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VG 1051/6

Foreign Office and Whitehall Distribution

UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC

February 25, 1963

Section 1

*In Nasser
and his
+ the
foundations
18m 15/3*

NASSER AND "NASSERISM" IN RELATION TO BRITISH INTERESTS

Sir Harold Beeley to Lord Home. (Received February 25)

SUMMARY

President Nasser is hostile to British interests, but his main purpose is the advancement of his own ambitions: he has not yet given high priority to upsetting our position in Aden, the Gulf or Libya (paragraph 2).

President Nasser's view of Britain; his lack of confidence in British intentions. Advisability of not treating him as irrevocably hostile to Her Majesty's Government (paragraph 3).

Difficulty of resisting "Nasserism" without becoming identified with opposition to Arab nationalism. Need to continue policy of disengagement where possible (paragraph 4).

Advantages of co-operation with the United States, whose policy excludes systematic antagonism to President Nasser. We should continue to seek a reasonable working relationship with him (paragraph 5).

(No. 9. Secret)
My Lord,

Cairo,
February 22, 1963.

So much has been said, in recent letters and telegrams between your Lordship's Department and other Middle Eastern posts, about the influence of President Nasser and "Nasserism" on British interests in the area, that I think it may be timely to submit a few general observations on this subject as I see it from Cairo.

2. President Nasser's desire to exercise influence in all parts of the Arab world, and his possession of powerful instruments of propaganda and subversion which he does not hesitate to use for this end, are established beyond dispute. There is no need to recapitulate the history of his intervention at various times in the internal affairs of Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, or the evidence of his intrigues in Libya; and his agents are at work in every Arab country. The important question is what conclusions should be drawn from these facts. In the first place, and despite the tendency to confuse means with ends which is to be found in varying degrees in all intelligence services, these Egyptian activities are purposive and therefore selective.

It is a mistake to assume that the United Arab Republic operates by keeping up the pressure at all points all the time. Secondly, it is perhaps necessary to add that President Nasser's basic purpose is the positive one of building up his own power and influence, not the negative one of destroying the British position in the area. He no doubt believes that this destruction is both necessary and inevitable. But he has not in fact, up to now, given any high priority to the undermining of Aden or the Gulf sheikhdoms, nor has he made an issue of our military presence in Libya.

3. The question thus arises: can Her Majesty's Government hope by any appropriate means to influence President Nasser's policy in these areas, at least to the extent of persuading him that his interests do not in existing circumstances demand more than verbal hostility to the British presence? This is linked to a further question, and a peculiarly difficult one to answer: what is President Nasser's view of Britain? Some of those closest to him are undoubtedly hostile; and the present ascendancy of Sayed Ali Sabri is not likely to do us any good. There are

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others among his advisers, however, who appear to have a sincere desire for greater confidence in our mutual relations. Some probably would like this without having much faith in its practicability, and the President himself may be more or less in this frame of mind. I sometimes feel that he approaches us rather like a police officer giving a reformed criminal the benefit of the doubt while more than half expecting to detect symptoms of recidivism. Confidence in British intentions, in short, is a tender plant here. But I believe the ground is sufficiently fertile for it to survive if carefully nursed, and I further believe that while we are seen to be nursing it President Nasser will not mount a major offensive against our positions in the Arab world unless his own interests urgently require it. The qualification is of course important, and all I am arguing at this point is that we may save ourselves a great amount of trouble in the near future by not treating President Nasser as if he were irrevocably hostile to Her Majesty's Government. This argument is elaborated, in terms with which I wholly agree, in paragraph 6 of Sir Roger Stevens' letter of the 8th of February to Sir William Luce.

4. What, moreover, would be the alternative? It could only be, I suppose, to give our systematic support to the forces resisting the spread of "Nasserist" influence outside the frontiers of Egypt. (Advocacy of this source is sometimes coupled with the hope that the failure of President Nasser's external policy might bring about a change of régime in Cairo, but this extension of the argument seems to me to be based on illusions about the situation here, and can be disregarded.) "Nasserism", however, is not a phenomenon which can easily be isolated from other aspects of the political and social unrest associated with contemporary Arab nationalism. President Nasser is not responsible, for instance, for vulnerability of the ruling house in Saudi Arabia, nor (though he has made his contribution to it in the last two years) for the endemic feebleness of Syrian Governments. And his repeated assertion that he does not instigate revolution in other Arab countries but merely responds to it when it occurs, while unconvincing as an alibi for his intelligence service, is nevertheless not far wrong as a description of events. It would not in practice be possible for Her Majesty's Government to pursue a consistent policy of supporting the resistance to "Nasserism" without at the same time

becoming identified as an opponent of almost every movement supported by the sentiment of Arab nationalism. Already Her Majesty's Government are widely accused of this. Only by perseverance in the policy of disengagement from inter-Arab disputes, except where specific British interests are directly threatened, can we hope in the long run to shake off this reputation or at least to throw doubt on it. In other words, an alliance with the resistance to the spread of "Nasserism" would be incompatible with the policy, which we have in the main been pursuing since 1958, of seeking a *modus vivendi* with Arab nationalism as a means of contributing to the preservation of our remaining interests in the area.

