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30 May, 1950.

Dear Kenneth,

You asked me for a note about the incident of which I spoke to you yesterday.

Briefly, what happened was this. General Mansergh, G.O.C.-in-C. at Hong Kong, was recently passing through Egypt on his way to this country. He was treated most courteously by the customs and passport officials, but was met with a most unco-operative, not to say hostile attitude on the part of the Egyptian doctor who was dealing with his cholera certificate. Although this was in order by international standards the doctor went so far as to suggest that the dates on it had been faked, and Gen. Mansergh was obliged to spend the night in a cell. Next day he was able to continue his journey and Gen. Mansergh, himself, lay great stress on the vexation which he has caused. Both he and I feel, however, as I am sure you will, that this is not the sort of incident that should be allowed to recur. Gen. Mansergh also points out that what has happened to him might well happen to any officer or other rank who might be going through Egypt on his way to this country on compassionate leave - and delay in such a case might be particularly unfortunate. Gen. Mansergh's companion in the cell was, in fact, a British private soldier on compassionate leave who had been similarly treated by the Egyptian authorities.

Would you consider this matter and take what action seems best?

Yours sincerely,

Michael Stewart

The Hon. K. G. Younger, M.P.,  
Minister of State,  
Foreign Office.

Is Mr. Mansergh still here? If so, I can put him in CT95 with which I am not sure what, if anything, the Embassy has already done. KGS 2/5

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FROM FOREIGN OFFICE TO CAIRO

No. 759

1st June, 1950

D. 11.50 p.m. 1st June, 1950

CONFIDENTIAL

Addressed to Cairo telegram No. 759 of 1st June.  
Repeated for information to B.M.E.O. (Cairo).

The War Office have informed us that on his way through Egypt on 18th May General Mansergh, G.O.C. at Hong Kong was detained by the Egyptian medical authorities and obliged to spend a night in a cell at the isolation camp at King Fareuk airport on the grounds that his cholera certificate was out of order.

2. In fact the certificate was entirely in order by international standards, but the Egyptian doctor concerned, who appears to have acted with the intention of making himself as offensive as possible, went so far as to suggest that the dates on the certificate had been faked. General Mansergh spent the night in the cell with a British private soldier on compassionate leave who had been similarly treated.

3. The Egyptian medical authorities in this case appear to have had no justification for not treating General Mansergh with normal courtesy, and I consider that this is a matter which should be taken up with the Egyptian Government without delay. Before you do so however you should discuss it with Field Marshal Slim who may care to mention it to King Fareuk. If this is so your representations could be made in the light of King Fareuk's reactions.

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JJJJJ

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6th June, 1954

(JR 1611/1)  
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*Dear Michael*

Many thanks for your letter of the 26th May in which you gave me the details of the incident in Egypt in which General Mansourgh was involved.

I quite agree that the attitude of the Egyptian medical authorities on this occasion was indefensible and His Majesty's Charge d'Affaires in Cairo has been instructed to take the matter up with the Egyptian Government. I have suggested, however, that before he does so, he should discuss the matter with Field Marshal Slim who may care to mention it when he sees King Farouk in the course of the next few days. The Embassy's representation can then be made in the light of King Farouk's reactions. It has occurred to us that the latter, since he now holds the rank of General in the British Army, might be a good deal interested in the treatment which his Service colleagues receive from the Egyptian Government.

*yours sincerely,*

(sgd) Kenneth Younger

Michael Stewart, Esq., M.P.,  
War Office.

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BRITISH EMBASSY

CAIRO

10th June, 1950.

Dear Allen.

We were surprised and distressed to receive your telegram No. 759 of 2nd June about the detention of General Mansergh by the Egyptian authorities when he was in transit from Hong Kong.

I have taken no action since, after discussion with the C.I.G.S. and between ourselves in the Embassy, I decided to refer back to you for reconsideration.

Our Military Attaché, who met the General at the airport on arrival reported the incident to me in full, and, from what he has told me, the War Office report to you seems to me to be wide of the mark, both in tone and substance.

