private individuals in various walks of life have gone out of their way to assure me or members of my staff of their sympathy in our difficulties and of their regret that the British point of view has not been better understood in the U.N. and elsewhere.

BARCLAY.

VR1091/1029

Levens

V

Parliamentary Question

* ~~101~~ Mr. Denis Healey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether, at any time after 23rd October, Her Majesty's Government warned the Government of Israel against attacking Egypt.

LA - Leeds East

5 DEC 1956

ANSWERED 5 DEC 1956
COPY ATTACHED.

See answer submitted on original
question.

Rib
4/12

Library
answer

(131)



ISRAEL

Mobilisation of Troops

101. Mr. Healey asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, at any time after 23rd October, Her Majesty's Government warned the Government of Israel against attacking Egypt.

Mr. Ormsby-Gore: I would refer the hon. Gentleman to the Answer given by my right hon. and learned Friend to the hon. Member for Ashfield (Mr. Warbey) on 5th November.

DRAFT REPLY TO
PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION
NO. 25 BY MR. DEHIS HEALEY
ON ~~NEWSP~~ DECEMBER 3 1956

Mr. Dehis Healey *Amby Jone*

I would refer the Hon. Gentleman to the answer ^{given by my r.h. & l. 7.} ~~given~~ to the Hon. Member for Ashfield on November 5.

NOTES FOR SUPPLEMENTARIES

agw
10/5/56

1. Why was no such warning given Israel?

The situation did not seem to demand it.

2. Why was nothing said even when Israel mobilisation was reported?

Because our attention was concentrated on the Israel-Jordan border where there had been a number of recent incidents. It seemed likely that mobilisation was connected with the situation on that border and the Israel Government was accordingly reminded of H.M. Government's obligations under the Anglo-Jordan Treaty.

3. When was HM Ambassador instructed to urge restraint on the Israel Govt?

Refer to answer given to Mr. Arthur Henderson on Nov. 26
[Hay B]

SECRET

FROM MR. WIV TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Cypher/OUT

VR 1091/995

MIDDLE EAST (SECRET) (CABINET)
DISTRIBUTION

Sir J. Nicholls

No. 330

November 26, 1956

D. 1.15 p.m. November 26, 1956

R. 2.02 p.m. November 26, 1956

PRIORITY

S. Class

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 330 of November 26.

Repeated for information to UKDEL New York

Washington

Guard.

I saw Ben-Gurion yesterday, having sent a message a few days earlier that I should be glad of an opportunity for another informal talk.

2. He was in a relaxed and philosophical mood. After some general discussion of the Suez operation he said it was no good crying over spilt milk; the Allies had not succeeded in upsetting Russia and that was that. The pressing need now was to re-establish unity among the Western Powers and everything must be subordinated to that. He did not see how President Eisenhower could go on being angry much longer; his information was that influential opinion in the United States (he mentioned particularly General Bedell Smith, Mr. Alan Dulles, and the Pentagon) was moving in our favour. He thought it might well be worth while for the United States Administration to appear to be cool and unfriendly towards us if this enabled them to wean the Afro-Asians away from the Russians; but it would be very serious if they continued to be genuinely unfriendly out of mere pique.

3. Ben-Gurion asked anxiously whether I knew anything of Turkey's intentions in regard to relations with Israel. Not having seen Ankara telegram No. 1019, I replied truthfully that I knew no more than what the Israel Minister had told Sir J. Bowker.

4. We had some talk about Syria and Jordan, but nothing very interesting emerged. I took the opportunity to speak on the lines of your telegram No. 1314 paragraph 1. Ben-Gurion dismissed Jordanian fears of an Israel attack on Syria as sheer nonsense.

5. Finally, I mentioned allegations of collusion between Israel, France and the United Kingdom. I impressed on Ben-Gurion that,
/politically

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SECRET

Tel Aviv telegram No. 830 to Foreign Office

-2-

politically, these were far more dangerous to us than to Israel; and I expressed the hope that he would lose no opportunity of scotching these rumours. He said he would do [? grp.omitted] he could, though it was not easy to prove a negative. He had already taken steps to disprove the story that he visited Paris on October 28 by demonstrating that on that day he had presided over a Cabinet, lunched with the President, driven to Tel Aviv and [gp.undef.] there.

Foreign Office pass Routine Washington 133 and UKDGL New York 138.

[Repeated to Washington and UKDGL New York]

111

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VR 1091/998

MIDDLE EAST - THE PAKISTAN ATTITUDE

Following are extracts from letters dated 9th and 12th November from the U.K. High Commissioner in Karachi to the Commonwealth Relations Office.
Letter of 9th November.

"I called on Sardar Amir Azam Khan, the present Minister of Information and Broadcasting, this morning. He is the only Minister of the present regime who has been in the present and the last two Governments.

2. In order to get him talking, I told him that whilst I had anticipated sympathy for another Muslim country, I had been startled by the strength of feeling which I had found on my arrival against the British and French action. He reacted at once.

3. In his view, Indian support for Nasser had prevented our reaching agreement with Egypt. If India had behaved properly, the present situation would not have arisen.

4. It was in the interests of Pakistan to prevent the Suez Canal being controlled exclusively by Egypt. They had welcomed our strong line knowing that Egypt was not a friend of Pakistan and that if Egypt retained exclusive control she might at some time use that control against Pakistan as she had done against Israel.

5. Against this background, the immediate Pakistan reaction to the Anglo-French move had not been unfriendly. He told me for my private information that many people in the bazaar had chuckled at our action and had hoped we should succeed.

6. The shock had come when we "flouted the United Nations". At this point almost the whole of the intelligentsia in Pakistan, with official and Ministerial support, became alarmed. The reason was quite simple. Pakistan still fears a hostile India and has continued to rely on the United Nations as providing the right solution for Kashmir. The United Nations was a big umbrella under which they would hope to seek protection if they were attacked by India. The flouting of United Nations authority by two founder members, viz. Britain and France, altered the whole position. They foresaw the end of the United Nations since it would be open to other big powers, e.g. India, to risk action against smaller nations and without the support from at least the United Kingdom seconded by the United States. He said in effect that for Pakistan the United Nations support came from the United States/United Kingdom alliance.

7. I reiterated very shortly our case for taking the original action and for maintaining our position until we could hand over to an effective United Nations force. The Minister said he was prepared to accept it that we have probably achieved one objective which was satisfactory to Pakistan, viz. the future international control of the Canal. Secondly he accepted it that it is our firm stand which has forced the United Nations for the first time in its history to take effective action, i.e. in the creation of an international force. Nevertheless, we have lost prestige throughout the world and in particular in South East Asia. It

/will

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- 2 -

will take a long time to restore our position. I said that I would need all the help in helping to do this and he promised me that at the right moment he would help us to get over our case in the Pakistani press and radio.

8. The Minister added that we should take account of what he had said in trying to restore our position, although he did not wish to be quoted as having given me this advice.

9. The Minister said that Pakistan feeling was mainly directed against the United Kingdom because they had expected so much more from us than from the French, whom they regarded as a decadent people.

10. After leaving Sardar Amir Azam Khan, I called on Mr. Dildar Ahmed, the new Minister of Agriculture. He is a friendly person and I spent a useful half hour with him. He took broadly the same line as the Minister for Information as regards the general Pakistani reaction to our Suez operation. He stressed that he and his people had always relied on the British sense of justice and moral authority. He himself had used this as an argument against Communism in East Pakistan."

Letter of 12th November

5. The impression left on my mind from the talks with the President, Prime Minister and other Ministers is that whilst most of the shock of recent events is beginning to be absorbed, they are now in a state of bewilderment. The Prime Minister is vulnerable politically, and is being fired at from two sides, namely by his own extreme followers headed by Bhashani and also by the Muslim League who are making the most of this opportunity of attacking the Government. The latter is ably led by experienced men such as Rab Nishtar, the Muslim League President, and is supported on the side lines by Chaudri Mohamad Ali, the late Prime Minister.

6. For the present, Suhrawardy is resisting pressure about membership of the Commonwealth and has come out strongly in favour of strengthening the Baghdad Pact. But knowing Suhrawardy as I do and having regard to his past record, I still have some uneasiness lest in the last resort he might sacrifice Pakistan's membership of the Commonwealth in order to maintain his own political supremacy. Having said this, I should make it clear that the President at this stage will do his best to prevent a Commonwealth break - but even he may be forced for political reasons to change his front. Only events and time can tell, and all I can do at the moment is to watch every straw to see how the wind blows.

7. With the President, the Prime Minister and all the other Ministers, I have stoutly maintained that our action has been right and that ultimately it will be shown to be right. By and large, this has not been challenged. In most cases, the shock has been twofold: first, to find the United Kingdom acting in a way in which they regard as being so wholly out of character with "our past respect for justice", and secondly, because of the fear which has been steadily growing since the cease fire that we have neither eliminated Nasser nor secured our objectives. It seems to me that, to put it very bluntly, the Pakistanis would have been very greatly relieved if our action had brought Nasser down or preferably to have let the Israelis do the job. The Prime Minister is as bewildered as everyone else. He said yesterday that you could look at the immediate situation from two angles, and he himself does not know which is right. On the one hand, it can be said that Nasser has come out as the victor in that his army has not been destroyed, he is rebuilding his airfields, his best aircraft were dispersed in Syria and Saudi Arabia, he has got the support of practically

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every country represented at U.N. and is still being built up powerfully by Russia. Against this it might be said that recent events represent a complete set-back and loss of face for Egypt and Russia. The Egyptian army has been shown to be useless, Nasser was without real help from his so-called Arab friends and, finally, by his own action he has blocked the Canal with all the economic consequences which this will mean to Egypt. The Prime Minister, his colleagues and the Foreign Secretary are all looking for some clue as to the future course of events. Even as regards the building up of the international force, there is bewilderment and anxiety. Pakistan has made a firm offer of a battalion, but, so far, there has been no information from New York as to what is really wanted in the way of military help from Pakistan either in numbers, time or composition. On the other hand, the Foreign Secretary told me this afternoon that India have just asked for immediate air freedom over Pakistan to fly substantial numbers of Indians to Naples.

8. The President confirmed to me yesterday that he had returned to Karachi with Suhrawardy because he did not feel that he could leave the latter alone at this particular juncture. The Middle East tour programme for the President and Prime Minister, which I sent you by telegram yesterday, can be regarded as the resumption of the President's original tour (with Suhrawardy tacked on so as not to leave him alone in Pakistan), and with the twin object of strengthening ties with Iraq and Turkey and putting pressure on Saudi Arabia. Baig, the Foreign Secretary, confirmed this in as many words this afternoon."

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SPECIAL MINISTERIAL DISTRIBUTION
Foreign Office Mr. G. Merrells.

SOUTH ASIA AND MIDDLE EAST DEPARTMENT

V
 LEVANT DEPARTMENT

VR 1091/997

FROM BBC Monitoring

No. /
 Dated November 21
 Received in Registry - Nov. 28.

French collusion in Israel. Reuters report.
 Official Israel sources deny presence of French pilots & planes. But correspondents have seen French planes, & pilots claim to have operated in campaign - the latter reports are unreliable.

References to former relevant papers

MINUTES

Heft Tel Aviv.

News Dept a/c. 11/12
 IP Dept

R. 28/4

(Print)

A] Sir J. Nicholls, Tel Aviv, Dec. 8

(How disposed of)

30/11
 DJH. Summary
 Tel Aviv
 from New York Del
 POMEF

Unfortunately POMEF Tel. no. 1386 is not much use as it has been decided not to publish the interview or to use what Mr. Eytan said in a manner attributable to him.

News Dept.

IP Dept.

11/12

R. 14/12

We have been told that a letter to Mr. Ross will contain material proving that Mr. Morris' article (in the "Manchester Guardian" on the participation of French pilots in the Sinai campaign) was based on false information. Has this letter

(Action completed)

(Index)

JW/11

10/12/52

References to later relevant papers

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CANAL - FRENCH

THE FOLLOWING DESPATCH IS FROM REUTERS STAFF CORRESPONDENT, ALEX VALENTINE, WHO HAS BEEN IN ISRAEL SINCE NOVEMBER 2.

TEL AVIV, NOV 21 (DELAYED), REUTER - LIMITED DETAILS OF THE PRESENCE OF FRENCH PILOTS AND PLANES IN ISRAEL DURING THE SINAI OFFENSIVE WERE ALLOWED TO PASS THE ISRAELI CENSORSHIP TONIGHT.

