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(1045/60)

BRITISH DIPLOMATIC MISSION,

CAIRO.

October 13, 1960.

UG 105/114

UG 105/122

Dear John,

I returned yesterday from a visit to Damascus and Aleppo and have just seen Paul Wright's letter to you (1045/60) of October 11 about the exchange of Ambassadors with the U.A.R.

2. The situation in Syria is the same as here: everybody I spoke to recalled the Prime Minister's meetings with Nasser and assumed that Ambassadors would be exchanged and Consular posts reopened in the next month or two. I did not find it easy to react with the right mixture of optimism and caution.

3. I should add that a journalist came to see me just before I left Cairo to ask if I could provide "a biography of Mr. Beeley".

4. I am sending a copy of this letter to Harold Beeley.

*Yours ever
G.G. Arthur*

(G.G. Arthur)

J.G.S. Beith, Esq., C.M.G.,
Levant Department,
Foreign Office.

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UG1051/123

The Secretary of State may wish to remind his colleagues of the conversations (which most of them will have seen in print) with President Nasser and Dr. Fawzi in New York. There is evidence that these had a good effect on President Nasser and the U.A.R. press hailed the meeting with the Prime Minister as marking the beginning of a new era in relations. The Mission in Cairo have not, however, noticed much difference so far.

2. This does not of course prevent President Nasser from attacking imperialism, including the British, strongly in the tour of Syria which he is now making. His speeches so far at Latakia and Aleppo have included strong attacks on King Hussein and accounts of the struggle of Arab nationalism against imperialism, Zionism and their agents. Indeed, at the moment, the question of Jordan is crucial for President Nasser. He feels obliged to attack King Hussein, though he does not want a conflict for fear of what Israel might do. He expects us to keep the King quiet and will never believe that we cannot do this. We shall of course continue to exercise what restraining influence we can. On October 17, the Secretary of State urged the King to reduce the temperature so far as he could: in a propaganda or a shooting war, Jordan is bound to be the loser.

3. On the practical questions of (a) exchange of Ambassadors and (b) the re-opening of consulates, we hope it may be possible to edge forward as a result of the conversations in New York.

4. On (a) the Minister of State spoke to Dr. Fawzi on October 14. The latter did not demur when the Minister of State suggested that we exchanged the names of our Ambassadors-designate on November 15. He hoped to have news from Cairo before he left New York on October 21.

New York
tel. 1087

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5. On (b) there is no progress on the Egyptian side, except that Dr. Fawzi indicated to the Secretary of State that we might agree between us on a list of U.A.R. Consulates, with the proviso that the opening of certain of them should be deferred for a time. Whether and in what terms we now make an offer to do a package deal is a difficult question which has already been submitted to the Secretary of State. He may merely wish to indicate to the Cabinet what the problem is, *mark for sympathetic consideration from the Cabinet Sec.*

6. There is a Parliamentary Question down for October 25 about Mr. Zarb. The Department understand that no opportunity arose in New York to make representations about his release though we have lost no opportunity of making the point (the last time was with Mr. Hassanein Heikal, Nasser's journalist confidant, who was in London recently). (If nothing happens before, he could be released under Amnesty in the middle of next year as having completed half his sentence). We are asking President Ayub Khan to put in a word when he is in Cairo in November. We have been working to get Mr. Zarb released to a sanatorium outside the jail on grounds of health, but have run into difficulties. His release might come more easily after the exchange of Ambassadors.

Levant Dept.
October 17, 1960.

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Returned from Private Office
11.10.

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FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

En Clair

DEPARTMENTAL DISTRIBUTION

Mr. Wright
No. 813
October 20, 1960

D. 5.36.p.m. October 20, 1960
R. 5.50.p.m. October 20, 1960

IMMEDIATE

V61051128

Reuters this afternoon carried a story by Pamela Matthews that, according to usually well informed diplomatic circles, tentative plans existed to announce the exchange of Ambassadors on November 15, subject to agreement being reached on remaining questions including consulates.

