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310

1947

J

EGYPT and SUDAN

J 2124

10 MAY

16

Registry Number } J2124/12/16

TELEGRAM FROM  
Sir R. Campbell

No. 1080 (CAIRO)

Dated } May 8, 1947

Received in Registry } May 10, 1947

Egyptian Press on Soviet attitude.

Press reports that H.M. Govt have received assurance that Soviet delegate in the Security Council would not support Egypt, which attitude would facilitate resumption of Anglo-Egyptian negotiations.

Last Paper.  
J2102 G

(Minutes.)

See J2126 11

References.

J.M.H. Richards

10/5

(Print.)

Ry

22/5

(How disposed of.)

Copied on J2126]

Action completed.) (Index.)

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2124

10 MAY

En Clair

GENERAL DISTRIBUTIONFROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Sir R. Campbell.

No.1080

D. 6.40 p.m. 8th May, 1947

8th May, 1947

R.12.55 a.m. 9th May, 1947

\*\*\*\*\*

"Al Ahraa" May 2nd published a telegram purporting to emanate from its London correspondent to the effect that, according to political observers who returned from Moscow, you had received assurance that the Soviet delegate in the Security Council would not support the Egyptian point of view. Telegram added that it was said in London that Russia's neutral attitude would facilitate the resumption of Anglo-Egyptian negotiations.

2. Commenting on this message "Al Ahraa" stated that whether this report was true or was meant as part of a war of nerves it would not cause Egypt to despair. Egypt was determined to go ahead with her plan and to insist on achieving her rights.

3. Other papers carried similar messages.

4. Egyptian Gazette on 7th May published a report from London according to which a "British Government source" had said on that day that Stalin had assured Mr. Bevin that Russia would remain neutral in the revision of the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian treaty and on the future status of the Sudan, according to the same source when you had met Stalin in Moscow you had discussed the whole question of Great Britain's position (or, according to Associated Press message from London, "Ambition") in the Middle East "in general terms" and also talked in more specific terms about Egypt's complaint against Great Britain. Stalin had "appeared generally to appreciate Great Britain's position in the Middle East and in Egypt" and had then declared that he did not regard Britain's interests in Egypt and the Middle East to be in conflict with Russia's interests.

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Minutes

J

1947

EGYPT AND SUDAN

J 2101  
9 MAY

A

Registry Number

J2101/12/16

FROM

Mr. Bowker

AIRD to

Mr. Butler

No.

240/307/47.

Dated

April 30, 1947

Received in Registry

May 9, 1947

Discussion with Mr. Quilliam, "Times" correspondent.

Discussions with Mr. QUILLIAM on April 29. Details of information he had obtained about the present position as regards preparation of Egyptian appeal to U.N.

Last Paper

(J2063)

J2099

(Minutes)

See within: Mr. Bowker to Mr. Butler of May 3.

References.

20/6

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)

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Minutes.

Egyptian Dam-5

PW

23 May 1947

Extract from Mr. Butler's letter of the 12th May to Sir R. Campbell.

"Jim Bowker talked to me about Quilliam. I have watched the columns of his paper since my return and in the issue of April 30th there was a despatch that seemed to me to bear out what Bowker said to me. I was intrigued to see a further despatch on the following day which made me wonder whether any of you had spoken to him about the earlier one. I drew Moley's attention to both suggesting the possibility of a word with his proprietor. Nothing has been decided yet, and I have noticed since then that Q. has given you quite a lot of useful information, see two letters from Bowker giving the probable line on which the Egyptians would refer their case to the Security Council. If you have any further advice about Q. perhaps you would let me know?"

Nothing to be written in this Margin.

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Minutes.

6.

The information contained in these two letters is, at the least, a very important pointer to the form which the Egyptian appeal is likely to take. It is rather extraordinary that the Cairo Embassy should not have telegraphed it. We got a slightly garbled but recognisable version of the same story from the U.S. Embassy here; and the source of their information, namely the U.S. Embassy in Cairo, probably got the whole thing from our Embassy.

2. As regards the letter of May 3<sup>rd</sup>, I suppose our defence will be broadly on the following lines:—

1. Sanctity of treaties fairly repudiated.  
(But we agreed to clear out within a reasonable length of time). Meanwhile our occupation of a largely desert part of Egypt which we have occupied for a great many years cannot possibly suddenly "endanger international peace".

2. These

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## Minutes.

2. These allegations can best be disposed of if a UN Commission is sent to investigate matters on the spot. (Here we would explain the real point at issue as regards the Sudan, emphasising how this point was the cause of the breakdown of negotiations otherwise successful).

3. a: This is covered by what we have said under 1 above;

3. b: This is covered by 2 above.

*Butcher*  
6/5

*Mr Beckett*

*Mr Butcher*  
6/5

These are two interesting letters. The letter of the 30th April; if it is in any way correct that Egyptian experts have talked in the manner indicated at the bottom of page 1, at any rate explains very clearly the hesitation of the Egyptian Government to start their proceedings in the Security Council, and the fact that they must be doing so in a somewhat chastened mood.

Turning to the letter of the 3rd May and points (1) and (2), our first answer here will be that the Treaty of 1936 is in no way contrary to the spirit of the Charter. (I would mention here that it is no good talking about the sanctity of treaties until you have established that the treaty is in conformity with the Charter because the Charter itself says it overrides all

treaties/

Nothing to be written in this Margin.

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Minutes.