FRENCH PILOTS WHO FLEW HERE WITH AN UNKNOWN NUMBER OF MYSTERY JET FIGHTERS BEFORE THE START OF THE SINAI OFFENSIVE PERSONALLY TOLD ME THEY HAD BEEN FLYING "PATROLS."

AN ISRAELI OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE - THE ONLY MENTION OF FRENCH PILOTS HITHERTO ALLOWED TO PASS THE CENSORS - LIMITED ITSELF TO DENYING THAT FRENCH PILOTS TOOK PART IN THE SINAI CAMPAIGN.

THE STORIES OF PILOTS ARE DIRECTLY CONTRARY TO THIS ASSERTION, SOME STATING THEY HAD STRAFED EGYPTIAN TANK COLUMNS IN SINAI AND OTHERS THAT THEY HAD PILOTTED FRENCH "FLYING BOXCARS" IN PARACHUTE DROPPING OPERATIONS.

THE ISRAELIS TONIGHT ALSO OFFICIALLY DENIED ANY SUGGESTION OF "COLLUSION" BETWEEN ISRAEL AND ANY OTHER NATION IN THE SINAI OFFENSIVE BUT IT WAS NOTED THAT THEY DID NOT DENY THAT FRENCH AIRMEN WERE IN FACT PRESENT IN ISRAEL DURING THE LIGHTNING SINAI WAR.

MORE MCH.. 1117

CORRECTION/O

IN CANAL-TECHNICIANS BRUSSELS PRINTER 1027 PLEASE READ IN FIRST PARA....A REFUGEE PARTY OF 137 MEN AND FAMILIES WHO HAVE BEEN ETC... INSTEAD OF ...A REFUGEE PARTY OF 137 MEN AND FAMILIES ALSO HAVE BEEN....

REUTER 1018

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30'

CANAL - FRENCH 2 TEL AVIV
OFFICIALS HERE HAVE PERSISTENTLY REFUSED TO ADMIT THE PRESENCE
THE FRENCH. IN ONE CASE A CORRESPONDENT WHO PRODUCED A
NOTEBOOK WITH RANKS AND NAMES WAS DESCRIBED AS "A LIAR."
FRENCH PILOTS AND FRENCH PLANES WERE FIRST SEEN BY
THIS CORRESPONDENT AT AN AIRFIELD SOMEWHERE IN ISRAEL.
WHEN I SAW THE PLANES A FEW DAYS LATER THE FRENCH MARKINGS
HAD BEEN REMOVED AND THE STAR OF DAVID PAINTED ON. DURING THE
TIME I WAS ON THE AIRFIELD I DID NOT, HOWEVER, SEE ANY
FRENCH PILOTS ACTUALLY TAKING OFF IN PLANES.
AFTER THE SINAI CAMPAIGN ISRAELI AIR FORCE OFFICERS GAVE
A "VICTORY PARTY" IN A TELAVIV HOTEL. IT WAS ATTENDED BY THE
ISRAELI CHIEF OF STAFF, GENERAL MOSHE DAYAN AND FRENCH AIR
FORCE OFFICERS WERE ALSO PRESENT.
I SPOKE TO ONE LIEUTENANT WHO SAID HE HAD BEEN FLYING AIR
PATROLS ALONG THE SYRIAN AND JORDAN FRONTIERS AND HAD ALSO
HELPED TO PROVIDE AN "AIR UMBRELLA" OVER TEL AVIV IN CASE OF
EGYPTIAN BOMBING.
MORE MCH..... 1127

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REQUESTED REPTN...

CANAL--FRENCH 4 TEL AVIV

ANOTHER EXPLANATION OFFERED BY UNOFFICIAL ISRAELI SOURCES

... THAT THE FRENCH DID FLY AIR PATROLS AND A PROTECTIVE UMBRELLA OVER HAIFA AND TELAVIV BUT DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN ANY ACTUAL COMBAT OPERATIONS.

ISRAELI DISCLAIMERS OF PARTICIPATION OF FRENCH PILOTS IN SINAI HAVE BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY A NUMBER OF UNOFFICIAL ALTHOUGH INSPIRED STATEMENTS THAT FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT ANY "COLLUSION" WITH BRITAIN AND FRANCE IN SINAI AND THE CANL OPERATIONS WOULD HAVE BEEN "UNDESIRABLE" FROM THE ISRAELI POINT OF VIEW.

THESE SAME SOURCES ARGUE THAT ANGLO-FRENCH INTERVENTION IN THE CANAL AREA WAS IN FACT DISADVANTAGEOUS TO ISRAEL. THE POINT MADE BY THESE SOURCES IS THAT IF BRITAIN AND FRANCE HAD NOT INTERVENED, EGYPT WOULD HAVE CONTINUED TO SEND REINFORCEMENTS TO SINAI AND THE ISRAELIS WOULD IN THE LONG RUN HAVE DESTROYED MORE OF THE EGYPTIAN ARMY.

THE SOURCES ALSO SAY THAT ANGLO-FRENCH INTERVENTION RESULTED IN AN EAST-WEST ISSUE WHICH FINALLY FORCED THE ISRAELIS TO AGREE TO WITHDRAW FROM SINAI. HAD IT BEEN LEFT AS A PURELY "LOCAL AND PRIVATE" MATTER, ISRAEL WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO MAKE POLITICAL AS WELL AS MILITARY GAINS IN HER WAR AGAINST EGYPT.

SEMI-OFFICIAL SOURCES HERE REFUSE TO STATE WHY THE ISRAELI AIR FORCE DID NOT BOMB EGYPTIAN AIRFIELDS WHEN SUFFERING A HIGH PROPORTION OF CASUALTIES FROM EGYPTIAN AIR ATTACKS IN THE FIRST TWO DAYS OF THE CAMPAIGN. THEY INSISTED THAT THE BRITISH AND FRENCH BOMBING OF EGYPTIAN AIRFIELDS WHICH STARTED ON THE THIRD DAY WAS "A MATTER OF GOOD LUCK AND COINCIDENCE."
REUTER MCH 1151

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M

CANAL--FRENCH 3 TEL AVIV

ANOTHER FRENCH OFFICER THEN STARTED TO GIVE ME DETAILS OF ANOTHER ACTION. HE WAS RESTRAINED BY AN ISRAELI WHO TOLD HIM: "BE CAREFUL."

A FEW DAYS AFTER THIS ALL FRENCH AIRMEN VANISHED FROM SIGHT --AT LEAST FROM THE JOURNALISTS--AND AN ABSOLUTE BAN ON ANY MENTION OF THEIR PRESENCE WAS IMPOSED BY THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT.

EVIDENCE HERE OF REPORTED PARTICIPATION OF THE FRENCH IN THE SINAI CAMPAIGN IS BASED ENTIRELY ON SECOND-HAND REPORTS. I PERSONALLY NEVER SAW ANY SUCH ACTION NOR MET ANY RELIABLE INDEPENDENT OBSERVER WHO DID.

FRENCH OFFICERS WHO CLAIMED TO HAVE PARTICIPATED IN SUCH ACTIONS DID NOT FURNISH ANY CORROBORATION OF THEIR STORIES.

IT WAS NOTED HERE THAT DURING THE FIGHTING IN THE CANAL AREA THE BRITISH CLAIMED ON ONE OCCASION TO HAVE SHOT DOWN AN ISRAELI PLANE. THE ISRAELIS DENIED THAT ANY OF THEIR PLANES WAS MISSING. BUT ON THE SAME DAY THE FRENCH ADMITTED ONE OF THEIR MYSTERES WAS MISSING.

ONE EXPLANATION THAT HAS BEEN OFFERED FOR THE PRESENCE OF THE FRENCH HERE IS THEY HAVE SIMPLY BEEN FERRYING PLANES FROM FRANCE. WHETHER THESE PLANES WERE PART OF THE PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED SALES OF ARMS OR WHETHER THEY WERE AN EXTRA ALLOTMENT WAS NOT KNOWN.

MORE MCH 1131

V

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Outline

(VR 1091/997)

FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

CONFIDENTIAL

November 30, 1956.

Dear Chancery,

In your telegram No. 135 of November 24 to United Kingdom Delegation New York you said that the only official Israeli denial you could trace was that quoted in your telegram No. 806 to us, which referred to military collaboration, not collusion.

2. We have just seen a delayed report, date lined Tel Aviv November 24, from Valentine, Reuters staff correspondent, which, after quoting the Israel official communiqué denying that French pilots took part in the Sinai campaign, states

"the Israelis tonight also officially denied any suggestion of 'collusion' between Israel and any other foreign nation in the Sinai offensive".

We shall be grateful to know if you can discover anything more about this latter denial.

3. We are sending copies of this letter to the United Kingdom Delegation New York and the Political Office with the Middle East Forces.

Yours ever,

LEVANT DEPARTMENT.

The Chancery,
British Embassy,
Tel Aviv.

1072/56

British Embassy,
Jedda.

November 5, 1956.

VR 1091/1000

Dear Department,

The following are the texts of two messages sent by King Saud to President Eisenhower on October 30 and ~~31~~ ~~November 3~~ respectively:

"I have learnt of Your Excellency's great concern at Jewish aggression against Egyptian territory, of your attempts to warn the aggressor and of American determination to take the side of the party aggressed upon. Such an attitude is a victory for the principles of justice followed by the United States and acted upon by President Eisenhower, a man of honour who keeps his word. I thank Your Excellency for your endeavours to repel this treacherous aggression I hope Your Excellency will rest assured that our aim is to maintain peace. If you do not hasten to stop this aggression no one can foresee the consequences. Your Excellency and the whole world recognise that we are right when this zionist faction occupies Arab territory and is responsible for trouble and disorder in the Middle East. While thanking my dear friend for his attitude, I hope he will continue effective action to help the party aggressed upon and, by fulfilling the promises he has made, so stabilize the situation that peace which has been disturbed by the zionist aggressor may be restored to this part of the world."

"Yesterday I telegraphed to Your Excellency thanking you for the attitude you have adopted towards Israeli aggression and for the stand taken by the United States in the Security Council meetings on this matter. I now appeal to the United States and to Your Excellency to put a stop to all acts of aggression inconsistent with the principles of the United Nations. The United States is traditionally famous for her love of freedom and justice. I appeal to you to stop the recent Anglo-French aggression against Egypt and, in your own wise manner, to do something towards this. If the United States does not do something positive I fear that the eastern situation will so develop as to bring about a wide gap between East and West which will be difficult to bridge and which might have the most serious consequences for world peace. I have great confidence in your judgment and your love for the welfare of mankind; so to guide peaceful humanity away from the miseries of war."

Yours ever,

W. CHANCERY.

Eastern Department,
Foreign Office,
London S.W.1.

NOT ORAL

VR1091/1004 Parliamentary Question

* Mr. Arthur Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, at what time on Monday 29th October the Government were first informed of the Israeli invasion of Egypt; and in what manner this intimation was delivered to Her Majesty's Government.

[Transferred]
27 NOV 1956

LA West Ham. N

Ret. add. P.M.

FLAG A

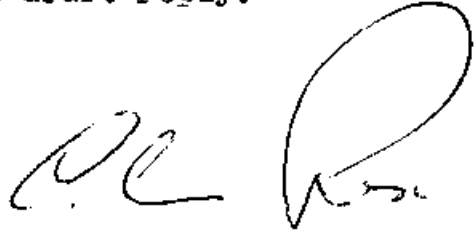
The first official news of the Israeli invasion of Egypt was received in Tel Aviv telegram No. 580 in the evening of October 29. This was decyphered by approximately 8.30 p.m.

FLAG B

2. Mr. Lewis has written to the Prime Minister to say that he wishes to give him an opportunity to refute allegations that the Prime Minister was told in Paris of the time and date of Israel's impending attack on Egypt. These allegations presumably refer to the Prime Minister's visit to Paris on October 16. There is no record of this meeting, but at the time there was no indication of a possible attack on Egypt.

ANSWERED 27 NOV 1956
REPLY ATTACHED.

3. I submit a draft reply.



(E. M. Rose)
November 23, 1956

H. Bailey 24/11
ask
26 Nov.

(26)
RECEIVED
26 NOV 1956

Israeli Invasion

Mr. Lewis asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs at what time on Monday, 29th October, the Government were first informed of the Israeli invasion of Egypt; and in what manner this intimation was delivered to Her Majesty's Government.