5. I conclude that in accepting the view that we must resist the spread of "Nasserism" we should unavoidably be identifying ourselves as an obstacle to the fulfilment of Arab national aspirations and thus incurring an additional risk of seeing our essential interests drawn into the present phase of the Arab revolutionary turmoil. How long a respite we can hope to obtain by continuing to pursue a less provocative policy is admittedly open to question. But there is one relevant consideration, on which I have already commented in my despatch No. 7 of the 14th of February, and which directly affects this issue: namely, the policy of the United States. It is most improbable that President Nasser considers his attitude towards British interests in the Middle East in isolation from his attitude towards the Western alliance in general and the United States in particular. He understands very well that the United States Government is seeking to combine a general sympathy for progressive Arab nationalism with a determination to exclude Soviet influence from the Middle East and to preserve Western control of its oil resources. And he realises that, in so far as Her Majesty's Government are working in harmony with the Government of the United States, a challenge to their position is also a challenge to this American policy. It seems to me that we have here a potential reinforcement of our defences in the area which could far outweigh in importance any measures we might take unilaterally to bar the way to "Nasserite" encroachment. But if we are to realise this potential by securing the wholehearted co-operation of the Americans in the defence of our positions, we must recognise that they have their own ideas on

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how the defence should be conducted. And these ideas quite certainly exclude any systematic antagonism to President Nasser. Sir David Ormsby Gore has indeed gone so far as to say, in paragraph 7 of Washington despatch No. 8 of the 8th of January, that except in circumstances involving a risk either of an Arab-Israel war or of the enlargement of Soviet influence "vigorous American opposition to Nasser should not be counted on even though his activities might imperil important American or British interests". I would not dispute this, but I would add that the chances of effective Anglo-American co-operation in the face of a direct threat to a major interest, e.g., in Aden or Kuwait, may in fact depend on the degree of responsibility which the Americans feel for the situation in which the threat arises. The more closely we can work with them meanwhile, the more likely

they are to stand with us in a crisis. This, it seems to me, is the most compelling argument of all for continuing to seek a reasonable working relationship with President Nasser and to avoid both the appearance and the reality of an unalterable hostility to him.

6. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives in Amman, Ankara, Baghdad, Beirut, Damascus, Kuwait, Jedda, Khartoum, Tehran, Tripoli, Tel Aviv and Washington, and to the Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York, the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, and the Political Adviser to the Commander-in-Chief, Middle East Command, Aden.

I have, &c.

H. BEELEY.

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EGYPT

February 14, 1961

Section 1

U.A.R.: THE STATE OF THE REGIME

Mr. Crowe to Lord Home. (Received February 14)

SUMMARY

The prestige of President Nasser's régime has declined sharply in Egypt during the past year, at any rate among the politically conscious middle class of Cairo (paragraphs 1-3).

2. The decline seems to date from certain nationalisation measures; but the real cause of the trouble is that President Nasser and the Egyptian revolution are failing to live up to the Egyptian idea of their role in the Arab world as a whole. With the revolutionary impetus lost, disappointment at the trend of foreign affairs has turned attention to domestic affairs, in which President Nasser has recently shown an unsure touch (paragraphs 4-6).

3. Although many measures have recently been introduced to change the structure of the State, everybody knows that the real power remains with President Nasser and the people of his choice. Although most Egyptians still have faith in Nasser, there is much criticism of the growing power and privilege of the Army. The Army officers in the Government are not thought to be the most suitable men for the job: Kemaluddin Hussein is one of the main targets of criticism (paragraphs 7-9).

4. Though the Egyptian Revolution was comparatively mild, pressure on minorities and foreign residents is now growing (paragraph 10).

5. Though some freedom of speech remains, Egypt has many of the features of a police State. The police bear most hardly on Communists. Nevertheless Soviet influence is bound to grow; and this too worries the middle class, whose ties with the West are strong (paragraphs 11 and 12).

6. President Nasser's middle class supporters still have confidence in him but are confused and disillusioned by some of his policies. But there is no opposition; and the régime displays great confidence.

(No. 14. Confidential)
My Lord,

*Cairo,
February 9, 1961.*

Every informed resident and regular visitor to Cairo is persuaded that the prestige of President Nasser's régime has declined sharply inside Egypt during the past year.