From Britain's standpoint Damascus was the most important of these, and the U.A.R. was known to want consulates in the Gulf. This would not be readily accepted owing to Cairo propaganda in recent years. A further complication was Nasser's attacks in Syria on King Hussein which had disturbed opinion in the United Kingdom. If internal commotion in Jordan ensued it might be impossible for the United Kingdom to normalise relation with Cairo, thus indicating greater cordiality.

Mr. Beeley was the Ambassador designate but, if the negotiations succeeded, he was not expected to take up his post before the new year.

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FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Mr. Clair

DEPARTMENTAL DISTRIBUTION

Mr. Wright

VG 1051/129

No. 818
October 21, 1960

D: 10.39 a.m. October 21, 1960
R: 10.55 a.m. October 21, 1960

IMMEDIATE

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 818 of October 21
Repeated for information to Amman.

VG 1051/128 - My telegram No. 813 (not to Amman)

Reuter's Story on Exchange of Ambassadors.

Under titles such as "our attacks on Hussein delay resumption of relations" and "London disturbed at our attacks on the little King", all Cairo papers today published this story with some prominence.

2. "Ahkbar" comments briefly that the Reuter's despatch is conclusive proof of the connexion between King Hussein and Britain.

3. Gumbouria comments in its main editorial that the Reuter's story proves that the Hashemite throne is a British protectorate. How can the Jordanian media rebut U.A.R. charges when London itself has declared that Hussein and his throne are British possessions? the story is an unequivocal declaration that London looks at its relations with other Arab States against the background of the position of the Hashemite throne in Amman. British policy is historically based on realism. It is a reality that continued estrangement with the free Arab States is detrimental to British interests. It is also a reality that Britain regards the Hashemite crown as her property which she will not give up in any circumstances. London has deliberately declared that Hussein's throne is under British protection.

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 24 OCT 1950
 Minutes
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Reuter's Story on Ambassadors & Consulates etc.

Annoying though this is, I do not think there is much cause to get unduly upset about this business; and there is certainly nothing we can do to prevent Reuters writing this sort of thing if they believe it to be true.

2. Mrs. Matthews, of course is something of a campaigner and when she gets this sort of bit between her teeth she is hard to hold. But we can pick no formal quarrel with her over this story.

3. I attach a copy of the Reuter tape. Looking at it in detail the following points emerge.

4. She starts off "according to usually well informed diplomatic quarters here": this is ~~an unofficial~~ phrase, which does not mean the Foreign Office. In any case the nomination of Mr. Beeley has been public knowledge for months past. Although I will not confirm it, I no longer make any particular effort to deny it, ~~off the record~~.

5. The second section begins with the point about an announcement of the Ambassador's impending for November 5. This, see Foreign Office telegram No. 1009, was leaked by the Egyptians in Cairo. Again I refused officially to confirm. But I did not officially deny what is in fact the truth. The phrase "usually well informed sources here" is the ~~unofficial~~ reference to News Department speaking off the record.

6. With the next paragraph which says that "the plan was subject to agreement between London and Cairo on the remaining questions holding up the posting of the Ambassadors. Chief of these is agreement on the number of consulates to be established by each Government" - on this we do have a legitimate quarrel with Mrs. Matthews, because I did not tell her this and she should not therefore have linked it to "usually well informed sources". What in fact I told her was that this was one of the various outstanding questions on which negotiation would continue through the usual channels meanwhile. The rest of this section, about U.A.R. propaganda in the Persian Gulf States is common knowledge.

7. The last section of the story, about Nasser's attacks on King Hussein is also of course common knowledge. The phrase "diplomatic quarters" who are alleged to

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believe that opinion here has been disturbed and embarrassed, does not mean the Foreign Office. It is presumably the Jordanian and Israeli Embassies. Perhaps also the Iranians.