Mr. Dodds-Parker: The first official report of the Israeli invasion of Egypt was received by emergency telegram from Her Majesty's Ambassador in Tel Aviv which was available, after deciphering, at approximately 8.30 p.m.

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COPY

House of Commons,
London, S.W. 1.

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

May I refer you to the report contained in the current issue of Commander Stephen King Hall's News Letter, wherein he makes charges and allegations against H.M. Government, including a statement that you were informed in Paris of the time and date of Israeli's impending attack on Israel.

Feeling sure that you would welcome the opportunity of refuting these charges and allegations I have today tabled a question in connection with same.

Yours sincerely,

ARTHUR W.J. LEWIS

UNCLASSIFIED



BRITISH EMBASSY, V

TEL AVIV.

November 20, 1956.

R109/1002

NR109/959
Dear Department,

With reference to our telegram No.
..... 802 of November 19, we enclose the text
of Mr. Bulganin's note as published in the
..... Jerusalem Post of November 19, and also a
copy of Mr. Ben-Gurion's reply as released
by the Government Press Office.

Yours ever,

CHANCERY.

Levant Department,
Foreign Office.

Text of Bulganin's Letter

The text of Marshal Bulganin's letter of Nov. 15 follows:
Mr. Prime Minister,

I have received your letter of October 8. In addition, we have at our disposal the texts of official statements by leaders of the Israel Government made during the past few days which enable us to judge Israel's position as regards the present situation in the region of the Near and Middle East.

The position of the Soviet Government with regard to the situation in this region was stated in my letter to you of November 6.

Since in your return letter you attempt to defend the actions undertaken by Israel against Egypt, I am compelled briefly to reply to you concerning your conclusions.

In your letter you maintain that the incursion of Israel's armed forces into Egyptian territory was necessitated by considerations of self-defence, justifying this by the existence of some threat to Israel from Egypt. Actually, as is borne out by a series of resolutions of the Security Council, it was not the Arab governments but precisely Israel which has been guilty of many armed attacks on territory of neighbouring Arab states.

The Security Council has expressed grave concern with regard to the non-fulfilment by the Israel Government of its obligations under the Armistice Agreement, and has called on the Israel Government to carry out these obligations in future under threat of applying suitable sanctions against Israel, as provided by the U.N. Charter.

Peaceful Settlement

Apart from this your very contention that Israel undertook an armed attack against Egypt allegedly because of the danger threatening from Egypt, means that the Israel Government had no desire to heed the provisions of the U.N. Charter which forbid member states of the U.N. to resort to force and which demand the settlement of disputes between them by peaceful means.

The Soviet Government cannot disregard the fact that the Israel Government has not only failed to comply with the General Assembly's call for an immediate cease-fire and the withdrawal of troops which had invaded Egypt, but has even openly announced its annexationist claims with regard to Egypt, its plans to seize and attach to Israel the Gaza region, the Sinai Peninsula and the islands of Tiran and Sanafir in the Gulf of Akaba. Likewise, your speech in the Israel Parliament on November 7 also spoke of the "nullification" of the Armistice Agreement concluded by Israel with Arab states.

It is worthy of note that, even when compelled to decide on the withdrawal of its troops from Egyptian territory, the Israel Government still attempts to make compliance with this demand provisional on "a satisfactory agreement with the U.N. with regard to the entry of the international force into the Suez Canal Zone, which, as is known,

is an inalienable part of the sovereign Egyptian state.

All this is in a glaring contradiction with the contention in your letter alleging that the policy of the Israel Government is dictated by a "thirst for peace" and by Israel's "vital requirements."

The Soviet Government is convinced that Israel's present policy, directed at fanning hostility towards the Arab governments and at crushing them, is in fact dangerous to the cause of universal peace and fatal for Israel. Actually, as has been borne out by recent events, such a policy serves only the interests of outside forces which are striving to re-establish a colonial order in this region, but we are fully convinced that it is foreign to the interests of all peoples of the Near and Middle East, without exception.

The Soviet Government has cautioned the Israel Government concerning the dangerous consequences for Israel should aggressive armed actions be launched against the Arab states. We regret that this went unheeded by you.

Destruction in Egypt

As a result of the aggression launched against Egypt by Israel, Egyptian towns and inhabited localities have been destroyed, thousands of innocent people have been killed and maimed, and damage has been inflicted on Egyptian communications, trade and economy. But what has Israel achieved? Only the blind can fail to see that the aggression has brought nothing good to Israel either.

Without doubt, aggression against Egypt has undermined Israel's international position, aroused profound hatred towards it on the part of the Arab and other peoples of the East, worsened Israel's relations with many states and has given rise to new economic and other difficulties within the country.

The Soviet Government takes into consideration that the Israel Government has ceased fire and subsequently announced the forthcoming withdrawal of Israel troops from Egyptian territory. It is self-evident that Israel troops must be withdrawn from Egyptian territory without delay.

At the same time, in order to stabilize the situation in the Near East and liquidate the consequences of the aggression against Egypt, the Soviet Government considers it essential that measures be undertaken which would exclude the possibility of new provocations by Israel against neighbouring states and would ensure a durable peace and tranquillity in the Near East.

Justice also demands that Egypt, as the victim of unprovoked aggression, should be compensated by Israel, as well as Britain and France, for the losses inflicted as a result of the destruction of Egyptian towns and inhabited localities, and as a result of interruption in the operation of the Suez Canal and the destruction of its installations. In addition Israel is obliged to return to Egypt all property which has been removed from Egyptian territory by the Israel armed forces which invaded it.

The international armed forces of the U.N., to whose creation the Egyptian Government has agreed, according to the U.N. resolutions, must be deployed on both sides of the Demarcation Line between Israel and Egypt established by the Armistice Agreement.

I would like to express the hope, Mr. Prime Minister, that the Israel Government will draw the proper conclusions from the lessons which the latest events indicate for Israel.

N. BULGANIN

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STATE OF ISRAEL
Government Press Office

Sunday
18 Nov. 1956

PRESS RELEASE No. 4

Text of a letter sent by Mr. D. Ben Gurion, Prime Minister on Nov. 18, 1956 to a letter received from Mr. N. Bulganin, President of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. on Nov. 15, 1956

Jerusalem, 18 November 1956

Mr. President of the Council of Ministers,

I have received your letter of 15 November 1956. In view of the statements contained therein, I felt compelled to draw your attention once more to the true state of affairs in the relations between Egypt and Israel, which has produced the present crisis.

The basic fact of the situation is that when the State of Israel was established on 14 May 1948, the Egyptian army, and with it the armies of the other Arab states, invaded our country for the purpose of annihilating us. Upon the termination of these hostilities Armistice Agreements were signed between Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria on the one hand, and Israel on the other. Egypt, however, did not honour her obligations under these agreements and has continued her hostile acts against Israel to this day.

I cannot but express my surprise at the fact that you do not appear to be aware of these roots of the tension in our area, and I must therefore stress the true background of the situation.

The facts are as follows:

(1) When the General Assembly of the United Nations in November 1947 resolved in favour of the establishment of the Jewish State, Egypt at the head of the other Arab States stated publicly that she should not recognize this resolution and would oppose it.

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D. Ben Gurion -- 2

(2) Pursuant to this defiant declaration, the Egyptian Army, together with the military forces of the other Arab States, invaded the State of Israel on the night of 15 May 1948 for the purpose of destroying Israel.

(3) In the course of the proceedings of the Security Council after this brutal invasion, the representatives of the USSR and of the Ukrainian S.S.R., together with the spokesmen of other states, condemned the action of Egypt and other Arab countries in attacking Israel. At the 309th meeting of the Security Council on 29 May 1948, Mr. Gromyko, the representative of the U.S.S.R. stated: "Indeed, what is happening in Palestine can only be described as military operations organised by a group of states against the Jewish State", and that "the states whose forces had invaded Palestine have ignored the Security Council's resolution".

(4) At the 366th meeting of the Security Council on 14 July 1948, Mr. Gromyko, the representative of the USSR, declared that "the Arabs despatched their troops to invade Palestinian territory and made no bones about informing the whole world that it was their firm intention to prevent the creation of independent Arab and Jewish states in Palestine".

(5) In the Armistice Agreement between Israel and Egypt signed on 24 February 1949, it was expressly stated that the purpose of the Agreement was "to promote the return of permanent peace in Palestine".

(6) In spite of the fact that Egypt signed this agreement, the rulers of that country have maintained ever since that Egypt is in a state of war with Israel.

(7) This declaration of the Egyptian Government is contrary not merely to the terms of the Armistice Agreement, but also to the Charter of the United Nations, which requires all members states of the United Nations to live together in peace with one another as good neighbours and to adjust all international disputes by peaceful means.

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Ben Gurion -- 3

(8) The Security Council in its resolution of 1 September 1951 expressly denied the right of either party to the Armistice Agreement "to assert that it is actively belligerent". Egypt defied this decision too, and continued to proclaim that she was in a state of war with Israel.

(9) As one of its instruments of war against Israel the Government of Egypt organised an economic boycott of Israel and used intimidation to apply pressure on business undertakings in various countries in order that they should break off economic relations with Israel.

(10) In violation of the Constantinople Convention of 1888, which guarantees to all countries freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal in time of peace as in time of war, and in defiance of the resolution adopted by the Security Council on 1 September 1951, which prohibited interference with Israel's right of free navigation in the Suez Canal, Egypt has continued to maintain a maritime blockade against the State of Israel in the Canal.

(11) On 13 October 1956 the Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution prohibiting any overt or covert discrimination against any state in regard to navigation in the Suez Canal. This was immediately followed by a renewed ~~xxxxxx~~ declaration on the part of the Egyptian Government that Israel shipping would not be allowed to pass through the Canal.

(12) The Egyptian Government did not limit itself to a maritime blockade in the Suez Canal, but throughout the period under consideration extended its blockade also to the Gulf of Aqaba. In violation of international law it prevented Israel shipping from passing through the Gulf on its way to and from the port of Eilat.

(13) In pursuing her war against Israel, in continuous contravention of the Armistice Agreement, Egypt did not confine herself to the maintenance of the economic boycott

B en Gurion -- 4

and the maritime blockade designed to bring about the economic collapse of our country. For the past two years the Egyptian Government has organised specially trained gangs of murderers and saboteurs, known as Fedayun, and sent them clandestinely from the Gaza Strip and the Sinai desert into our villages and onto our highways. These terrorist gangs have murdered Israel workers in the fields, travellers on the roads and children in the schools. They have also blown up irrigation pipes and agricultural installations in our villages.

(14) We have in our possession citations issued to these murderers by officers of the Egyptian regular army; files describing the itineraries and activities of the Fedayun groups who were under the direct command of the Egyptian Army in the Gaza Strip and the Sinai desert; furthermore documents showing that these gangs received their arms and equipment from units of the Egyptian army.

In my letter to you on 8 November 1956 I enclosed photostatic evidence of Egypt's design to destroy Israel. If you so desire, I shall supply you with additional photostatic evidence proving the connection between these gangs of murderers and saboteurs and the commanders of the Egyptian Army.

(15) The rulers of Egypt have repeatedly proclaimed throughout the last eight years -- and these declarations have become more outspoken and more frequent during the past two years -- that the time was drawing near when the Egyptian Army would eliminate Israel by force.

Have these declarations never reached your ears?

In recent months matters have come to a head.

A series of developments has brought home to us the imminent danger to our very existence:

(a) A few weeks ago Egypt signed aggressive military pacts with Syria and Jordan, the purpose of which was the destruction of Israel.

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Ben Gurion -- 5

(b) During the period of the Suez crisis, when the Security Council was considering the problem of the Canal, the activities of the Fedayun ceased. As soon, however, as the Security Council had completed its deliberations on the subject, Egypt intensified the murderous activities of these gangs. Hundreds of these trained murderers who had previously been sent by the Egyptian military command to the other Arab countries -- Jordan, Syria and the Lebanon -- received orders to step up their activities from these bases against Israel's citizens and border villages all along our frontiers in the North, East and South. Almost every day peaceful Israel citizens were murdered by the terror squads sent out by the Egyptian ^{military} dictator.

(c) In the Gaza Strip and all along our borders with the Sinai peninsula, enormous Egyptian military forces were concentrated equipped with tremendous quantities of aggressive weapons, and poised to attack and destroy Israel.