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treaties which are inconsistent with it.) We can refer, if the Egyptians have not already done so, to the Resolution of the last General Assembly, and show that, far from such treaties being contrary to the Charter, the Resolution expressly recognises that, under treaties, foreign troops can be stationed in a state's territory. We shall refer, of course, to Article 51 of the Charter

On point (2), it may or may not be good tactics and necessary to suggest a United Nations Commission going to the Sudan, but I do not think we shall start off that way. We have clearly, I think, got to start off with a short vivid history of the Sudan beginning from the period before the Maadi revolt, showing the state of corruption etc. there, then the revolt which left Egypt with a claim to the Sudan, but with complete inability to recover it, and that so much did it appear that Egypt had lost the Sudan that the French thought themselves able to occupy it; that the U.K. then saved the Sudan for Egypt and concluded the Condominium Agreement. We must then say a few words about the Condominium Agreement, making it clear that the essential purpose of the Condominium Agreement was to create the Sudan as a territory quite separate from Egypt for the purposes of administration and that the U.K. was to play the major part in the administration. This was both for the good of Egypt and the Sudan. We shall then want a few sentences stressing the work that in fact has been done in the Sudan under the Condominium Agreement and how much benefit it in fact has given to Egypt as well as to the Sudan. We must get this background in before we begin answering the Egyptian complaints, otherwise we shall in fact go half way to admitting the thesis on which their complaints are based before we begin to answer them. We shall end up by ridiculing the idea that the situation in the Sudan endangers peace. As regards the effect of the Condominium Agreement, we shall refer to those two decisions of the Egyptian courts.

Now, on the second point I think that we ought really now to begin drafting a paper on this point which I suggest might be on the above lines. We are certain to want something of this kind and the sooner we begin to get some paper

prepared/

Nothing to be written in this margin.

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*Minutes.*

prepared the better. I should like to discuss ..  
with the Department orally the beginning of this  
work of preparation for the case coming before  
the Security Council.

*WRB*

7th May, 1947.

Nothing to be Written in this Margin.

9



CAIRO.

30th April, 1947.

J. 2101

9 MAY

240/307/47

*Mr. Nicolle,*

Quilliam, the "Times" correspondent, called to see me on the 29th April and gave me the following information which he had obtained about the present position as regards the preparation of the Egyptian appeal to the United Nations.

The recent reports in the paper that the Egyptian appeal would consist of only one foolscap page are quite incorrect. The Egyptians in fact have produced a voluminous bundle of documents giving the details of their case. Difficulty has now arisen over the drafting of the covering letter addressed to the Secretary General. A draft was produced by two of the four members of the Committee of experts which is preparing the Egyptian appeal. This draft, which Quilliam has seen, was on the following lines.

(i) A reference to Articles 35 and 37 of the Charter of the United Nations.

(ii) A demand for complete evacuation by the British Forces, which are a potential source of friction and serious disorder.

(iii) A demand for the removal of the present Administration and troops from the Sudan so that Egypt can bring the Sudan self-government, it being alleged that Great Britain is causing dissension and internal strife in the Sudan and inciting the Sudan to secession and trying to sever Egypt from the Sudan.

When this draft was prepared the other members of the Committee pulled it to pieces on the following grounds :-

(i) Is it possible to appeal under two articles at once ?

(ii) There is no evidence that the British Forces in the Canal area, who after all are there by virtue of a treaty, however repugnant now to Egypt, are a potential source of friction etc., nor that they are intervening in Egyptian internal politics. On the contrary, it might be said that at the present moment of international tension, this force has a stabilising influence in the Middle East area. The only threat to peace would result from an attempt by the Egyptians to evict them.

(iii) The Egyptian claim as regards the Sudan is a complete departure from the real facts of the situation. The real point at issue is that Great Britain has refused to deny the right of the Sudanese eventually to secede. It is nonsense to argue from this that Great Britain is causing dissension and internal strife in the Sudan and inciting the Sudan to secede.

These/

N. M. Butler Esq., C.M.G., C.V.O.,  
Foreign Office,  
London, S.W.1.

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- 2 -

These arguments were put to the Council of Ministers at their meeting on the 28th April, and as a result this draft has been torn up and the experts are now working on a re-draft.

Quilliam told me that Nokrashi still intends to refer the Egyptian case to the Security Council rather than the Assembly. He is convinced that as soon as the Egyptian Delegation arrive at Lake Success they will be urged by the Americans to re-open negotiations and will probably be offered a dollar loan as an incentive to do so. His idea of re-opening negotiations is still that it would be on the basis of a full acceptance of Egyptian demands.

Anticipating American mediation, which may mean discussions with President Truman, Nokrashi is anxious himself to lead the Delegation in spite of his misgivings at leaving affairs in Egypt in other hands.

The Ambassador bids me, in passing this on to you, add a warning not to bank on the sweet reasonableness of certain members of the Committee of experts being adopted by the Egyptian Government.

*Back over  
Jim Bunker*

PO 371/62971

Egyptian Dept

INDEXED

2 letters

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M. 1  
18/9/47

2101 12 16

BRITISH EMBASSY,  
CAIRO.

3rd May, 1947.

Dear Neville,

(below)

With reference to my letter of the in which I gave you Quilliam's version of the Egyptian abortive draft covering letter to the United Nations on the subject of their appeal, Quilliam has now given me the following note on the lines of the revised draft which the committee of experts produced after the early draft was torn up:-

1. About a dozen lines to the following effect:-

The presence of foreign troops in an independent sovereign country in time of peace is against the spirit of the United Nations Charter and the continuance of occupation is likely to endanger international peace.

2. A rather longer paragraph to the following effect:-

The British policy, facilitated by the occupation of Egypt in 1882 and of the Sudan in 1899, both of which enabled the British to interfere in Egyptian affairs, is to sever Egypt from the Sudan by supporting artificial separatist movements and by causing dissension between the Sudanese and the Egyptians and even between the Sudanese themselves. Continuance of this policy is likely to endanger international peace.

3. A short paragraph to the following effect:-

The Egyptian Government has endeavoured to settle these matters by negotiation but, regretfully, has failed. It must therefore appeal, under article 37, to the Security Council, asking:-

- a. Immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of British troops from both Egypt and Sudan.
- b. Termination of the present administrative régime in the Sudan.

Yours ever

John Bowker

N.M. Butler Esq., C.M.G., C.V.O.,  
Foreign Office,  
London, S.W.1.

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R 11 / Cond

	ESTHIAN	2145 / G

2145/10/G 16

F.O. Min  
Sir O Sargent

dated 5 May  
received 12 May.

Egypt: Nokrashi 183

Attaches memo regarding possibility of ~~and~~ and desirability of unseating Nokrashi.

Last Paper.  
2144

(Minutes.)

14/5

References.