The facts as set out in paragraph 1 of your telegram are correct, but the use of the word "cell" in line 4 is definitely misleading. There is a considerable difference between an Egyptian prison cell and the rooms in the quarantine hostel where the General stayed, which contain ordinary beds with mattresses, clean sheets, pillows and pillow-cases, bedside tables and telephones.

With regard to paragraph 2, this is the first time we have heard it suggested that the cholera certificate was in order. No one here seems to have denied that it was incorrect in point of time. Moreover, the War Office omitted to inform you that the certificate could not have been connected with any individual as the heading of it was not completed. General Mansergh had to fill in his own name, number, rank, and other particulars himself at the airport.

The Military Attaché rejects as misleading, to say the least of it, the statement that the doctor acted with the intention of making himself as offensive as possible. He was certainly firm but, nevertheless, civil and certainly not offensive at any time or by any standard. With regard to his suggestion that the dates on the certificate had been faked, I am told by the Military Attaché that, in his opinion and in that of General Mansergh, this suggestion had considerable weight of visual evidence to support it.

/I ....

Roger Allen, Esq., C.M.G.,  
African Department,  
Foreign Office,  
LONDON, S.W.1.

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I agree that it was unfortunate that the General had to share his room with a private soldier. The Egyptians did promise to give the General a room to himself, and they slipped up by not so doing, but apart from this I cannot see where the Egyptian authorities behaved sufficiently badly to warrant the measures suggested in the telegram under reference.

For your private information, I think the War Office are making very heavy weather over this matter. The General himself, when he realised the position, accepted it with a good grace.

The C.I.G.S., when Military Attaché and I told him the facts, said that it was not the Egyptians but the officer responsible for furnishing General Mansergh with the faulty certificate in question that should take the blame. The C.I.G.S. said he would not in any case consider raising such a matter with King Farouk.

I sincerely hope that we shall hear no more about this.

*Yours sincerely,*

*(for E. A. Chapman. Andrews)*

*John Lawrence*

P.S.

They are understandably very "cholera conscious" in Egypt and no Egyptian official dare take a chance on that risk.

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MINISTER OF STATE

I have talked to Mr. Michael Stewart's Private Secretary. He is rather surprised at the statement made in this letter, especially at the attempt to suggest that General Mansergh himself had accepted the situation.

2. In fact it was General Mansergh who raised the question with the War Office. The General was not so anxious to make a fuss on personal grounds as to have some kind of protest made to the Egyptians on the principle of the thing. General Mansergh is apparently not the type to be highly incensed on personal grounds, but he did feel that the Egyptians derived a certain amount of pleasure in kicking a senior British Officer around. From my knowledge of the Middle East I should say that this was highly probable and would be equally applicable to Iraqis, Persians or any other people of the area, with the possible exception of the Jordanians.

3. However, if the Embassy have succeeded in squaring the C.I.G.S., the War Office feel there is nothing more they can do about it and I attach a draft which should close the matter.

Kgm

Rm. Hadow

10th June, 1950.

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Draft. letter

R.M.M. Stewart,  
Esq., M.P.  
Parly. Under-  
Sec. of State,  
War Office.

From:  
Minister of State

*Mr. Wright has  
seen and approved*

*Sent by  
M/S office  
20.6.50*

OUTFILE

*[Handwritten signature]*

Since writing to you on the 6th June about the incident involving General Mansergh, we have had the Embassy reaction to our proposal that the matter should be taken up with the Egyptian Government.

Apparently after discussion with the Military Attaché and the C.I.G.S. it was agreed that nothing should be done since there is, in fact, considerable doubt about the cholera certificate.

In the opinion of the Military Attaché <sup>apparently</sup> and <sup>at the time</sup> that of General Mansergh <sup>apparently</sup>, there was considerable weight of visual evidence to support the contention that the dates on the certificate had been faked <sup>you will agree</sup>

I hope that as the Military Attaché and the C.I.G.S. seem to think that nothing should be done we should let the matter rest there.

*KgM*

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.