These facts are known to the entire world.

I would add that the vast quantities of Egyptian weapons and military equipment which were destroyed by our forces in the Sinai desert clearly indicate the intentions and the preparations of the Egyptian dictator.

It was, therefore, the elementary duty of our Government to take defensive measures in accordance with the right assured to every state under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations -- in order to protect the lives of its citizens and defend the existence of the State by uprooting the Fedayun nests and the Egyptian military bases which directed their activities. Any other people similarly placed would have been compelled to do the same.

You say in your letter that in my address to the Israel Parliament on 7 November 1956 I stated that the Armistice Agreements signed by Israel with the Arab States were no longer valid. This is not correct. If you examine the text of my

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Ben Gurion -- 6

speech you will find that I said in that address that Israel on her part will observe the Armistice Agreements with the other Arab countries -- even though the latter are not prepared for permanent peace -- so long as they on their part are ready to observe these agreements. What I said in the Knesset was that the Armistice Agreement with Egypt -- and only that with Egypt, not those with the other Arab States -- is dead and buried and will not return to life. For years the Egyptian dictator has treated the Agreement with contempt, has violated its principles and purposes, has defied the Charter of the United Nations and the resolutions of the Security Council. By his repeated declarations that a state of war existed between Egypt and Israel he distorted the nature and aim of the Armistice Agreement, whose first and fundamental article states that it was signed with a view to promoting the return of permanent peace.

In my speech I stated further that "the Egyptian dictator has throughout been exploiting the agreement as a smoke screen for his murderous attacks against Israel citizens, and as a cover for his relentless blockade of Israel on land, at sea and in the air. Colonel Nasser did not contend himself with the Fodayun gangs which he organised in the territory under his control; he also directed and activated these gangs against Israel from the other Arab countries. In this way the Armistice Agreement became a harmful and a dangerous fiction, serving only the destructive plans of the Egyptian dictator. Any return to the Armistice Agreement means a return to murder, ^{blockade} ~~blockade~~, and boycott, directed against Israel, aimed at her ultimate destruction".

As for the recent resolutions of the General Assembly of the United Nations we have announced that we have ceased fire, and that we are prepared to withdraw our forces from Egypt, when satisfactory arrangements have been made with the United Nations in connection with the international force mentioned in the General Assembly resolution. This declaration remains fully valid.

./..7

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Ben Gurion -- 7

From the mass flight and surrender of the Egyptian soldiers, peasants torn from their homes in Egypt and sent against their will to do battle in a remote desert -- it is clear that these soldiers were not prepared to fight for the fascist dictator of Cairo. The first to flee were officers of the Egyptian Army.

This is conclusive proof of the fact that many people in Egypt have come to understand the true character of Gamal Abdel Nasser, who at the beginning pretended that he was concerned to improve the conditions of his people -- in health, education and economic development -- but who since then has shown himself to be consumed by the lust for power and the ambition to impose his rule on all the Islamic peoples. He has squandered his country's resources to increase his military power and his armaments in order to carry through his expansionist ambitions and make himself master of the Moslem world.

I have to point out that your statements regarding our military operations are not accurate. We have not destroyed a single Egyptian town, nor have we caused harm to any civilian centre. We have not damaged the Suez Canal; as far as we know, the Canal has been blocked by the Egyptians themselves. Our forces were given strict instructions not to injure civilians, and these instructions were ^{faithfully} ~~faithfully~~ observed. The transport which did suffer -- and this for years -- was that of Israel, in the air, on land and at sea, as a result of Egypt's illegal blockade. If there is a case for claiming compensation, it is we who are entitled to compensation for the Egyptian invasion of our country in 1948, for the deaths of thousands of our sons and daughters, as a result of this aggression, for the economic boycott and the ~~maritime~~ maritime blockade maintained in defiance of the U.N. Charter and the Security Council's resolutions, for the hundreds of Israelis, Jews and Arabs, murdered by the Fedayun, and for all the damage

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Ben Gurion -- 8

caused to our economy, running into millions of pounds. However, if peace is established between Egypt and ourselves, we shall be ready to forgive all past transgressions of the Egyptian rulers.

In closing, I would repeat my statement that, in accordance with Article 33 of the United Nations Charter, Israel is prepared for a settlement of her dispute with Egypt, as well as with the other Arab states, by peaceful means. It is with regret that I have to point out that several of the expressions on Israel used in your letter are not likely to be interpreted by the Arab rulers as an encouragement to the achievement of peace in our region. Nor would they appear appropriate to the accepted relations between states members of the United Nations.

I am confident that, if the U.S.S.R. will lend its support to bring about direct peace negotiations between Israel and her neighbours, this will be a real and significant contribution to the strengthening of peace in the Middle East and throughout the world.

(-) D. Ben Gurion

His Excellency
M. Bulganin
President of the Council of Ministers
of the U.S.S.R.

Leunt

Parliamentary Question
Defence

* *21* Mr. Warbey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, what military co-operation took place between the Anglo-French forces and the Israeli forces on or after 29th October.

LA *Ashford*

R1091/1003

ANSWERED 26 NOV 1956
REPLY ATTACHED.

Transferred to Min / Defence.

Anglo-French and Israeli Forces

104. Mr. Warbey asked the Minister of Defence what military co-operation took place between the Anglo-French forces and the Israeli forces on or after 29th October.

Mr. Head: None.

P. 23/11

(22) Library

ADVANCE NOTICE

Parliamentary Question

Leveson

R109/100

ANSWERED 26 NOV 1956
REPLY ATTACHED.

Mr Arthur Henderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, on what date Her Majesty's Ambassador at Tel Aviv made enquiries of the Israel Minister for Foreign Affairs and urged restraint as instructed by Her Majesty's Government on the 25th October.

LA, Rowley Regis & Tipton

Monday
Nov. 26

Flag A

Mr. Arthur Henderson presumably has in mind the Prime Minister's statement in the House on October 30 that H.M. Government "at once instructed H.M. Ambassador at Tel Aviv to make enquiries of the Israel Minister for Foreign Affairs and to urge restraint" (Hansard column 1278).

Flag B

2. Instructions were in fact sent to Sir J. Nicholls on October 27 (F.O. telegram No. 1025). This was two days after the first reports of Israel mobilisation were received, but it was only on October 27th that the scale and unusual proportions of mobilisation were fully apparent.

Flag C

3. Sir J. Nicholls was not able to see the Israel Foreign Minister until noon on October 29. His report of the interview is in Tel Aviv telegram No. 575.

4. I submit a draft reply.



(E.M. Rose)
November 23, 1956

Mr Henderson and letter - 22 Nov
Mr Butler and 'MR' letter -
enquiries - 25 Oct.

this up 21 Oct.?

that is right

lg etc delay 48 days!

H. Bulley 23/11

add -
23 Nov.

(5)

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28 NOV 1956

Mobilisation of Troops

49. Mr. Henderson asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on what date Her Majesty's Ambassador at Tel Aviv made enquiries of the Israeli Minister for Foreign Affairs and urged restraint as instructed by Her Majesty's Government on 25th October.

Mr. Dodds-Parker: Instructions were sent to Her Majesty's Ambassador on 27th October. He was not able to see the Israeli Foreign Minister until noon on the 29th October, when he carried out his instructions.

26 NOV 1956

Arthur Henderson

DRAFT REPLY TO
 PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION
 NO.
 BY MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON
 ON NOVEMBER 26, 1956

Instructions were sent to H.M. Ambassador on October 27. He was not able to see the Israel Foreign Minister until noon on October 29, when he carried out his instructions.

*as V.
 29 Nov.
 PQ Nov 5*

NOTES ON SUPPLEMENTARIES

1. Why were instructions not sent earlier?

Although vague reports of Israel mobilisation began to come in on October 25, it was not until October 27 that confirmatory evidence showed that the scale of mobilisation was sufficiently unusual to justify enquiries.

2. What was the result of H.M. Ambassador's Representations?

The Israel Foreign Minister assured him that Israel was not seeking military adventures but had to be prepared in view of the general situation in the Middle East. She gave H.M. Ambassador an assurance that no hostile move was contemplated against Jordan.

Egypt-Syria-Jordan - Fedayeen raids.

3. Was an assurance sought that no move was contemplated against Egypt?

Refer answer to Mr. Warbey on November 5.

Arthur Henderson

4. Hon. Members must remember that reports of troop concentrations, mobilisation etc., have been an almost constant feature of the troubled Middle East scene over the last few years.

5. The opposition has been, in the past, very quick to criticise any representations to Israel which smacked of undue haste or of acting on unconfirmed evidence.

6. Why were there "delays"?

(a) Instructions were sent to H.M.A. as soon as the degree of mobilisation became apparent.

(b) H.M. representatives cannot dictate to Foreign Ministers when they should be received.

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SECRET

Outward Telegram from Commonwealth Relations Office *phw*

TO: U.K. HIGH COMMISSIONER IN CANADA
U.K. HIGH COMMISSIONER IN AUSTRALIA
U.K. HIGH COMMISSIONER IN NEW ZEALAND
U.K. HIGH COMMISSIONER IN SOUTH AFRICA
U.K. HIGH COMMISSIONER IN THE FEDERATION
OF RHODESIA AND NYASALAND (AIR MAIL)

RPTD: U.K. HIGH COMMISSIONER IN DELHI
U.K. HIGH COMMISSIONER IN KARACHI
U.K. HIGH COMMISSIONER IN CEYLON (ACTING)

(Sent 17.10 hours 27th November 1956)

CYPHER

W. No. 642 SECRET

V R 1071/1005

Air Mail to U.K. High Commissioner in Salisbury, repeated
U.K. High Commissioners in Delhi, Karachi and Colombo.

ISRAEL/SYRIA

Jordanian military authorities expressed to us on 21st November and subsequently, their fears that an Israeli attack on Syria was imminent. They profess to believe that

- (a) five to ten Israeli brigades plus artillery and armour are concentrated on Syrian border
- (b) in event of Israeli attack on Syria, Jordan would have to help Syria whereupon Israelis would attack Jordan
- (c) there was in fact an Anglo/French/Israeli plot, Syria being the next step, and dismemberment of Jordan the third.

2. Our Ambassador in Amman has spoken to Jordanians on following lines:

- (i) Denying categorically that we are trying to promote any attack on Syria. On contrary, we have repeatedly warned Israelis against any further adventures.
- (ii) As stated by Minister of State in House of Commons on November 19 there has been no change in our policy as far as Syria is concerned. In event of an Israel attack, we should join with United States and United Nations in any action they decided to take against Israel. Anglo-Jordan Treaty would apply in case of an attack on Jordan.
- (iii) In any event such information as we have shows that Israel has no intention of attacking Syria. Israelis cannot afford to alienate further United Nations and United States sympathies. Recent Syrian statement at United Nations seems to have been less a genuine expression of fear than a manoeuvre to distract attention from debate on Hungary.

/(iv) If

- 2 -

(iv) If there are Israeli concentrations on Syrian frontier, they can be explained by fear of Russia and possibility of Soviet-backed attack by Syria on Israel. We have not invented these stories of Soviet infiltration into Syria. We have them from reliable Arab sources and Turkish Government and Governments of the other Moslem members of Baghdad Pact give credence to them.

3. United Nations observers have since carried out investigations along Israel's borders with Jordan and Syria and are reported to have been satisfied that there were no troop concentrations there in excess of those permitted under Armistice Agreements.

4. Our Ambassador in Tel Aviv reported on 26th November that an appreciable degree of Israeli demobilization had taken place, but mainly of non-operational units. Israel probably had about twelve brigades under arms at present as compared with about sixteen at height of campaign and about five in normal times. Of remainder not more than six are likely to be covering extensive borders of north Tel Aviv; and of these not more than two can be covering Syrian Border. Prime motive for partial demobilization is indubitably economic, and further demobilization seems likely.