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)

dft) Sir R. Campbell  
Cairo.  
from Sir O Sargent  
8 May

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22145  
 139/1947

S/S.  
 I am sorry to inform  
 or you, but I hope  
 will be able to have a  
 meeting tomorrow to discuss  
 this portion of tactics & in  
 the case I think you will find  
 this paper useful if you can  
 find time to read it before  
 the meeting.

It is important to have the  
 meeting tomorrow so as to  
 enable Sir W. Early to attend  
 before he leaves for Canada  
 tomorrow night.

J. A. [unclear]  
 [unclear] [unclear]

WJ  
 May 5.

F0371/62971

SECRETARY OF STATE

The Possibility and Desirability of  
Un-seating Nokrashi.

In regard to this question, which formed the subject of telegraphic exchanges with you while you were still in Moscow, there have been two new developments:-

(1) Dr. Rifa'i Bey, a Wafdist politician who may have been used by Nahhas as an emissary, has made to us certain suggestions for encompassing the fall of Nokrashi and the emergence of a more representative Egyptian Government including, of course, the Wafd.

(2) The Treasury have been urging that Egyptian representatives should be invited to come to London at once for discussions in connexion with the Egyptian sterling balances. The Foreign Office view is that, provided that we can do so without falling foul of the Americans, we should use the timing of this invitation as a card in the political game, since the Egyptians are most anxious to resume the financial discussions, and this anxiety provides us with a certain amount of political leverage.

A third development may be said to be the more reasonable and forthcoming line which Nokrashi has taken in response to Sir R. Campbell's representations of April 24th about the various incidents in connexion with British troops.

For the reasons developed below, the recommendations submitted by the Egyptian Department are as follows:-

(a) That in view of Nokrashi's present more reasonable line, and of the fact that he is not yet absolutely certain to decide upon an appeal to the United Nations, we should take no immediate step with a view to dislodging him;

(b) That if and when Nokrashi does address an appeal to the United Nations, we should for our part publish the texts comprising the Bevin-Sidki Agreement;

(c) That before publishing we should warn King Farouk that we are going to do so, adding that if the United Nations advise the two parties to try again to break the present deadlock and reach a settlement, the only hope in our view of our being able to achieve agreement will be if in the meantime free elections have taken place and a fresh Parliament is sitting in Egypt.

It is submitted that Sir R. Campbell's views should first be sought on the foregoing programme of action.

/Foreign

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Flag A  
(para.6)

not attached

Foreign Office telegram No. 827 of the 19th April to the Secretary of State in Moscow raised the question of attempting to unseat the Egyptian Prime Minister, Nokrashi Pasha, by political means. There were some slight indications (not amounting to definite evidence) that the Palace was getting tired of him and was sufficiently doubtful of the success of an Egyptian appeal to the United Nations to be toying with the idea of dismissing him in order to facilitate a resumption of treaty negotiations. The Foreign Office telegram emphasised, however, that such an attempt might have the opposite effect of strengthening Nokrashi's position.

Flag B.

not attached

2. Sir R. Campbell's comments on this suggestion (Cairo telegram No. 964 of April 24th) were not encouraging. The Ambassador agreed that the attempt to unseat Nokrashi might have the opposite effect, and he doubted whether King Farouk was contemplating the Prime Minister's dismissal. Both the King and Nokrashi himself would, of course, prefer a one-hundred per cent. acceptance of their demands to the risks of an appeal to the United Nations, but it was doubtful whether the former wished to appoint another Prime Minister able to conclude a treaty on our terms.

J 413

Flag C

not attached

3. The possibility of securing Nokrashi's dismissal had been considered at an earlier stage - in January last. Sir R. Campbell was then asked for his views on the question whether, since we were getting nowhere with the last of a series of unrepresentative Palace governments, the time had not come to revert to a policy of intervention in Egyptian internal affairs in order to secure the return of the Wafd to power. At that time it was thought here that the Wafd might well be prepared to let us have a treaty on, roughly, the basis of the Bevin-Sidky texts, but dressed up to appear different and better from the Egyptian point of view. Sir R. Campbell was, however, very doubtful about this, feeling that although the Wafd might have accepted a treaty based on the Bevin-Sidky texts at the outset of negotiations, the subsequent crystallisation of the Sudan issue had altered the picture to our disadvantage. He also felt that, as "strong hand" methods on the 1942 model were no longer possible, the necessary pressure could not in fact be brought to bear upon the King - whom he evidently regarded as the only possible instrument that we could employ for installing the Wafd. (In point of fact we here had been thinking on the lines of an approach to the Wafd itself rather than to the King.) At Flag "L" is an extract from Cairo telegram No. 535 of March 1st, giving the form of approach to the King which Sir R. Campbell favoured at that time. Nothing positive came of this exchange of views with Cairo at the time. The Secretary of State, in his telegram No. 167 of the 18th March from Moscow to the Foreign Office, ruled that we should make no attempt to secure Nokrashi's removal until we had had time to see whether Sir R. Howe's appointment had a favourable effect on the situation.

J 927/G

Flag D.

not attached

Flag L.

not attached

J 1287/G

Flag E.

not attached

4. Sir R. Howe's appointment certainly did not have the desired effect of lessening Anglo-Egyptian tension; and the renewed proposal, mentioned in para.1 above, to attempt to unseat Nokrashi was prompted by the series of obstructive measures taken by him in the matter of troop leave, transit through the Delta, the registration of military vehicles, etc. We not unnaturally regarded these cases of obstruction as deliberate pinpricks.

/Nevertheless

Cairo tel. 966 of Apr. 24th. Flag F.  
*is attached*

Nevertheless Sir R. Campbell's most recent representations to Nokrashi (on April 24th) have apparently produced at least a temporary détente: the Egyptian Prime Minister has gone a little way towards meeting us (though only, it is true, on an interim basis and pending further consideration of the legal position as set forth by the Ambassador); and Sir R. Campbell has derived the impression that Nokrashi's attitude has been at least partly dictated by a genuine fear of complications resulting from popular demonstrations against our troops in the Delta. If this impression is correct, it is arguable that, in respect of our day-to-day relations with the Egyptians, we might fare worse if we succeeded in securing a change of government. On the other hand, in respect of the wider problem of Anglo-Egyptian relations, it is evident that a deadlock will continue so long as the Nokrashi Government remains in power. Nokrashi is more irrevocably committed than any other Egyptian to the continuance of this deadlock or, alternatively, to breaking it by an appeal to the United Nations - a solution which we of course do not want; and whoever else on the Egyptian side could afford to resume treaty negotiations, he certainly cannot. For this reason there is still a good prima facie case for attempting to unseat him. But it must be added that, at the stage now reached, it is extremely doubtful whether any other Egyptian who might conceivably replace him would in fact be able to agree to a resumption of treaty negotiations on anything approaching the basis of the Bevin-Sidky texts. The fact is that Nokrashi has fouled the course not only for himself but also for everybody else.