8. Mr. Wright in his telegram No. 814 says that he is disturbed by this story. I can well understand his being disturbed, as this sort of thing obviously makes his job more difficult. But there is nothing whatever that we can do to prevent perfectly legitimate speculation by any organ of the press on a matter like this of very considerable public interest. I have sent you a minute putting just this point. It had in fact already been put to me in more or less these terms by Mrs. Matthews a couple of days before. Reuters, like any newspaper, has the right to a certain amount of editorial opinion. It is no use our trying to stop them reporting the facts of life when these facts happen to be unpalatable to us. And it is not Reuters which have started this speculation but Nasser himself by going round Syria openly calling for the assassination of King Hussein. Of course the press are going to react.

9. I do not think there is much more to be done about this now. Mr. Wright will presumably speak to officials at his end as he suggests and try to keep them calm. News Department will stick to the line that the recent high level meetings in New York were conducted in a friendly atmosphere and that we hope that they will have given impetus to normalisation of relations all round. We will continue to refuse either to deny or to confirm the November 5 story. And we will continue to refuse official comment on the name of Mr. Beeley, since it is not our habit to announce diplomatic appointments until the agreement has been requested and received.

John Russell
(J.W. Russell)
October 21, 1960.

Levant Department

However it may have arisen, Mrs. Matthews' story is a most unhelpful one from our point of view. In effect, a representative of the major British news agency has come out with background comment to the effect that the exchange of Ambassadors between the U.K. and the U.A.R. is likely (a) subject to agreement on the difficult consulate question and (b) complicated

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by the propaganda exchanges between Jordan and the U.A.R. and in particular resident Nasser's speeches in Syria. Both these suggestions are counter-productive from our point of view since there is no point in putting into Cairo's head the obstacles in the way of an exchange of Ambassadors which may have cropped up in recent weeks. There are always ~~the~~ people in Cairo who will no doubt oppose the exchange of Ambassadors. This is simply giving them ammunition.

2. Since the interviews with President Nasser and Dr. Fawzi in New York we have managed to avoid receiving even a ~~hint~~ hint from the U.A.R. side that the question of consulates must be solved before the exchange of Ambassadors. On our side we have carefully kept the two things separate for very obvious reasons.

I attach a *John Beith*
Guidance tel. (J.G.S. Beith)
October 21, 1960.

There are a number of things which I find rather puzzling about Mr. Russell's minute. One of them is that what he says about 'very considerable public interest' is not borne out by the lack of attention given so far to the story in the British press. As regards the offending passages there is not I am afraid as much difference as I wd. like to see between A & B in Mr. Russell's para 6.

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*Further minute attached
John Beith
27.10*

*UP
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*Guidance telegram No 369 issued.
Please 2/10*

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Outward Telegram from Commonwealth Relations Office

TO: OTTAWA
CANBERRA
WELLINGTON
PRETORIA
KARACHI

(SENT: 19.35 hours, 24th October, 1960)

CYPHERPRIORITY

Z. No. 56
KARACHI No. 1779 } CONFIDENTIAL

V61051/130(A)

My telegram W. No. 520 Saving.

UNITED KINGDOM/U. A. R. RELATIONS
EXCHANGE OF AMBASSADORS

When Foreign Secretary lunched with U.A.R. Foreign Minister in New York on October 7th, he raised question of an exchange of Ambassadors, and proposed we should agree to submit the two names in a month or two's time. Minister of State for Foreign Affairs followed this up with Dr. Fawzi on October 14th and suggested we exchange names of our Ambassadors-designate by November 15th. Dr. Fawzi gave no indication he thought the date too early.

2. Reuters received service message on October 20th from Cairo that "authoritative sources were saying there will be an announcement on November 15th naming Ambassadors". Reuters then put this out from London as story by Pamela Matthews, adding that this development was subject to agreement being reached on remaining questions including consulates, and that a further complication was President Nasser's attacks in Syria on King Hussein, continuation of which might make it impossible for United Kingdom to normalize relations with Cairo. Mr. Beeley was the Ambassador-designate but was not expected to take up his post before the New Year.