Copy to:-

D.II.	
C.R.O.	Mr. Anderson Mr. Golds
Foreign Office	Mr. R.M. Hadow Mr. P.C. Holmes Miss Richards
H.M. Ambassador for U.K. in Dublin	
U.K. Embassy Washington	Mr. J.R.A. Bottomley
U.K. Delegation to U.N. New York	Mr. T.W. Keeble
Accra Governor's Office	Mr. F.E. Cumming-Bruce
c/o High Commissioner for the Federation Kuala Lumpur, Malaya	Mr. R.C.C. Hunt
U.K. High Commissioner in Salisbury (4)	
Canada House	Mr. G.G. Riddell (2)
Australia House	Mr. W.T. Doig Mr. L. Corkery Miss N. Gleeson-White
New Zealand House	Mr. F.H. Corner (2)
South Africa House	Mr. J.G. Stewart (2)
Rhodesia House	Mr. S.J. Olivier (2)

SOUTH ASIA AND MIDDLE EAST DEPT.
S.A. 242/3

Telephone:
Central 3333
Telex, Facsimile Address:
Transotel, Manchester
Private Box No. 791

THE MIDLAND HOTEL
MANCHESTER 2

as from 68 Kings Close,
Hamden,
N.W.4.

11091/1007

The Rt. Hon. Mr. Selwyn Lloyd,
House of Commons,
S.W.1.

affirmed
for reply by direction
17/11/66

Dear Mr. Selwyn Lloyd,

I was at

the Methodist Missionary Society's
layman's Dinner earlier this
year, and heard you speak
on that occasion. I am
naturally pleased that there
are sincere Christians in

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Private Box No. T91

2. THE MIDLAND HOTEL
MANCHESTER 2

positions of great national
responsibility in our land,
and I was impressed with
~~you~~ the fact that you are
a Methodist like myself.

Over the Egyptian
adventure, I hold completely
opposite views to yours,
though I recognise your
position to be honourably
held (as I hope you held
mine!) However there
has been growing a strong

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3. THE MIDLAND HOTEL
MANCHESTER 2

feeling at home and abroad
that there was some collusion
between Britain, France and
Israel before Israel attacked
Egypt. If this is true,
then your case justifying our
subsequent attack on Egypt
is quite false, and could
not be upheld by most
people in England.

Therefore, please
search in your heart for
the true answer to the

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Private Box No. 791

4.

THE MIDLAND HOTEL
MANCHESTER 2

question "Did we know anything of the impending Israeli attack on Egypt?" and then tell us ~~straight~~ straight away.

In any case, let us now stop playing the Russian "power" game in Egypt, and promise to abide by any future United Nations resolutions.

Yours sincerely,

David Evans
(DAVID EVANS)

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VR 1091/1007

Foreign Office,

E.W.1.

November 30, 1956.

Sir,

I am directed by Mr. Secretary Lloyd, to reply to your letter suggesting that he should deny that there had been any collusion between Britain, France and Israel before Israel attacked Egypt.

I am to say that Mr. Lloyd has twice categorically denied that there was such collusion. In the House of Commons on the 31st of October, he said

"The right hon. Gentleman asked whether there had been collusion with regard to this matter. Every time any incident has happened on the frontiers of Israel and the Arab States we have been accused of being in collusion with the Israelis about it. That allegation has been broadcast from Radio Cairo every time. It is quite wrong to state that Israel was incited to this action by Her Majesty's Government. There was no prior agreement between us about it."

Again in the General Assembly of the United Nations on the 23rd of November, he stated

"I deny emphatically the allegation that Her Majesty's Government instigated the Israeli attack or that there was agreement between the two countries about the matter. The British and French Governments decided to intervene to prevent the spread of hostilities and to stop the conflagration spreading. We wished to put, as rapidly as possible, a protective shield between the combatants. This was a situation which would not brook delay, and this was what we achieved."

I am,
Sir,
Your obedient servant,

(SA) R. M. Hodson

D. Evans, Esq.,
68, King's Close,
Hendon,
N.W.4.

VR 1091/1008 *Warbey*

Parliamentary Question

85
* Mrs. Castle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, what assurances he asked for from the Government of Israel, at the time of Israel's mobilisation, that Egypt would not be attacked; and what answer he received.

LA Blackburn - W

29th 28th NOV 1956

ANSWERED 28 NOV 1956
REPLY ATTACHED.

16/2 Warbey

The answer to this question is to refer Mrs. Castle to the reply given to Mr. Warbey on November 5 (Hansard column 200).

I submit a draft reply.

E. K. Rose
(E. K. Rose)
November 23, 1956

H. Warbey 23/11

AN

ISRAEL

Mobilisation of Troops

85. Mrs. Castle asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what assurances he asked for from the Government of Israel, at the time of Israel's mobilisation that Egypt would not be attacked; and what answer he received.

Mr. Ormsby-Gore: I have nothing to add to the answer given to the hon. Member for Ashfield (Mr. Warbey) by my right hon. and learned Friend on 5th November.

(43)

DRAFT REPLY TO
PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION
 NO. 85
Mrs. Castle

M. Gandy - Gne
Chas. N. Dole

I have nothing to add to the answer given to the Hon. Member for ^{Askefield} ~~Askeby~~ by my right honourable and learned friend on November 5.

ATN
with 28 Nov

Notes for Supplementaries

No specific assurance was obtained from the Government of Israel that Egypt would not be attacked. Up to October 29 tension was located on the Israel-Jordan Border. In view of this, and of the Anglo-Jordan Treaty, it was natural that H.M. Government's first concern was to warn Israel not to attack Jordan.

2. As long as L. J. M. Z.P.S. informed the House on Nov 22 the Israeli M. F. A. informed Mr. Ambassador at Tel Aviv on Oct 29 that Israel was not making military advances. She explained mobilisation on the ground that Israel had to be prepared.

to Rep
OR?

Levant R1091/1009

Parliamentary Question

86 ~~76~~
 LA Blackburn W

Del 28th
 25 NOV 1956

ANSWERED 28 NOV 1956
 REPLY ATTACHED

* Mrs. Castle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, what reports he received during October from our British base in Aqaba of the concentrations of troops in Eilat by the Government of Israel.

The Secretary of State has received no reports from the Officer Commanding British troops in Aqaba. Such reports would be addressed in the first place to General H.Q. in Cyprus.

Mr. Wigg asked the Minister of Defence on November 14 when the Officer Commanding British Troops in Aqaba became aware that Israeli troops were undertaking a major operation against Egypt and when this information reached H.Q.M.E. I think we can refer Mrs. Castle to the answer which Mr. Head gave then.

I submit a draft reply which has been cleared with the War Office.

[Signature]
 (E. M. Rose)
 November 23, 1956

H. Berkeley 23/11

*add
 24 Nov.*

86. Mrs. Castle asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what reports he received during October from our British base in Aqaba of the concentrations of troops in Eilat by the Government of Israel.

Mr. Ormsby-Gore: My right hon. and learned Friend has received no reports from the officer commanding British troops in Aqaba. I would refer the hon. Lady to the reply given to the hon. Member for Dudley (Mr. Wigg) by the Minister of Defence on 14th November.

(43/4)

~~28~~ 88

R1094/1010
Lev...
Parliamentary Question

18 Mr. Philip Noel-Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, what point the Israeli troops had reached in the Sinai Peninsula at 9.40 p.m. on 30th October; and how near this was to the Suez Canal.

Def told 28th

26 NOV 1956

LA: Swinton

ANSWERED 28 Nov 1956
REPLY ATTACHED.
FLAG A

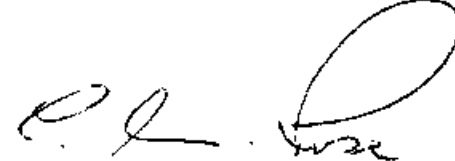
FLAG B

FLAG C

Mr. Noel Baker has told Mr. Rae that the point of his reference to 9.40 p.m. on October 30 is that the Secretary of State was speaking in the House then, and stated that the Israeli forces were within a very few miles of Suez (Hansard column 1380).

2. The accuracy of the Secretary of State's statement was subsequently confirmed by Tel Aviv telegram No. 597 (copy attached). And on October 31 the Prime Minister told the House that Israeli forces, in addition to being near the Canal, were in action at El Quseima (Hansard column 1451).

3. I submit a draft reply.



(E. M. Rose)
November 23, 1956

H. Bulley 237

Sinai Peninsula (Military Operations)

88. Mr. P. Noel-Baker asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what point the Israeli troops had reached in the Sinai Peninsula at 9.40 p.m. on 30th October; and how near this was to the Suez Canal.

Mr. Ormsby-Gore: According to Her Majesty's Government's information at the time, which has since been confirmed, Israel forces had already on the evening of 30th October reached a position eighteen miles from the Suez Canal. Further forces were advancing westward.

(2/1)

DRAFT REPLY TO
 PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION NO. ²⁵
 BY MR. NOEL BAKER ON NOVEMBER
 26, 1956.

Mr. Soder-Parker

According to H.M. Government's information at the time, which has since been confirmed, Israel forces had already on the evening of October 30 reached a position ¹⁰ ~~within 20~~ miles ^{from} ~~of~~ the Suez Canal: Further forces were advancing westward.

Have any other messages or info been received?

NOTES FOR SUPPLEMENTARIES

1. This information was received in the normal way through H. M. Embassy in Tel Aviv.
2. As the Prime Minister said on October 31, other Israel forces were engaged in the north-east of the Sinai peninsula against El Quseima.

Page —

3. Was aerial reconnaissance that used?
 Not so far as I know. (Question for the Air Ministry; but at 9.40 pm it was dark)
 4. The Israeli troops were at the Milla Pass, 18 miles East of Suez.

Have there not been more recent Israeli statements suggesting they would certainly have reached the canal in a matter of hours had they not agreed to stop at the 10 mile limit?

5. The Israelis accepted our ~~demands~~ demand that they stop to keep 10 miles from the Canal.

241

[If referred, Mr. D. G. to point
outleaf must be met. Tel Arrow
Tel. No. 723 (alt. H) says only some way
roads being this] - [Signature]
Ans. 27.

VR 1091/1011 *Levant* ✓
Parliamentary Question

90

* **Mr. Harold Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, if he will make available to Members the reports from the British Ambassador in Jerusalem about Israeli mobilisation which were presented before the attack on Egypt.
[Deferred from Tuesday 27th November]

LA Leak

28 NOV 1956

ANSWERED 28 NOV 1956
REPLY ATTACHED.

90. **Mr. Harold Davies** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he will make available to Members the reports from the British Ambassador in Jerusalem about Israeli mobilisation which were presented before the attack on Egypt.

Mr. Ormsby-Gore: No. I cannot circulate secret official documents to the House.

(44)
28 NOV 1956

Levant

Parliamentary Question

* 66 Mr. Harold Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, if he will make available to Members the reports from the British Ambassador in Jerusalem about Israeli mobilisation which were presented before the attack on Egypt. 27-11 '56

Def. 28th Nov 1956

*La 90
 Look*

Flags A,B,C

Flag D

H.M. Ambassador in Israel is in Tel Aviv, not in Jerusalem.

2. Sir J. Nicholls sent three telegrams on Israel mobilisation between October 25 and October 29. They are Nos. 552, 570 and 579, copies attached.

3. The Military and Air Attachés also sent a large number of telegrams to their respective ministries. Copies of these are attached. The first was that from the Military Attaché dated October 25, reporting that large numbers of civilian vehicles were being mobilised and that men might be called up that night (Tel Aviv telegram No. 550).

4. We clearly cannot circulate Secret official documents to the House, and I think that we can only say so in reply to this question.

5. There may be supplementary questions about the representations which H.M. Ambassador was instructed to make, and the date of his instructions and when he took action. The answer to these is to refer to the question (No.49) by Mr. Arthur Henderson due for answer on November 26.

E. M. Rose

(E.M. Rose)
 November 26, 1956

H. Bailey 26/11

*add
 26 Nov*

how deferred to Wednesday 28/11

Mr. Lawrence has seen; no alteration required. 27/11

W. Adair *J. Dumbly Gore*

DRAFT REPLY TO
PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION
NO. ⁹⁰~~66~~ BY
MR. HAROLD DAVIES
ON November 28, 1956

No, Sir. [~~regret that~~] I cannot circulate Secret official documents to the House.

add
26 Nov

NOTES FOR SUPPLEMENTARIES *28N*

1. When was the first report of Mobilisation received?

On October 25, in a report from the Military Attaché.

2. Representations of H.M. Ambassador

Refer to answer given to Mr. Arthur Henderson on November 26.

3. H.M. Ambassador's functions

H.M. Ambassador is not in Israel in order to spy on Israel military dispositions. But it is part of his functions to report on the situation as he sees it. This he did.