Flag G.

5. A new factor which has now been introduced into this question is the approach recently made by Rifa'i Bey, a Wafdist politician, to Mr. Neville Butler (please see record at Flag "G" attached). The gist of Rifa'i Bey's suggestion is as follows :-

In response to an inspired Parliamentary Question as to how H.M.G.'s offer, embodied in the abortive negotiations with Sidky, now stood, the Secretary of State would intimate that we did not intend to repeat our previous action in negotiating with a government that was not based on free elections nor widely representative of Egypt, but that our generous offer still stood if a properly representative Egyptian Government were formed. Thereafter Sir R. Campbell would invite Prince Mohammed Ali and other respected Egyptian figures to the Embassy and repeat to them the substance of the Secretary of State's reply in Parliament. It would then be for his guests to make it clear to Egyptian public opinion that the King's adherence to a minority government was hindering the conclusion of a satisfactory treaty with the United Kingdom.

Rifa'i Bey of course suggested that our new treaty offer should be "more generous", but he could suggest no practical means of making it so beyond expressing the hope that the forthcoming negotiations over the sterling balances might provide the necessary appearance of increased concessions on the British side.



H.

6. In connexion with Rifa'i Bey's mention of the sterling balance negotiations, it is relevant to point out that there has been an inconclusive exchange of views between Sir Orme Sargent and Sir W. Eady of the Treasury concerning the possibility of using these financial negotiations as a lever for use in the political game. The Treasury, of course, are opposed to this, and would like to keep the financial negotiations entirely separate. They consider, moreover, that any prolonged stone-walling by us in connexion with the financial negotiations (we here had contemplated using these negotiations, or a refusal to initiate them for the present, to quell Egyptian obstructiveness rather than, as suggested by Rifa'i Bey, to sweeten a future Egyptian government) would be likely to get us into trouble with the Americans, who are keenly interested in the ability of the Egyptians to make dollar purchases in the U.S.A. The Treasury may well be right about this; and it is fair to add that, according to Sir W. Eady, they anyhow intended to be pretty tough with the Egyptian negotiators when the latter came to London). The Minister of State, however, in commenting on the exchange of views with Sir W. Eady, has minuted :-

"I am hoping the Secretary of State will review our whole attitude to Nokrashi. We ought therefore to tell Sir W. Eady this, while agreeing to the telegram [authorising Sir R. Campbell, subject to his seeing no objection, to invite the Egyptian financial negotiators to London]."

\* Note: On Sir Orme Sargent's instructions the telegram is being held up pending discussion with Sir W. Eady.

I.

7. The Minister of State's minute on the record of the conversation between Mr. Neville Butler and Rifa'i Bey is attached at Flag I. It will be seen that he suggests the possibility, in view of the difficulty of taking a really firm stand on any of the incidents which have so far occurred, of presenting Nokrashi, via King Farouk, with a sort of ultimatum. This would consist of an intimation to the King that H.M.G. would soon be pressed by Parliament on the question of the Treaty, and that in reply they would have to point out the futility of further negotiation with Nokrashi's minority government and the consequent necessity for standing on the 1936 Treaty as long as that government remained in power.

8. Egyptian Department cannot help doubting whether a hint to this effect made to King Farouk would achieve any positive result. It will be remembered that the Secretary of State's reference in the House of Commons on January 27th to the minority status of the Nokrashi government, though doubtless necessary and desirable from the point of view of British public opinion, had no effect in Egypt save that of further antagonising both King Farouk and Nokrashi himself. It would perhaps be more accurate to say that the first effect in Egypt of the Secretary of State's remarks was considerable, since it was generally assumed that they were the prelude to some sort of positive action; but that when nothing further happened the final effect was the negative one mentioned above. It is true, too, that the Secretary of State on that occasion did not say (as is now proposed) that because Egypt had a minority government we should have to continue to take our stand on the 1936 Treaty. There was not, in fact, the same clear hint that an alternative government would be able to come to satisfactory terms with us. It must however

be emphasised that, at any rate since the treaty negotiations broke down, there has not been the slightest sign of willingness on the part of the Wafd to resume them with us should they come to power. On the contrary, the general line of Wafdist propaganda has been even more hostile to the Bevin-Sidky agreement than that of the Egyptian Government itself, and has in addition implied that it was the Wafd that prevented that government from concluding a treaty which would have betrayed Egyptian interests. It seems fairly clear, therefore, that public references in this country to the unrepresentative quality of the Nokrashi régime are hardly likely to get us any further, and might well merely increase the determination of the Palace and the Government to exploit the various weaknesses and difficulties of our treaty position in regard to such matters as troop leave and transit between the Canal Zone and the Sudan. Naturally such public criticisms by us are always welcome to the Wafd, who stand to lose nothing by them and to gain a certain amount of international support. But something much more positive would almost certainly be required to throw the present government out and get the Wafd in.