3. This Reuter story has been picked up in Cairo and doubtless will be elsewhere.

4. We have in fact been trying to keep question of consulates apart from exchange of Ambassadors. We hope that the latter will, failing further troubles, take place fairly soon. Meanwhile we are studying consulate question afresh to see if any progress can be made. We are equally anxious that exchange of Ambassadors should not become mixed up with campaign between King Hussein and President Nasser. On the other hand, we must also be careful not to display undue eagerness to get our Ambassador into Cairo, since this would only encourage the Egyptians to back out. In these circumstances the less comment we can make the better.

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5. The official spokesman has not had to make any comment so far. If comment is inevitable we shall say that we hope the Ministerial meetings in New York will have paved the way for restoration of normal relations. If questioned about problem of the consulates, we should say we hope progress on both this and the exchange of Ambassadors, which are separate questions, will flow from the contacts in New York. We may also say it is premature to talk of dates, details or names. We should try to avoid any comment on Jordan

6. You may use foregoing in strict confidence with Commonwealth authorities.

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D.II
C.R.O. Mr. Redpath
Foreign Office Mr. Arculus
Dublin
Salisbury
U.K. Embassy, Washington Mr. H.S.H. Stanley
U.K. Mission to the U.N., New York Mr. C.E. Diggines
Freetown Mr. N. Aspin

WESTERN AND MIDDLE EAST DEPT.

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FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

En Clair

DEPARTMENTAL DISTRIBUTION

Mr. Wright

VG 1051/131

No. 837
October 25, 1960

D. 4. 34 p.m. October 25, 1960
R. 5. 15 p.m. October 25, 1960

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 837 of October 25.

Repeated for information Saving to U.K.Mis. New York.

My telegram No. 81[sic]: Exchange of Ambassadors.

Dr. Fawzi returned to Cairo yesterday. In answer to questions at the airport he is reported as saying that his visit to London was private and that he had seen no members of the British Government. As regards an exchange of Ambassadors, everything would be made known in due course.

2. Under banner headlines "obstacles to an Exchange of Ambassadors with London," "Gumhuriya" today published an article by its diplomatic correspondent that there were substantial obstacles, which would need some time to be overcome, to the resumption of full relations. British newspapers had said that one of the problems under discussion was the U.A.R.'s request for consulates in Aden, Muscat, the Hadramaut and Oman and the British request for consulates in Alexandria, Damascus, and Port Said. Moreover, Misrair had asked for traffic rights between London and New York since Israeli Airlines already enjoyed such rights. They had also asked for a new air route linking Cairo with the Arab South.

3. "Ahram" however, claimed today that the U.A.R. Ambassador for London would be selected within the next week, while "Ahkbar" published a U.P.I. report from London that an official announcement had been made there that full diplomatic relations would be resumed on November 15, on which day the respective Ambassadors would be named. The British Ambassador would be Mr. Beeley. It was also expected that Britain would open consulates at Damascus and Alexandria. "Ahkbar" also carried a report from its London correspondent that the U.A.R. Ambassador might be Hussein Zulficar Sabri.

Foreign Office pass Saving to U.K.Mis. New York as my telegram No. 54.

[Repeated as requested]

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U.K./U.A.R. RELATIONS: CONSULATESFlag A
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The Secretary of State agreed with Dr. Fawzi in New York to look again into the question of consulates. From the record it appears that the Egyptians recalled their requirements for posts in East Africa, Hong Kong, and Singapore as well as in the United Kingdom, and that they showed most interest in Kuwait and Liverpool.