4. Reports were conflicting. As late as October 29 H.M. Ambassador was informed by UNTSO observers that stories of "almost complete mobilisation" were greatly exaggerated.

ADVANCE COPY

TELEGRAM.

CB.

SAVINGRAM

Cypher

Code

Clear

V TELEGRAM V
Dept

From:— Stockholm

To:— Foreign Office

Ukdel New York 9. Washington 26. Paris 29. Oslo 42.
Copenhagen 38 and Moscow 12.

Despatched

Received Dec 3.

No. 42 Saving of November 30, 1956.

RESTRICTED

Addressed to Foreign Office Saving telegram No: 42 of November 30 and repeated for information saving to Ukdel New York, Washington, Paris, Oslo, Copenhagen and Moscow.

My telegram No: 39 Saving of November 23.

Middle East: Swedish Reactions.

Swedish opinion is at last beginning to concern itself with the wider and long-term issues in the Middle East rather than with the daily comings and goings. Criticism of Britain and France has dwindled to a murmur; criticism of the United Nations and the United States is growing. The votes in the General Assembly are increasingly seen to bear little relation either to the realities of the situation or to the real state of world opinion and the contrast is drawn between the United Nations' impotence over Hungary and its stream of resolutions against the British and French. The US Government are criticised, especially in Conservative and Liberal quarters, for letting down their allies, "doing a Munich" and allowing their foreign policy to be run by Mr. Hammarskjold (of whom right-wing opinion here does not have a high opinion). In conversation, a number of Swedes have criticised President Eisenhower for departing to play golf at this juncture. Mr. Hammarskjold is blamed for accepting all Colonel Nasser's conditions. A growing divergence is

/noticeable..

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- 2 -

noticeable between informed public opinion and the official position of the Swedish Government, which remains wedded to the United Nations and the United States. The points for a Middle East settlement made in your speech to the English Speaking Union are widely endorsed. Several commentators stress that the UN force must remain in Egypt until a final settlement.

2. There is no noticeable tendency to blame Britain and France for the reduction of oil supplies to Sweden. On the contrary, the lesson is drawn that Europe must stand together if European interests are not to be overridden. All Europe is seen as sharing in the diplomatic defeat of Britain and France. "The only security European peoples can count on in the future is the security they create for themselves. Only by joining forces can they protect their interests, their independence and their future.....The only way out for the European states, if they want to avoid fiascos in their foreign policy and become the pawns in the game between East and West is intimate cooperation in both political and economic matters". (Göteborgs Handels-Tidningen).

3. Much attention is being paid to growing Russian influence in Syria and the reactivation of the Bagdad Pact, and it is hoped that these developments will lead to a change in American policy and to some helpful initiative. "Without damaging their own and the West's cause, the US cannot go on with their half rejection of Britain and France".

4. Göteborgs Handels-Tidningen of November 29 carries a long article (translation by bag) maintaining that Franco/British intervention must have been due to the knowledge (which could not be made public) that Russian volunteers were about to enter Egypt, where stores of arms had been previously prepared for them and that, but for our intervention, the whole Middle East would now be in Russian hands. Several Swedes of standing have said the same thing to me; their attitude may be summed up as: "Sir Anthony Eden must have had secret reasons to act as he did and we are prepared to trust his judgement".

HANKY

(OWAP) TELEGRAM *OB. V*

Cypher

SAVINGRAM

Code

ADVANCE COPY

Clear

Dept Dist.

From: Stockholm

To: Foreign Office

VR091/1012 A

Despatched

Received

No. 43 Saving of December 11, 1956.

RESTRICTED

Addressed to Foreign Office Saving telegram No. 43 of December 11, 1956 and repeated for information saving to Oslo 45 and Copenhagen 41.

My telegram No. 42 Saving of November 30.

Middle East: Swedish Reactions.

Tendency in the press and in private conversation to consider more the main problems of the Middle East and less the day to day happenings has become marked. The Liberal "Göteborgs-Handelstidning" comments: "To return to the state of affairs before the Israel advance into the Sinai desert would be but to summon up a new storm. Moreover a number of the Arab states are not capable of ruling themselves, far less of fulfilling their obligations of international co-existence.....National autonomy can be a good thing but to confer it upon irresponsible régimes is pointless".

2. All sections of opinion deplore the fact that, whereas France and Britain have observed the authority of the United Nations, the Russians have not done so in Hungary; thus again "Göteborgs-Handelstidning" expresses regret that "The United Nations have influence over the decent nations; not over the others". For the most part Hammarskjöld still stands in high esteem but criticism of him has been voiced in the Opposition press, on occasions vehemently.

/3. Much...

45467 (4)



- 2 -

3. Much comment centres on the position of the United States and the hope is expressed that the Atlantic Alliance can be strengthened. It is generally hoped that the United States will take a stronger line in the Middle East, though at least one paper has pointed out that the US Government will have to buy Arab support by increased economic aid and that their position in the Middle East may be reinforced by their opposition to Anglo-French action.
4. Last week's debate in the House of Commons was well covered and the prospect of greater national unity in the United Kingdom in dealing with the economic difficulties created by events in the Middle East was welcomed. In particular, the Opposition's laudatory remarks about the American position are regarded as a welcome change from the former "anti-Americanism" of, for example, Mr. Bevan. All Swedes have been deeply shocked by the ribald atmosphere during important statements in the House of Commons.
5. The Social Democrat "Morgon-Tidningen" has carried an article by their correspondent who has returned from Egypt bitterly criticising the Egyptian censorship. "Censorship and distortion of the truth have reached a pitch in Cairo which was not even attained in Nazi Germany. The censors do not only content themselves with crossing out unpleasant truths, but they re-write it so as to suit Egyptian needs.....". This article (translation follows separately) also deplures the mass expulsion of Jews of Egyptian nationality, and a question has been tabled in the Riksdag by a Liberal member on this subject. The written answer will be given on Wednesday or Thursday.

HANKEY

1956

V
 LEVANT DEPARTMENT

VR 1091/1014

15/12/56

FROM Sir E. Dening
 Tokyo

Press reports of Egyptian allegations about British help for the Israelis.

No. 495
 Dated December 3
 Received in Registry— Dec 3.

References to former relevant papers

MINUTES

I discussed this with IP Dept / FERA who despatched a reply last night, after clearing it with African Dept.

(Print)

African Dept.

Rh.
 9/12

(How disposed of)

20 Miss Meadows
 Administrative 4/12

See my F.O. tel No 547 of Dec 5 to T Dept enclosing reply referred to above

JSW
 12/12

Tel Tokyo 547 Dec 14

Rh.
 14/12

(Action completed)

(Index)

JW 14/12 for 14/57

References to later relevant papers

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FROM TOKYO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

En Clair

FOREIGN OFFICE AND
WHITEHALL DISTRIBUTION

Sir E. Dening

VR 1091/10/4

No. 495
December 3, 1956

D.1.03 p.m. December 3, 1956
R.1.37 p.m. December 3, 1956

IMMEDIATE

In an article published in the Press this morning the Egyptian embassy here has made the following allegations:-

- (a) that on November 2 the British fleet bombarded Gaza to help the Israel forces occupy it;
- (b) that it bombarded the Sharmelshekin zone from the Red Sea also to help the Israelis;
- (c) that the Secretary General of the United Nations had proposed a meeting in Geneva on October 29 to resume negotiations on Suez. Egypt had agreed, but Britain and France were quite evasive.

2. I presume these various charges are lies, but would be glad of confirmation and of any other relevant material to lend authority and weight to a denial.

ADVANCE COPIES:

Private Secretary
Sir I. Kirkpatrick
Mr. Dean
Mr. Beeley
Head of Levant Department
Head of African Department
Head of Information Policy Department
Head of News Department
Mr. Ashe (P.U.S.D.)

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CONFIDENTIAL

FROM FOREIGN OFFICE TO TOKYO

Cypher/OTP

FOREIGN OFFICE AND WHITEHALL
DISTRIBUTION

No. 547
December 4, 1956.

D. 1.45 a.m. December 5, 1956.

CONFIDENTIAL

Your telegram No. 495 [of December 3].

Paragraph 1 (a) and (b): The British fleet did **NOT** bombard the Gaza or Sharmel Sheikh areas. British naval forces **did** not operate in the Gaza area.

2. Paragraph 1 (c): The Secretary General had proposed such a meeting, but, after the Egyptian Government's flat rejection of the 18 - power proposals, we had told the Secretary General that we saw no point in attending such a meeting unless he could assure us that the Egyptian delegate would have alternative proposals to put forward. We did not receive that assurance.

uuuuu



BRITISH EMBASSY,
BEIRUT.

(1093/307/56)

CONFIDENTIAL

November 29, 1956.

R 1091/1017

Dear Michael

There is much talk going on about collusion between the Anglo-French forces and the Israelis when the Israeli attack began.

2. You may be interested to know that I have been told by the Counsellor of the French Embassy here that in fact there was collusion between the French and the Israelis. I did not question him on the details of this but from his conversation I infer that the French knew, well beforehand, about the forthcoming Israeli attack on Egypt and were giving such assistance as they could.

Yours
I.D. Scott

R.M. Hadow, Esq.,
Foreign Office,
LONDON, S.W.1.

P.S. I would ask that no one who sees this letter should reveal the source of my information.

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Air Attache No. A.A.759/56

Date: 26th November, 1956

From: Air Attache,
TEL AVIV

To: Assistant Chief of Air Staff,
(Intelligence)
Air Ministry

Israel - The War In Sinai - October 29th - November 4th, 1956

Introduction

1. An outline of the fighting in Sinai was given in A.A.725/56 dated 7th November, 1956. It was stressed that report was an interim one. Unfortunately the promised tour of Sinai was cancelled, and the Israel Air Force has still not completed its operational research. This report, therefore, is also not final, it merely adds the story of the air campaign as described to the Air Attache by Aluf Mishne LAHAT, Chief of Operations, on 19th November, 1956. It may however be the last official information we shall get as Israel distrust of Britain appears to be growing again. I have added a few comments in parenthesis.

Nomenclature

2. The official I.D.F. name for the campaign is "OPERATION KADESH". Sinai is of course "holy" to the Jews, and the presumed location of Kadesh Barnea was on the start line.

Planning

3. Lahat said there were two difficulties in planning the air operations. The intention had to be kept to a restricted circle for security reasons, so full use could not be made of the staff. Secondly they were asked to undertake large scale operations at a moment when the conversion of the air force from piston engine to jet aircraft had only run half its course.

Monday, 29th October, 1956

Synopsis

4. Aerial activity on the Monday appears to have been confined, by day, to the paratroop operation at the Mitla Pass and reconnaissance. Concerning reconnaissance there is nothing to add to the description in A.A.725/56, paragraph 44. By night air supply sorties were also flown.

Paratroop Drop

5. Operation Kadesh opened with the paratroop drop which took place between 1630 and 1700 hours. This particular mission caused more apprehension than any other as the transport aircraft had to fly deep into hostile territory in daylight, and make the drop within sight of the enemy's main fighter bases. The Mitla Pass is approximately 30 miles from the Shallufa/Kabrit area.

6. Sixteen Dakotas were employed. They were specially camouflaged to blend with the terrain of northern Sinai. This was apparently very effective as their escorts had difficulty in finding them. The Dakotas flew at about 800 feet.

7. Cover was given by the jet fighter force. This took two forms, close escort and defensive screen.

- (a) Fighter Screen. The Mysteres flew a series of patrols between the DZ and the Canal. They were ordered not to cross the Canal, but patrolled near enough to the waterway to be able to observe clearly all movement on the Egyptian airfields. Lahat said though Israel's radar gave some cover over Egyptian airfields it could

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not be relied on in this case as the Mitla Pass was too near the Canal to depend on organising interceptions by G.C.I. methods. It was hoped therefore by maintaining visual contact to be able to pounce on any aircraft that took off before it reached the Dakotas. In fact the only Egyptian reaction was to move their aircraft to dispersals from hard standings. The Mysteres relieved each other by sections of four, and patrolled at 20,000 feet.

(b) Close Escort. The close escort was flown by Meteors and Ouragans. These sat over the transports in sections of four and were relieved every fifteen minutes. They flew at 5,000 feet.

8. The air force had orders to attack nothing unless they were attacked first. As already stated there was no Egyptian air activity east of the Canal.