9. It is difficult to see what this "something" can be. Our old technique of political interference in Egypt was based on our known ability to use physical force if need be. Quite apart from the extreme inadvisability, in present international conditions, of a recourse to the methods that were still practicable in 1924 and 1942, we cannot in fact have recourse now to precisely the same methods, but would have to adopt still more flamboyant ones, i.e., to bring troops back to Cairo from the Canal Zone as a preliminary move to using them for political intimidation. We have reason to know (from most secret sources) that this is precisely what King Farouk fears we may do, and there is thus some chance of bluffing him into submission (i.e. into dismissal of Nokrashi and acceptance of Nahhas, whom he intensely dislikes); but if he decided to call the bluff we should either forfeit our prestige in Egypt completely by doing nothing, or have to go ahead at the risk of serious international complications including an Egyptian appeal to the United Nations on a very good wicket. It would, ~~however~~, be worth while to ask Sir R. Campbell for his views on the scheme propounded by Rifa'i Bey (see para. 5 above); but ~~I suspect that~~ the Ambassador will reply in the sense that an Embassy flirtation with Egyptian Elder Statesmen and/or the Wafd, coupled with threats of more public criticism here on the subject of the unrepresentative quality of the Nokrashi régime, would not gain the trick in the absence of the joker we used to hold. The fact is that, because the average Egyptian no longer believes (though the King may) in our readiness to use force, the chances of our having actually to use it on a considerable scale, as distinct from merely making a demonstration indicative of our readiness to do so, are greatly increased.

10. Sir R. Campbell is also likely to maintain a view which he has expressed in the past, that any attempt to unseat Nokrashi must take the form of an approach to the King in the first place, since a direct approach to the Wafd would immediately become known to H.M. before we could "get going" with them, and might well drive him and Nokrashi into extreme courses. In this connexion it is well to remember that although the Wafd can count on a large measure of popular support, the King, who has recently been posing with some success as a heroic figure and liberator, can probably count for his part on the loyalty of the Egyptian Army and Police - except of course in the

event of our actually using force, when they would fold up at once. It is likely therefore that the Wafd would not attempt a coup on the strength of mere blandishments by the Embassy and encouraging "noises off"; and that if they did attempt one, they would fail. Either way we should merely have made our relations with the present Egyptian Government, which are none too good as it is, entirely impossible - though the resultant suppression of popular liberties would no doubt provide us with plenty of additional grounds for public criticism of the Nokrashi régime.

11. In connexion with the foregoing, the question has once more been raised of our making public the Bevin-Sidky texts. When this question has been mooted in the past, two objections have been raised to our doing so: (1) that it would be better publicity timing to await the moment when the Egyptian appeal to the United Nations became really imminent and world opinion was correspondingly interested; and (2) that if and when we do publish the Bevin-Sidky texts, the Egyptians for their part may retaliate by publishing (a) related documents which might be construed to imply that our plans for joint defence envisaged the Soviet Union as the aggressor. The documents in question are the F.O. aide-mémoire explaining the British views as to the objects of the proposed new Treaty of Alliance, and Sidky Pasha's Note commenting thereon - please see pages 24, 25 and 26 of Mr. Scrivener's memorandum, copy attached. It is true that it is the second of these documents (i.e. the Egyptian one) rather than the first which permits of this construction being placed upon them as a whole; but the most natural interpretation of the Egyptian Note would be that it referred, not only to the official British aide-mémoire, but also to oral explanations which had accompanied it. Sidky says, for instance, "it is now apparently a question of a danger from the East..... But may we remark that these perils are often presented in a light in which a sometimes deliberate pessimism plays a leading part. Russian policy is certainly disturbing; but it is more suspicious than dangerous....." etc. *The Egyptians might also* (b) our attempt, when the negotiations broke down, to secure by an exchange of letters transit rights for our aircraft across Egyptian territory and payment by the Egyptians for our installations. (The Egyptians could make play with (b) as disproving our contention that the negotiations broke down on the question of ultimate self-determination for the Sudanese). As regards (2), it seems almost inevitable that we should have to publish the Bevin-Sidky texts, and hence take this risk, in the event of the Egyptians actually appealing to the United Nations; and consequently the only reason for not taking the risk now is that increasingly faint hope that the Egyptians will not appeal. As regards (1), this seems to the Egyptian Department to be still a valid reason for waiting: the publicity experts with whom we have recently been discussing the dissemination of guidance and background material are unanimous that a full propaganda blast by us at the present stage would be premature, i.e., would be half-forgotten by the time the Egyptians had got in with theirs.

Flag M.  
attached

publish

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8th May, 1947.

TOP SECRET

I enclose a copy of a minute to the Secretary of State reviewing the recent exchange of telegrams which has taken place on the possibility of our taking action to secure the removal of Nokrashi Pasha; together with the record of the conversation between Neville Butler and Dr. Rifa'i Bey which is mentioned in the course of the minute.

This question has now been discussed with the Secretary of State, who has decided that it would be a mistake to consider taking any action at all with the object of unseating Nokrashi. If and when the Egyptian appeal to the Security Council is actually made, he will review the situation but even then it would only be a possibility that he would decide to take some action. We did not discuss what line we would have to take if Nokrashi challenged by his actions our rights under the 1936 Treaty.

Similarly, as regards the publication of the Bevin-Sidky texts and the proposal for a previous warning to King Farouk that we were going to do so, the Secretary of State feels that we should do nothing until the Egyptian reference to the United Nations is actually made, when the matter can be reviewed afresh.

In the meantime we should be grateful for your observations on the possibilities discussed in the minute, and would also like to have your comments on what Dr. Rifa'i Bey said to Neville Butler.

/ As

His Excellency  
Sir Ronald Campbell, G.C.M.G., C.B.,  
Cairo.

Reference:-

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194  
End

As regards the linking up of the sterling balance negotiations with the political problem, the Secretary of State no longer wishes to raise any objection to the Treasury's proposal that the Egyptians should be invited to resume the financial negotiations in this country, and you will have already received two telegrams from Kady on this subject. Kady has assured us that the Treasury intend to be very stiff with the Egyptian financial representatives when they do arrive.

(SIGNED) O.G. SARGENT

194  
End

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55	E. S. EGYPTIAN	J2102 /G
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J2102 / 12 / 9 / 16 F.O. Min Mr Riches Dated 6 May Received 9 May	Policy towards Egypt 13 Record of meeting on 6 May.  10
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Last Paper. J2086	(Minutes.) 10/3
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References.	
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(Print.)	
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(How disposed of.)	
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10371/62971

Minutes.

Record of a Meeting 14

Meeting held of the 6th May at 10.15

Present :- Secretary of State  
Sir O Sargent  
Sir E Hall-Patch.  
Mr N. Butler.  
Mr Lascelles  
Mr Dixon

2102

9 MAY 1942

9 MAY 1942

Sir W Eady

2  
6/5

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

Sir O Sargent said that the main question was whether or not an attempt should be made to unseat Nokrashi.