2. They originally asked for Aden, East Africa (Dar-es-Salaam, Kampala and Nairobi), Singapore and Hong Kong as well as the U.K. posts. They also wanted to be let into Nigeria and Cyprus before independence. We gave them Cyprus as soon as the Base agreements were signed. We arranged before independence for their Ambassador in Ghana to visit Nigeria. They said they would deal direct with the Ruler over Kuwait and we did not dissent or discuss this further. They have not shown the slightest interest in their posts in the United Kingdom. It is therefore somewhat surprising that they emphasised Kuwait and Liverpool in talking to the Secretary of State. Perhaps the reason for this chopping and changing is that they see the whole question less as a practical issue than as a test of confidence.

3. Mr. Crowe has always said that a post in East Africa was a sine qua non for an agreement. The colonial governors concerned have been fiercely hostile to this on the grounds that Cairo Radio conducts a violent campaign of incitement and insult, while the Egyptians lure colonial students to the Soviet bloc via Cairo, give facilities to colonial renegades in Cairo and indulge in espionage and subversion if ever they set foot in the territories. After considerable negotiation with the Colonial Office at official level, they agreed at the end of August to go back to the colonial governors and try to get authority for the establishment of one non-Egyptian resident of good standing in Nairobi to act as a local representative

I don't know that they particularly emphasised these

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of the U.A.R. (with limited privileges) for East Africa. The idea was that Mr. Crowe, on return to Cairo in November, should see what could be done by offering Hong Kong, Singapore and the U.K. posts, and test the ground to see if the Egyptians would be satisfied with this local representative in East Africa. (They would have an incentive to earn a full consulate there by good behaviour and by moderating their anti-colonial activities).

4. The position on the various Egyptian requirements is briefly:
- (a) Aden. There is no chance of persuading the Colonial Office to accept this and the Egyptians can hardly expect it.
 - (b) East Africa. It will probably require a Ministerial approach even to get clearance for a local representative in Nairobi; there is likely to be much stronger resistance to a full consul.
 - (c) The Governor of Hong Kong has already agreed that if it is absolutely essential to concede Hong Kong in order to get our posts in Damascus and Alexandria he would tolerate an Egyptian office.
 - (d) We can probably offer Singapore, but local Ministers have yet to be consulted and once they have given their agreement we cannot withhold the concession of this post.
 - (e) Hitherto we have regarded the question of foreign consulates in Kuwait as primarily a matter for the Ruler, though he has always said that we must take the decision together. A month ago he indicated to the Political Resident that the time was near when he would have to admit foreign consuls and he would like to discuss this with the Political Resident on the latter's return from leave in December. The Egyptians would presumably be among the first to be admitted. If this is likely to be decided upon, we might be able to contrive to gain some credit beforehand with the Egyptians.
5. The Egyptians have in fact modified their demands somewhat. They started off by listing their nine posts and saying this was a

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block offer over which they would not bargain. In June they proposed that we should give them trade missions rather than consulates - this concession was more apparent than real since either could harbour Egyptian Intelligence Service men. They also suggested that we might agree to some of their posts if not all. Now Dr. Fawzi suggests that we might like to postpone the actual establishment of one or more of the posts for the time being. Thus our policy of playing this slowly (because the Egyptians are apparently keener on solving the consulate question than we are) has paid dividends.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

(a) The Egyptian requirements.

6. In 1954/55 we turned down Egyptian requests for consulates in Lagos, Kuwait and Aden, on the grounds that they had no legitimate need for them according to the normal criteria i.e. protection of trade and nationals. They still have no case on these grounds in any of the places under our control. It is not a good precedent to give posts when no need exists. The Egyptians desperately want to extend their influence in Africa. They have not had many successes of late, though Mr. Hammarskjöld's request to provide a contingent for the Congo gave them an opportunity they are exploiting to the full. They also want to compete with Israel. (In East Africa the Israelis only have a British Jew acting as Honorary Consul in Nairobi). Their basic policy of anti-colonialism will not be changed. We could not expect any significant diminution in anti-colonial activities or propaganda even if we agreed to their demands for consulates in toto. There is indeed something to be said for keeping them out of countries in Africa which are short of independence until (as in Nigeria) the local leaders are sufficiently established and mature to

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want to be independent of Egyptian as of other influence. Officials from the Presidency, the U.A.R. Chargé d'Affaires in London and others are active in covert anti-colonial activity, - subsidies for dissidents, etc. The Egyptians gave the impression that progress on the exchange of Ambassadors would depend on our meeting them on the consulates. There now seems a chance that these two subjects can be kept separate (and our instructions to Mr. Wright to follow up in Cairo what Dr. Fawzi said to the Secretary of State about Ambassadors have been Flag A drafted with this in mind).