Night Operations

9. During the first night activity took three forms, reconnaissance, supply and evacuation.

10. Reconnaissance appears to have been largely by Piper Cubs, with the object of locating any enemy movement eastwards from the Canal. (I have been unable to get any admission of the use of night photographic reconnaissance by Mosquitos).

11. The columns advancing westwards from the frontier and the paratroops were supported by air supply. Both Noratlas and Dakotas were used in these operations. At this stage it is believed supply included small arms and ammunition, food and medical stores and larger equipment such as jeeps and guns. The latter stores were dropped to the paratroops by Noratlas.

12. Wounded were evacuated by air from both the Mitla Pass and other points, such as Kuntilla and Themed. These sorties were flown by Piper Cubs.

Tuesday and Wednesday, 30th and 31st October, 1956

Synopsis

13. Tuesday and Wednesday were the phase of air fighting, though the Egyptians did not react until just before 1100 hours on the Tuesday. After the Allied force bombed Egyptian airfields on Wednesday night Arab air activity ceased. Close support, interdiction, supply and reconnaissance sorties were also flown.

Fighter Operations

14. Fighter patrols over the paratroops and advancing columns commenced at first light on Tuesday. Fighters again flew in sections of four, leaving their bases in Israel at fifteen minute intervals. The Israel Air Force expected the Egyptians to attack their main bases. All fighters not airborne or rearming were kept dispersed at immediate readiness to counter any such attacks. None materialised.

15. Just before eleven o'clock the first Egyptian air force reaction was observed. MIGs made a reconnaissance of the Mitla Pass area. Shortly afterwards both MIGs and Vampires straffed the paratroops. The first aerial combat took place when two Mysteres intercepted four attacking Vampires, three were seen as flammers and the fourth was claimed as a probable. It was said interrogation of the paratroopers has now made it clear all four Vampires crashed. None have however been recovered as the mountainous terrain about Mitla is extremely rugged. The search for these wrecks is

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continuing. (This account suggests that the Israel fighter force was stretched to its limit between flying defensive patrols and standing by to repel attacks on home bases, as the first MIG reconnaissances and attacks were not apparently intercepted). During the morning of Tuesday the Egyptians managed to get in three or four attacks on the paratroops by midday. They made a few more attacks during the afternoon.

16. During the rest of the day MIGs were encountered on a number of occasions. The Russian built jets were penetrating right across Sinai at this time. Two MIGs attacked a Piper Cub which was flying low near Nekhl. The first failed in its attack. The second shot down the Piper after about ten minutes. The pilot was killed. (I am told this officer was Segen Yehuda Karni). Later in the day two other Pipers were attacked by MIGs in the Mitla Pass area. The A.O.P. aircraft escaped by flying at ground level in steep wadis.

17. Encounters between MIGs and Mysteres took place on four or five occasions. The Israelis came to the conclusion the Mystere is the better aircraft, even allowing for relative skill and morale as between the pilots. Some MIG pilots fought hard, but others seemed to take the first opportunity to break off combat. From Lahat's reading of Korean air fighting he thought the MIGs behaved much as they had done in the Far East. They broke off in a half loop getting away on the gain of height.

18. One MIG pilot fought extremely gallantly and is worthy of special note. Two Mysteres encountered eight MIGs over Bir Hama. The Mysteres were at the end of their patrol and had to retire as fuel was running low. Six MIGs soon turned westwards but the other two kept up a running dog fight towards the east. The seventh retired when the frontier area was reached, but the last man accompanied the Mysteres all the way to Hatsor. Progress was therefore in a series of circular movements. Finally the MIG turned back, having been hit, and the Mysteres were able to land. This battle commenced at 25,000 feet and finished at low altitude. The MIG was hit in the wing and the Israelis think it is possible this was a MIG 15 they have recovered from the sea. The aircraft was salvaged by the Israel navy from the lagoon of Sabkhet el Bardawil. (I believe the actual position was near the west end of the lagoon not far from Rumani 774924).

19. On both days the MIGs flew in formations of up to eight aircraft, occasionally more. Four or eight seemed the favourite numbers. Smaller numbers of MIGs were seen only in the two attacks on Pipers recorded above.

20. On one occasion two Meteors were attacked by MIGs. The Meteors found they could outturn the MIGs with ease. The No. 1 Meteor said he might have had a good shot at a MIG if he had had a more experienced No. 2. The MIGs superior speed did not seem of any advantage if the Meteors flew defensive circles. (It is probable of course the Israeli's superior skill as pilots helped considerably).

21. Ouragans also encountered MIGs on two or three occasions. Again (below 25,000 feet) the Ouragan outturned the MIG every time. However on one occasion over the Mitla Pass an Ouragan was hit by a MIG. This aircraft & a companion fought a defensive battle back to the Israeli frontier, turning continually. The damaged aircraft made a forced landing at Halutsa. (This is the Ouragan previously reported shot down. It has already been repaired).

22. It was during one of these Ouragan v MIG affrays that pilots reported meeting MIG 17s. The aircrew are convinced at least two MIG 17s were in the fight. One MIG 17 was hit by an Ouragan, it went into a spin, and the

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Israeli pilot said he believed, but could not be absolutely certain, it crashed. A search for this wreck is still in progress.

23. Lahat said the general impression was that MIG pilots were very careful in turns, especially below 25,000 feet. On one occasion a MIG was seen to flick off a steep turn. Lahat stressed the relative distances to Central and Western Sinai, saying this gave the Egyptians a great advantage. The pattern of battle suggested the MIGs tended to come up when they believed the Israel aircraft were about due to turn for home at the end of patrols or ground strafing. The Egyptians then followed harassing them. MIGs were rarely encountered when the Israelis first entered the area. (This late contact does not necessarily support Lahat's conclusion, especially if Egyptian radar was ineffective and their control disorganised).

Interdiction

24. It was just before noon on 30th October when the Egyptians first fired at Israel forces on the ground. At the same time the Israelis observed Egyptian ground movement eastwards from the Canal area. The Air Staff had a quick conference to decide whether they should still hold aircraft in reserve to repel possible attacks on their airfields. They decided to put the maximum effort into the forward area, continuing their fighter patrols and using the reserve for interdiction and if necessary close support.

25. The main roads across Northern Sinai, Kantara - El Arish and Ismailia - Abu Ageila, were divided into sectors and allocated to flights. The only pilot briefing was the initial allocation to sectors, though occasional changes of emphasis were made during rearming periods. Pilots also received an air to air briefing from returning aircraft which they were relieving. In these interdiction sorties three trains were destroyed as well as large numbers of armoured and thin skinned vehicles. The army had the greatest praise for this effort, saying most Egyptian formations were broken up before they got anywhere near the advancing columns of Israel troops. Lahat described the interdiction as classical.

Close Support

26. On the Tuesday, 30th October, close support was confined almost entirely to helping the paratroops. This tactical aid was given by Ouragans and also to some extent by Mysteres. The Mysteres appeared to have combined this task with their defensive screening, (as I understand it they must have carried out their ground attacks and then relieved the forward patrol, returning when fuel was down to a minimum or they in turn were relieved, whichever occurred earlier).

27. The Israelis consider the Mystere 68 mm rocket proved a useful weapon against enemy troops in rough hill country, such as about Mitla. Its high velocity and rate of fire (it will be remembered each aircraft carries 55 stores), combined with a contact fuse gave it the effect of a directed shower of small anti-personnel bombs. Surprise and satisfaction were also expressed at the damage achieved against armoured vehicles by the 20mm and 30 mm canon. Lahat said they witnessed far more flames than had been expected. He added the caution however that many of the fires may have been the result of rear unprotected tanks of extra fuel. Nevertheless this was good enough to finish the tank off so far as the Egyptians were concerned. Napalm was equally successful, attacks were made from the rear in the direction a tank was travelling; as the burst tended to be forward the tank was in the fire long enough to suffer severe damage.

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28. On Wednesday, 31st October, the stiff ground fighting at Abu Ageila commenced. At first the ground position was too confused to permit close support. (I think this may well have been where two members of an air contact team were wounded; in which case control probably broke down - see A.A. 725/56 Appendix 'D' para. 4). Whether or not close support for this action really developed on the Wednesday is not clear.

Thursday and Friday, 1st and 2nd November

Synopsis

29. After the Anglo - French action against Egyptian airfields on Wednesday night the Egyptian air force ceased to take part in the fighting in Sinai. The Israel Air Force was therefore free to indulge in unrestricted interdiction and close support. Thursday and Friday witnessed the collapse of the breaking Egyptian forces; retreat became rout; by Friday night apart from a few pockets of resistance, such as in the Gaza Strip, Northern Sinai had been completely occupied by the Israel forces.

Close Support and Interdiction

30. On Thursday the air force joined in the fight at Abu Ageila in strong measure. The Mustang squadrons were put on this task, and here they received severe punishment. Most losses were described as the result of light arms fire from troops, as opposed to organised anti aircraft fire. Of the nine Mustangs which crash landed the majority had lost glycol. Most of these crashes took place east of the old Palestine frontier. Lahat said one pilot who came down near Abu Ageila and walked 40 miles back, mostly at night, proved the value of the Israel Air Force escape and evasion pack. He deliberately did not burn his aircraft, which has since been recovered.

31. The Mosquitos were employed on interdiction and had no losses, though a number were damaged. Lahat said a few were saved by having a second engine, but the majority had only superficial airframe scars which were easily plugged or covered.

32. The Ouragan and Mystere squadrons were also used on interdiction. The Meteors gave close support to the advancing army columns. (Harvards were not mentioned but it is known they were withdrawn from operations after Tuesday).

Gaza and El Arish

33. Lahat said there was relatively little air action against the Gaza Strip and most of such action was against stubborn strong points towards the end of the affray. (I knew however that a preliminary rocket attack by Mustangs was made on the outer Gaza defences on Friday just before the attack commenced). At Khan Yunis and Deir al Balah Meteors were used to attack pockets of troops. The pilots said the Egyptian fortified positions in the white sand stood out as excellent targets. (These attacks were flown on both Thursday and Friday). Lahat stressed that strict orders were given against bombing towns or other populated areas. (He said "bombing"; I imagine the order covered all weapons!)

34. There seems to have been little fighting at El Arish. By Friday the Egyptians were in disorganised retreat, and Israel air activity was devoted to turning this into a rout.

Enemy Radar in Sinai

35. There was an Egyptian radar station near El Arish and in addition

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a well made dummy set. There was some hot argument in the air force on whether to capture this intact (C.I.O. and party) or whether to knock it out to weaken Egyptian fighter activities (Chief of Ops. and party). The latter had his way and the station was attacked early in the battle with 20 mm cannon and damaged. The radar has been brought to Israel, is stated to be a British 21 set, and is already being repaired.

Air Transport

36. Throughout these days the transport squadron was putting maximum effort, by day and night, into supporting the army. All types of stores, including large quantities of fuel, were dropped to forward units. When the airfields at El Arish and Bir Hamma were overrun they were rapidly put into commission as forward supply points. On return flights wounded were flown out.

Saturday and Sunday, 3rd and 4th November

Synopsis

37. By Saturday the air force had completed its fighting tasks in the north. It was however still employed in this area in three roles - transportation, seeking out fleeing Egyptian troops in wild areas (a task of the Piper Cubs), and maintaining fighters at readiness lest an unexpected attack materialised from Egypt or Syria. The major part of the fighting force was turned south to help the army occupy the southern half of the Sinai peninsula.

Aircraft Employed in the South

38. For a day and a half before the ground troops reached Sharm el Sheikh the Israel Air Force attacked the Egyptian outposts in Southern Sinai. The targets were up to 400 kms. from the bases. The range was too great for Ouragans and Meteors to be used. The aircraft employed were Mosquitoes, Mustangs, Mysteres and the B.17s. The B.17s bombed from between 6-8000 feet.

Israel Aircraft Shot Down

39. In one of these attacks on Saturday, 3rd March, a Mystere was lost. This was flown by Rav Seren Peled the Squadron Commander. He was hit in the engine by a light anti aircraft shell and bailed out from about 3500 feet. He landed about three kilometres from the Egyptian camp at Ras Nuzrani. He suffered from burns and had a small bone broken in one foot, though he was not aware of this injury at the time. He ran six kilometres into the hills, and according to Lahat was picked up by a Piper Cub one hour and twenty minutes later. When the Piper landed two Egyptians were standing two hundred yards away. They regarded the scene with interest but displayed no hostile feelings.