The S/S thought it would be a mistake to try to do so. If we did and it proved a flop we should be in a very bad situation. If we pressed for free elections etc he would find himself in the same position as in e.g. Poland. He had followed the Americans and their policy had led to no useful result at all.

Sir O Sargent said that all that was suggested was a warning to the King. Maybe the Security Council would tell us and the Egyptians to go away and negotiate. The suggestion was that in that event the King should have been warned privately and previously that we saw no point in negotiating with an unrepresentative Government.

The S/S said that the King would immediately come back with an enquiry whether he had changed his policy of non-interference. He thought that nothing should be done until the Egyptians actually made their appeal to the Security Council. Then he would make his decisions after considering the matter again. In the meanwhile Sir R. Campbell could be consulted but he must not be given the idea that the S/S intended to do anything. He should be told that the Secretary of State had considered proposals for such intervention and that if the Egyptians did go to the Security Council it might be a possibility. At that time he would also consider the publication of the Bevin-Sidky texts. We had kept cool so far and there had been no serious incidents; and the same tactics should be continued until the Egyptians appealed to the United Nations.

The S/S said that the suggestion that there should be a united front on both sides for negotiations i.e. on the British as well as the Egyptian side, was impracticable.

For some time to come he had to bluff his way through in foreign policy, given the financial weakness of this country.

Sterling Balance negotiations

Sir W Eady said that he had the impression that the Egyptians were scared about our intentions on this issue. At the talks in Cairo they had been very cock-a-hoop until we refused their suggestion that they should have our Suez Canal shares in part payment. All the Treasury wished to do now was to take the next essential step in the negotiations i.e. to ask the Egyptians to come to this country. There was

normal and

FO 371/62971 59322

*Minutes.*

was no intention of being particularly civil to them, and they were very anxious to come.

The S/S said that he thought it best to go ahead. The people whom they would be likely to meet should be well briefed. He agreed that in the negotiations we should be cold and business-like.

Sir W Eady explained that the Egyptians could make it difficult for us in the event of a failure to agree by (a) refusing to accept sterling for our troops' expenditure and insisting on payment in gold and (b) by evading the blocking of their balances in this country. But on the other hand under similar conditions they would initially be in a mess, they were very frightened, and they wanted a commercial agreement.

*D. H. H. Richards*

*MB*

*6/10*

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cont



<p>5b</p>	<p>E. S.</p>	<p>2138 / G 12 MAY 1947 12 MAY 1947</p>
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2138 / 12 / G 16  
rd Inverchapel,  
Washington.  
Tel. no. 2483  
May 9th

Anglo-Egyptian Treaty. 165  
Rep. to his tel. 2400 (2086/12/G)  
State Dept. hope to get in a  
prepared question & answer denying  
press reports about U.S. mediation  
at the next press conference.

Last Paper.  
2102

(Minutes.)

References.

I think a copy of this should be sent, as  
previous tels. on the subject, to Sir A. Cadogan.

(Print.)

Cadogan 12/5  
Copied to U.K. del. N.Y.  
D.S. on 13/5

(How disposed of.)  
New York del  
No. 201 May 11  
20) to Com 2886  
✓ 16 May

letter ask Winton to copy  
to N.Y. Direct in future  
13/5  
Draft tel  
Rf  
13/5  
Despatch  
CA.  
14/5

(Action completed.)  
(Index.)  
h. h.

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J .. 22138 167

2 MAY 1947

[This telegram is of particular secrecy and should be retained by the authorised recipient and not passed on].

Cypher/OTP

DIPLOMATIC (SECRET)

FROM WASHINGTON TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Lord Inverchapel.  
No. 2783.

D. 2.32. a.m. 10th May 1947.

9th May 1947.

R. 10. 8. a.m. 10th May 1947.

Repeated to Cairo.

\*\*\*\*\*

My telegram No. 2720. T 2086/10/c  
Secret.

State Department inform us that they had, as they thought, arranged at Mr. Marshall's last press conference for a prepared question and answer denying press reports about American mediation. This misfired and they hope to get it in at his next press conference which will probably be held next week.

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MAY 11 1947

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Minutes.

Government. The alternative would be merely to state that we consider this demand a breach of the Treaty which we cannot accept and cease to use our vehicles in the Delta Area. This, it has already been pointed out would cause great hardship, as we have certain vehicles used in Cairo for the disposal of our stores there, and Egyptian railways which are the only alternative for transport from the Canal Zone to Cairo are slow and inefficient. A possible solution, it occurs to me, might be to tell the Egyptians that we regard this as a breach of the Treaty, and that if the Egyptians persist in their demand we cannot accept to pay for the registration of British vehicles and therefore suggest that they should let their own vehicles undertake for us the duties formerly carried out by ours.

In the case of the movement of troops from the Sudan, acceptance of the Egyptian demand would, it appears, entail putting our troops in mufti to pass through the Delta Area, and this it seems would cause great difficulty for our military authorities in the case of large bodies of troops. The only way in which we could avoid the issue arising again would be either to fly the troops or send them out from Port Sudan.

If we find a case on which it is worth standing up to Nokrashi the only alternative is to consider unseating him. The F.O. advice on this point is that it would be dangerous and might strengthen Nokrashi's position, though they make their views subject to anything Sir R. Campbell may say. As a result, their advice appears to be that we should sit back and wait for Nokrashi to fall, in view of his increasing unpopularity with the Palace. It may be that this is the right policy. It is similar to the one we have adopted towards Spain. I would not wish to dispute what appears to be the F.O. view, but I cannot help feeling that if we do give way to Nokrashi we shall give him a new lease of life by adding to his popularity.