(b) Our requirements

7. Damascus is the only important one, and we had evidence that the Egyptians were determined to keep us out of Damascus for fear that we would work there (as they think we work already in Beirut) to disrupt the union of Egypt and Syria. With the present Jordan/Syrian situation it seems doubtful whether they will be happy about letting us into Damascus yet. It would be convenient to reopen in Alexandria, Port Said (and possibly Aleppo), though we are managing to carry out essential work by visits from Cairo and with some residual help from the Swiss. Perhaps surprisingly there has been no public criticism here of our having no consular posts or of being unrepresented in Damascus.

Tactics

8. Assuming that the balance of advantage lies in proposing a package deal of say Hong Kong, Singapore, Liverpool and perhaps a local representative in Nairobi, against Damascus, Alexandria, Port Said and perhaps Aleppo, the main question is how best to obtain the necessary agreement of the Colonial Office. If Mr. Crowe was right in suggesting that something in East Africa was a sine qua non, then the offer of a local representative in Nairobi may or may not be enough for the Egyptians. To get the

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Colonial Office and the Governor of Kenya to concede even this will no doubt require Ministerial intervention. The Secretary of State will no doubt wish personally to decide how to approach this.

9. If we go for, and secure, agreement to a full U.A.R. Consulate in Nairobi, that will undoubtedly make our discussion with the U.A.R. much easier. I would reckon that we should then have an excellent chance of getting back, not only to Alexandria and Egyptian consular posts, but also to Damascus and Aleppo. There is also possibly some advantage in pitching our demands to the Colonial Office reasonably high, if only to ensure that at any rate we get some smaller concession from them, such as a local representative.

10. The disadvantages of this course are that we might find it difficult to argue with the Colonial Office, both inside the Cabinet and out, that a full U.A.R. consulate would at this moment be justified (see para. 6 above). It would be much easier to argue that the Colonial Office should allow the U.A.R. to make a trial run with a local representative.

11. If the Secretary of State will indicate his preference between the alternatives considered in paras. 9 and 10, the Department will draft a minute for him to send to the Colonial Secretary.

John Birch
(J. S. Birch)
 October 13, 1960.

Copy

Lord Privy Seal
 Mr. Allan
 Arabian Dept.
 African Dept.

W.B. Stevens.

*I would go right out for 1/2
 a full consulate in Nairobi
 & will write to Col. Secretary*

*Nairobi, Liverpool - May May & family
 Singapore should be a fair exchange will
 for Damascus - Alexandria - H.*


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Will the Department now please draft a letter for the Secretary of State to send to Mr. Macleod. Incidentally, I am very glad that the Secretary of State has come out in favour of a full Consulate at Nairobi as I cannot imagine that anything else or anything in the nature of a non-Egyptian trade representative would satisfy Cairo. Indeed, from the Kenya Government's point of view I should have thought that there was some advantage in allowing the Egyptians to appoint a recognised representative on whom a watch can be kept and who can be turned out of the country if he misbehaves. We can be certain that whatever happens the Egyptians will continue their campaign of intrigue and propaganda in East Africa, and it is perhaps better that they should do so through an open agent rather than clandestinely through people who cannot perhaps be immediately traced.

2. A subsidiary consideration which must be borne in mind in all this is that for our own administrative reasons, it would be of the greatest help if we could get the posts in Alexandria and Damascus re-opened within the next few months.


October 17, 1960