40. A Mustang was also shot down near Ras Nuzrani, also apparently on the Saturday. The pilot crash landed on the beach and was taken prisoner. He has not been recovered. The source of this information is an Egyptian doctor who was captured the next day and had attended the pilot. When it was reported this pilot was missing a Dakota fitted with loudspeakers was sent to the Ras Nuzrani area and broadcast a warning to the Egyptians to treat him well. This Dakota had been used earlier over the Gaza Strip to call on the Arabs to lay down their arms.

Fall of Tor and Sharm el Sheikh

41. It was on Saturday that the air force attacked a small troop ship and a frigate off Ras Nuzrani. The former was sunk, the latter damaged. Details were given in my A.A. 726/56 dated 7th November, 1956 (Air Ministry only).

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7.

42. On Saturday afternoon paratroops were dropped at TOR on the west coast of the Sinai Peninsula. There was no resistance and Noratlas and Dakota aircraft flew in additional forces within an hour.

43. By Sunday the remaining Egyptian troops were fleeing down both sides of the peninsula towards the southern tip of Sinai (the Sharm el Sheikh area). During the final stage of their retreat they had been strafed by Mustangs and four Mysteres with napalm and cannon. At times the Israeli pilots were attacking Egyptians within thirty metres (sic) of their own forces. Sharm el Sheikh was well fortified but by Sunday there was not much fight left in the enemy. They were bombed until the Israel army arrived, by which time most of the Egyptians had laid down their arms and walked away. The army counted three hundred killed as the result of these air attacks on Sharm el Sheikh, which numbered twenty two sorties. Most of the damage was done with what were described as 500 lb anti personnel bombs.

Miscellaneous Operational Information

44. Israeli Pilots. Even the most recent Israeli converts to jet aircraft said they did not find the sudden increase in speed any drawback on operations. Their training in flying, firing and bombing was adequate for their tasks. (I gather some pilots on the Meteors had only very few jet hours when operations began).

45. Sorties Flown. In northern Sinai the Israelis got an average of four or five sorties a day from their jet aircraft, and about two to three a day from their Mustangs and Mesquitos. In the latter stages as distances increased the number of sorties fell to the lower figures.

46. Air Supply. Dakotas and Noratlas were flown to the limit on supply duties. Spare parts, fuel, ammunition, field guns, and jeeps were dropped to the ground forces - all items both by day and night. Troops were flown to forward strips and the wounded were brought out.

47. A.G.P. Aircraft. The Piper Cubs were described as the eyes and ears of the army. They are easy to maintain, and landed on roads, tracks and desert. The majority were parcelled out to the ground forces, and these were put under the operational control of the army units and formations to which they were attached. Allocation was on no set basis, - one battalion might have two aircraft, or a number of companies might have one each.

48. Harvards. The Harvards were armed with bombs and rockets. They were restricted to attacks on soft skinned vehicles. Only one was lost, the second reported down had in fact forced landed with undercarriage lowered and has since been flown out.

49. Capture of Destroyer "Ibrahim". After the Ibrahim had shelled Haifa at about 0330 hours on 31st October, 1956 she was shadowed by a Dakota equipped with Radar. At first light two Ouragans were sent out to attack. They made stern attacks out of the sun (according to Lahat though I wonder if the sun was up) with rockets and 20mm cannon at about 0500 hours. The United States Naval Attache maintains he saw a light aircraft of the Piper variety making low passes over the ship between the shelling and first light, he thought at about 0345 hours. Lahat denied any knowledge of this light aircraft.

50. Maritime Reconnaissance. Lahat said little maritime reconnaissance was flown during the campaign. They did however fly extensive maritime patrols during the forty eight hours before "Kadosh" started; at the same time they were obtaining comprehensive high level photographic cover of the

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8.

Egyptian navy. Israel Mosquitos took part in the air sea rescue operation following the loss of an Egyptian aircraft carrying staff officers from Beirut to Cairo just before hostilities started. He denied that Israel had shot this aircraft down.

51. Helicopters. Lahat said both S.55 and Hiller helicopters were used. (My first intimation that Sikorski's were in Israel). He said a helicopter had been used to retrieve a Piper Cub which forced landed in the desert. (If this is literally true it must surely have been an S.55).

52. Spitfires. Lahat said Spitfires were not used in "Kadesh".

53. Israel A.A. Defences. Lahat said no Egyptian aircraft came over Israel by night. The stories of bombs being dropped off Tel Aviv and in the Jerusalem corridor were untrue. He thought air raid alarms were probably caused by the approach of British and French aircraft, which he said followed weird and incomprehensible courses at times. He admitted the guns outside the Embassy here had fired at an Israel Mosquito, which violated the prohibited area, on the Tuesday morning, 30th October.

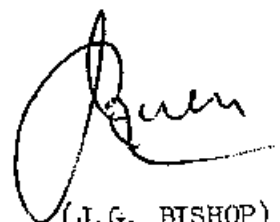
54. Operational Control. Lahat said the air battle was fought from the Operational Control Room at A.H.Q. Ramle. The only other controllers operating were those in air Contact teams forward with the army.

55. Flying Training. Flying training ceased. Advanced cadets were used on Stearman's for communications duties. Other cadets were given ground employment.

56. Assessment of Losses., Lahat's figures of Israel and Egyptian losses are given at Annex 1 to this report.

Conclusion

57. I draw no conclusions, as there is nothing to add to my final comments in A.A.725/56. I think we have been given a fairly honest account of the air force's activities in the Sinai campaign, with the inevitable Israeli reticence on those subjects and statistics which would be most interesting, such as radar, communications and serviceability. For a few days it looked as though they would be more forthcoming than ever before, but by the time their officers reappeared on the public scene the old security blanket had been rehoisted for reasons which are not appropriate to this report.


(J.G. BISHOP)
Wing Commander,
Air Attache
Tel Aviv

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Annex 1 to
A.A. 759/56 dated 26th Nov. 56

Egyptian and Israel Air Losses During
Operation KADESH as given by Aluf Mishne
Lahat on 19th November, 1956

Egypt

1. Lahat said the Egyptian forces involved were estimated at

- 1 Vampire Squadron
- 2 MIG 15 Squadrons
- $\frac{1}{2}$ Meteor Squadron

He emphasised the Egyptians employed NO A.O.P. aircraft.

2. The Israel Air Force estimated the losses from this force as

- 4 Vampires destroyed (no wrecks found)
(one pilot captured)
- 1 Meteor probably destroyed.
- 3 MIG 15 destroyed (Two wrecks found of which one has been recovered, see para 18 of report; the other wreckage was approximately 23 miles west of Abu Agaila)
- 2 MIG possibly destroyed (of which one is the alleged MIG 17)
- 2 Sokol overrun (These Czech trainers were at El Arish. One has been flown to Ramle; the other is a wreck. In A.A. 725/56 App. D, para 1(b) I reported these as Aero 45. The twin I saw at El Arish was apparently a burnt out Egyptian Meteor of pre Kadesh vintage.)

Israel

3. Lahat's remarks on Israel losses were -

- 1 Mystere destroyed (Light A.A. fire) (Pilot safe).
- 9 Mustangs shot down by small arms fire. (at least four recoverable) (Two pilots killed)
- 2 Harvards shot down (One destroyed; one already recovered) (One pilot killed).
- 1 Ouragan forced landed after being hit. (Already repaired).
- 4 or 5 Pipers destroyed (One shot down by a MIG 15; one destroyed on the ground by a MIG 15; two or three written off as the result of accidents).

Many other aircraft were damaged.

4. I do not know the name of the second Mustang pilot killed, but understand he was a young officer. The other casualties were:-

- Mustang - Rav Soren Moshe TADMOR (Milnitsky) O.C. No.105 Squadron.
- Harvard - Soren Moshe ESHEL (of the F.T.S.) O.C. Harvard Ga Squadron.
- Piper Cub - Segen Yehuda KARNI of No. 100 Squadron.

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BRITISH EMBASSY REVIEW OF SWEDISH PRESS COMMENTS C.S.
STOCKHOLM Friday 30 November 1956.

1) GHT. 29/11 Feature article by Sven Lönberg.
"Suez, Soviet and United Nations"

"In 'Manchester Guardian' of 8/11 a Mr John Pringle in a letter opposes the violent criticism against Eden's policy in the Middle East. The letter-writer is firmly convinced that the leaders of the Government have received such information as to the situation, as would silence most of their adversaries, if only he could make public this information.

"Mr Pringle was 'Manchester Guardian' correspondent in Berlin during the Hitler era, and he had given his paper information about Hitler and his plans, which that paper published, without the news making much impression. This was at the time of Hitler's march into the Rhineland in 1936; all the League of Nations could do was to make 'serious protests'; Mr Pringle thinks the Western Powers should have sent in troops at once; if that had happened Hitler would have been nipped in the bud, and humanity saved the horrors of the war.

GHT then quotes another similar article from a German journalist, writing in Neue Zürcher Zeitung 17/11; here too the writer recalls the incident of Hitler's march into the Rhineland, and says that if only the French had marched in then, the Germans would have been forced to an ignominious retreat, as indeed they were expecting to have to turn tail and run if any French soldiers had appeared; that time the whole thing was a bluff on Hitler's part; and it succeeded.

GHT understands from Mr Pringle's letter, that the information that Eden had obtained must have been of just some such nature, and equally important for the whole future of the world; so serious was it, in fact that it can be concerned with none other than one power: the Soviet; says GHT. (Sven Lönberg)

propaganda
The article then reviews the efforts during recent years of Russia in the Middle East. It refers to the purchase of arms by Egypt; and it points out that the quantity far exceeded what would have been necessary for Egypt to reach her main objective: the annihilation of Israel; no, the arms were for another purpose; they were meant for Russian 'volunteers' ~~which~~ for which Nasser had asked, and which the Soviet was only too pleased to send.

GHT says it can be taken for granted that the British Government was informed of all the details of this plan, about which the general public knew nothing. The article says one does not need to belong to the Secret Service to understand the rest of the picture: once sufficient arms were there, on the spot, all that was needed was an excuse to send off the Russian army; Nasser was only too glad to annex the Suez Canal, and in view of the protests from the capitalist states that were bound to follow, the Soviet would find it her obvious duty to come to the rescue and protect the sovereignty of her threatened brother-nation by sending her army.

"This was the situation which gave rise to the sending of the Franco-British expeditionary force; it was a case of preventing the Russians from making themselves masters in Egypt.

"The Russian expedition had been ready some time; then came the revolt in Hungary... Hungarian refugees have reported how Russian soldiers were constantly asking them 'where is the Canal' (see also reference this review) and 'where are the English and French?' These were the soldiers that were to have gone to Egypt, but had had to be deployed to Hungary instead; it had all happened so quickly, there had not even been time to explain the changed dispositions to the men.

+ Review 13/11/56. p.1 AP report from Nickelsdorff.

(cont.)

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REVIEW OF SWEDISH

is(cont.)

30/11/56 C.S.

The writer goes on:

"I leave it to others to discuss the morality or expediency of the Anglo-French political action. But I cannot resist asking: What would it look like now if the expedition had not ~~been~~ undertaken? The answer to that question would almost certainly be this: In Egypt there would now be a strong Soviet Russian ~~my~~ - and not merely in Egypt, but in all the other Arab states as well - in Syria there are even now being amassed stacks of Russian war material. Russia would not only be master of the Suez Canal and all the oil pipelines in the Arab countries, but would also have control of the eastern Mediterranean, the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, and masses of arms would then without the least difficulty, still continue to be sent to Algeria and Tunisia.

"What, in such a situation would the United Nations have been able to do? The answer is unfortunately all too obvious. We have only to look at poor bleeding Hungary. UN has been generous with "serious protests" - just as when Hitler marched into the Rhineland, similarly for the Soviet, who takes them nearly always as a guarantee that nothing further will happen. That something, even a little, was done in Egypt is all due to the British-French expedition. Therefore it is worth something more than just ingratitude and snubs.

"Here, one agrees heartily with old man Churchill's words - that UN's rebuke of England was neither clever nor helpful.

"What is now happening is calculated to give rise to grave second-thoughts. We in the West are now confronted with serious ~~danger~~ dangers. We must be prepared to meet them alone. It would be folly to place too much hope in the wisdom or helpfulness of either the UN or USA." (end)