My feeling, therefore, is that we should either stand up to Nokrashi over the first breach of the Treaty, or try to unhorse him, and that we should not be passive in both instances. I cannot believe that complete passivity in face of the intolerable Egyptian behaviour will win us respect or advantage in oriental eyes. If we decide to enforce our Treaty rights, we shall, I think as I have argued above, probably have to do it over a point on which, while having a strong Treaty right, we have nothing much in the way of a grievance. In that event there seems to be some force in the F.O. argument, unless we are prepared to go the whole hog and remove Nokrashi and depose the King in the face of the probable disapproval of the world. I

doubt/

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FO371/62971

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doubt if we shall find the Chiefs of Staff or the Cabinet prepared to do this, and as the F.O. point out, more half-hearted measures are likely to do just what Nokrashi wants. I would, therefore be in favour of an all-out attempt to remove Nokrashi. We have already twice asked the F.O. what measures we should take to achieve this end and have encountered a singular reluctance to tell us anything.

At the moment I do not feel we need do anything on this telegram until we get the views of the Chiefs of Staff and the Prime Minister as well, possibly, as those of Sir R. Campbell. We have not yet heard either whether Sir R. Campbell had any success with his representations to Nokrashi.

*J.M. Henniker*

21st April, 1948

Mr Henniker is right, I think, in predicting that Nokrashi will continue to choose his ground carefully, so that the incidents will either be on the borderline of treaty infringements, or will seem trivial. His calculation will be that we shall not react to such incidents. After the series has <sup>extended</sup> ~~been~~ to 2 or 3, he will hope to be in a fair way to have got us on the run.

We ought perhaps to point this out to the F.O. & say that we must be on our guard & ready, if the Nokrashi technique goes on, to stand on a ~~threshold~~ seemingly trivial point. I think we might also  
etc.

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ask once more what practical measures we could take to unhouse Notoashi. If done on now, it strengthens the case for standing at the next principle.

P.S.  
21/4.

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2144 / 12 19.16

Egypt: Dr Rifaie Bey

175

F.O. Min  
Mr Ruster

Report interview with  
Dr Rifaie Bey.

Dated 29 April  
Received 13 May

*[Faint Arabic text]*

Last Paper.

2143

(Minutes.)

See within

- 1. F.O. Min Mr Ruster 1 Ha
- 2. F.O. Min Mr McNeill 1 Ha

References.

The memo to the S/S

is in J2145/9.

(Print.)

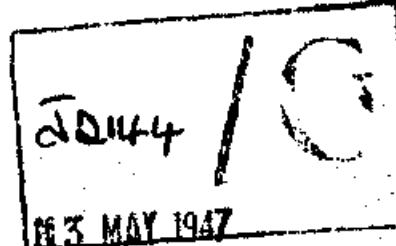
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.. Copy to Egyptian Dept.

Minister of State  
Sir O. Sargent



At the request of the Minister of State I saw this afternoon Dr. Rifaie Bey who had written to Mr. McNeill asking for an interview. Dr. Rifaie Bey was employed in the Press Department of the Egyptian Government for over twenty years, is well-known to Sir William Smart and was described by Sir Ronald Campbell as having always been extremely friendly if rather incoherent, and as deserving a friendly reception at the Foreign Office "even if there is no question of actual business being done through him".

Dr. Rifaie has a close connection with the Yemeni Royal Family and the Department had anticipated that he would talk about the Yemen. He began however by saying that he had come to talk about Egypt, and his remarks about Yemen were brief and are recorded in a separate note.

It transpired that Dr. Rifaie came as a spokesman for, if not an actual emissary of, Nahas Pasha. Speaking as one who had never been a politician but had been an old friend of this country, and who had in particular a great admiration for the Secretary of State, he said that in the late negotiations we had made the mistake of negotiating with a Minority Government. Field Marshal Smuts was one of the many who had warned the King not only that England was the traditional friend of the Arabs and of Egypt, but also that Nahas was the representative of Egyptian public opinion on whom the King should found his own position. The King had neglected this advice, and Dr. Rifaie would not express, but did not disguise, his view that the King had lost any popularity he had possessed and was now courting a dangerous and even revolutionary position. Nahas had said to Dr. Rifaie that the whole position in Egypt was poisoned, and that it seemed impossible to get out of the poisoned slough, and Dr. Rifaie's view was that the poison was not merely in the internal situation but ....

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but had affected widely the feelings of Egyptians towards England - a photograph of Mr. Eden appearing in a film <sup>shown in Cairo</sup> had been greeted in such a way as had caused him to leave the cinema. He was afraid that it was the commencement of a grudge against this country. He realised that in agreeing to negotiate with the King we believed we were following a policy of non-intervention, i.e. of dealing with the constitutional government of Egypt whatever we might think of it; but in fact Egyptians regarded our readiness to negotiate with a Minority and notoriously un-representative Government as a form of interference in their affairs. (I demurred to this argument.) Dr. Rifaie continued that the late King had appointed Prince Mohamed Ali, Sherif Sabry Pasha and Azziz ~~1214~~ Pasha as virtually three advisers to his son; all these three had recently advised the King to allow free elections and bring <sup>back</sup> the Wafd, and with it Nahas, who was by and large the only figure of wide appeal to the fellaheen.

I asked Dr. Rifaie how the poison could be extracted from the situation. His view was that His Majesty's Government should take the initiative and indirectly put the responsibility on Egypt. He suggested that in reply to an inspired Question in Parliament as to how H.M.G.'s offer, embodied in the abortive negotiations with Sidki, now stood, The Secretary of State should <sup>say in</sup> ~~reply to the~~ effect that we did not intend to repeat our previous action in negotiating with a Government that was not based on free elections or widely representative of Egypt, but that our <sup>offer</sup> still stood ~~for~~ a properly representative Government <sup>found</sup>.

I asked what the sequel would be. He replied that Sir Ronald Campbell should next invite Prince Mohamed Ali and other well-known and respected figures to the Embassy and repeat to them broadly the substance of the Secretary of State's reply.

It ....



f0371/62971

It would then be for them to make it clear to Egyptian public opinion that it was the King's adherence to a minority Government and frustration of free expression of popular will that was the obstacle to a satisfactory treaty with England.

Dr. Rifaie suggested at one point that our new offer should be described as "more generous". I pointed out that this could hardly be, but Dr. Rifaie had some idea that the negotiations over sterling balances might produce the necessary rabbit!

Dr. Rifaie was anxious that the issue should not be brought before the Security Council. He was convinced that the Council's advise would be that the two parties should resume negotiations, but he felt sure that the mere discussion of the issue in New York would make the tone of the Egyptian press yet worse, compromise the situation still further, and cause Nokrashi to be yet more intransigent. Dr. Rifaie had told Nahas that he hoped to speak to Ministers here and give them what he knew to be Nahas's views, and the latter had said that he certainly could not authorize Dr. Rifaie to do so. Dr. Rifaie had added that Nahas had a very great admiration for Mr. Bevin. // The notion of our standing in London and, if necessary, in New York, as the champions of free elections in Egypt (as elsewhere) has some attractions and advantages over an attack on Nokrashi individually. Some members of the Arab League are already uneasy about their support of Egypt, and the position of the Syrian representative on the Security Council would become still more embarrassing. We should of course anger the King, but he is already hostile and needs frightening, and we should also have no guarantee that Nahas would deal fairly with us, but we must take some chances.

I am getting the comments of the Department on the above. We must of course bear in mind the Embassy estimate of Dr. Rifaie

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quoted in the opening paragraph, and it may be well to consult the Cairo Embassy on this démarche and to invite their comments.

At the moment Nkrashi is being a little more cooperative over current questions arising out of our forces' evacuation of the Delta.

M Butler

29th April, 1947.

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Minutes.

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EGYPTIAN DEPT.URGENT.

Sir O. Sargent, in returning the attached file from Sir W. Eady, has said that we ought now to bring before the Secretary of State in one paper the question of what our future relations with Nokrashi are to be.

Sir O. Sargent suggested in a telegram to Moscow that the question should be discussed on Mr. Bevin's return that Sir R. Campbell might comment meanwhile.

The papers on which the minute to the Secretary of State should be based would include the above telegram to Moscow and the comments we received from Sir R. Campbell; minutes by Mr. Beckett, and I think the Dept. also, that Nokrashi was being pretty reasonable and that we might do well to let things take their course for the present; Sir W. Eady's letter, and my record of my talk with Dr. Rifaie and the minutes on it of the Department and of the Minister of State.

Sir O. Sargent thought that Sir W. Eady would very likely wish to be present at the meeting with the Secretary of State and he is being informed accordingly. As he leaves for Canada on May 6 or thereabouts, the meeting ought presumably to be not later than Monday, and the minute for the Secretary of State should be sent in before the weekend.

1st May, 1947.

Div. 6

M. attach this to the memo ch. 9 prepared when it became available  
 J. S.

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

F. 371/62971  
SECRETARY OF STATE.

I think you will find this account of a conversation between Mr. Neville Butler and Dr. Rifaie Bey most interesting.

Now, while you were in Moscow you telegraphed us saying that you were considering whether or not we should not make a stand upon either the question of the registration of our military vehicles or the passage of our men.

We have discussed this subject departmentally, and you will see separate minutes upon it. I do not think that either of them is a particularly good point upon which to make a stand.

I wonder, therefore, if we should not now have an assessment made on whether or not we more or less deliver an ultimatum to Nokrashi?

The line I would be inclined to follow, but I agree that it needs very careful study, is whether or not we should not now intimate to the Palace that we are being pressed privately and in Parliament on the question of the Treaty, and that we will soon have to answer a parliamentary question on it; and that in reply to such a question we would have to say that we did not consider that there would be any useful purpose in having further negotiations with Nokrashi's minority government and that therefore we would be meantime forced to stand on the 1936 treaty.

Of course, I ought to add that if we were successful in securing either a change of Government or, much better, elections in Egypt, we ought not in my opinion begin to enter into negotiations with a one-party delegation.

*Herbert C.*

May 1st 1947.

F 8371/62971

8 MAY 1947

Minutes. 25/4/47

Info. Egyptian relations.

I think it may be useful to analyse the conclusions to which, I submit, the arguments in this telegram inevitably lead. To my mind they are different from the view expressed in the first paragraph. If we accept the Foreign Office criterion that before we can decide to make a stand we must have a case which is:-

- a) water-tight from the Treaty point of view, and
- b) impressive as a grievance.

I am inclined to doubt whether we shall easily find such a case. So far there have been three cases over which Nokrashi has tried to interfere with us. The first - the question of leave in the Delta Area - while impressive as a grievance, is not in any way covered by the Treaty. The second - the registration of vehicles - is specifically covered by the Treaty and has no grievance value whatever. The third - the passage of troops from the Sudan through the Delta Area - is not really sound on either account. There has been one other rather abortive attempt to interfere with our troops, namely the attempt of the Governor of El Arish to deny training facilities to our troops in the Canal Zone. Our ground here is sound under the Treaty, but as a grievance it is distinctly unimpressive.

My own view is that Nokrashi is being very careful not to pick on a point which lends itself easily to our making a stand. He has so far chosen his ground very well and there is no reason to suppose that unless his position becomes really desperate he will alter his course.

I believe that the Chiefs of Staff will almost certainly endorse the Foreign Office view that it is not worth while risking a fight with the Egyptians over a matter which is intrinsically of little importance to them. If so, what is our next move? I presume that if Nokrashi is still stubborn over these two points the Foreign Office view will be that we should give way. It may be decided that this is desirable, in view of the new arguments which the F.O. have put to us that Nokrashi is trying to make us take the case to the United Nations as his own Government is becoming doubtful whether it is worth while their taking the case to the Assembly.

If it is decided to be preferable to give way on minor points until we get a really good case, if we ever do, I submit that there are two ways in which we can do this. We can either accept the Egyptian terms or see that the case does not arise again. For example, in the instance of the registration of vehicles, if we accept the Egyptian point of view, we agree to buy Egyptian number-plates from the Egyptian

Government/

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827  
to Moscow  
J J1762/C

I prefer the latter  
course the better if  
we can do it

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J2143 /12/9/16

F.O. Min  
Mr. Henniker

Dated 21 April  
Received 13 May

Anglo-Egyptian Treaty 170

Comments on possible  
policy of Nakaschi.

Last Paper. J2138	(Minutes.) See J1762/2/9 & J1867/12/9 DR 30/5
References.	
(Print.)	
(How disposed of.)	