2. Foreigners are apt to comment on this decline in terms so general that one might be tempted to conclude that the Government of the United Arab Republic, if not in

danger of collapse, would at any rate be under the strongest pressure to modify its policies. This is manifestly not so; and when we examine the nature and causes of the loss of prestige we must remember that the evidence for it is drawn from certain classes only. We do not know what the Egyptian peasant thinks, nor would it be significant if we did. The urban proletariat is no less inscrutable; but there is no sign that its members are concerned with politics or unusually dissatisfied with the economic

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situation. We have no reason to suppose that the Army, the true foundation and chief beneficiary of the revolution, is disillusioned or discontented. The wealthy remnants of the old régime, the minorities, the foreign residents and the business men and shopkeepers have from the first disliked a revolution from which they could only expect to suffer: their discontent is chronic, and the only significant fact is that their confidence has recently begun to ebb much more quickly.

3. The people who have lost some of their enthusiasm for the régime during the past year are the professional classes—civil servants, lawyers, doctors, engineers, and all intellectuals who are interested in politics. That these people have recently grown more cynical or apathetic, if not positively discontented, is a fact attested by many experienced observers. Visitors who have returned to Egypt lately after an absence of a year or so have all expressed surprise at the change in the atmosphere and the difference in the attitudes of their Egyptian friends; whilst those of us who reside in Cairo are continually receiving fresh evidence, often in the form of specific complaints, of the fall in the esteem for the régime among thinking members of the middle class. They are a small minority, but an important one; for it is they upon whom, outside the Army, President Nasser must rely for active support in carrying through his revolution, and it is they who create or destroy a general climate of confidence. They are not likely to oppose Nasser—they could easily be suppressed if they did—but unless he can fire their enthusiasm again he will find it difficult to fulfil his ambitious economic and social aims.

4. Most observers would date the decline in the régime's prestige from the transfer of the Press to the National Union in May 1960 or from the nationalisation of the National Bank of Egypt and the Misr Bank in February 1960. These things certainly shook the confidence of many Egyptians, evoked an unusual volume of protest, and confounded the defenders of the régime. But the cause of the trouble is deeper; we must seek it in the role which President Nasser found for himself and the Egyptian revolution in the Arab world as a whole. His first aim was to be rid of foreign domination at home; and then, with Egypt's hands freed, to lead the struggle of the Arabs against imperialism and feudalism towards "nationalism" and unity. For some time it must have seemed to his

middle class supporters as though he and they could not fail. Having secured the evacuation of the British forces, and defeated Western efforts to bring the Arab world into a defence organisation, he nationalised the Suez Canal, and triumphantly survived a powerful Western coalition against him. Syria joined Egypt; two of his chief adversaries in the Arab world, Chamoun and Nuri Said, were removed by subversion and revolution; Jordan was severely shaken, and the other Arab States were cowed or impressed into following the Egyptian line. Sustained by so many genuine victories, and other imaginary ones, politically minded Egyptians were probably so flushed by their country's new importance that they kept their eyes fixed on distant horizons and paid little attention to what was going on at home.

5. After the abortive Mosul revolt in the spring of 1959, however, the picture gradually changed. From the Egyptian point of view, the Iraqi revolution took the wrong path; and all the resources of Cairo's propaganda and subversion could not unseat Abdul Kerim Qasim. President Bourguiba and King Hussein proved to have surprising staying power, and even the Imam of Yemen ventured to turn awkward. For nearly two years there have been no revolutionary "victories" in the Arab world, and it has begun to look as though President Nasser is stuck. The impetus remained for some time, however, partly because the United Arab Republic had in other respects a good year in 1959. Israeli efforts to use the Suez Canal were frustrated, a loan for Canal development was secured, against determined Zionist opposition, from the International Bank, the Soviet Union co-operated over the High Dam yet was kept at arm's length, and aid was received from the United States and other countries.

6. 1960 was not so good: President Nasser did not have things his way, either in the Arab world or in Africa. The revolutionary impetus has been lost, at any rate for the time being, and many of the middle class Cairenes who formerly gave unthinking support to the régime have begun to reflect on its internal performance and to wonder where it is taking them. President Nasser has declared his aims: the doubling of the national income in 10 years and the creation of a Socialist co-operative democratic society. But few people believe that the first will be achieved, and fewer still have any comprehension of the second. The

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nationalisation of the Misr Bank concerns and of the distribution of pharmaceuticals and other commodities upset the business community, both native and foreign, not only for its own sake but as a general indication of the extension of State control over the economy. Rumours of further measures of nationalisation have sapped confidence. The transfer of the Press to the National Union shook many of the President's stoutest supporters and was never convincingly explained. In several of his incursions into internal affairs during 1960 Nasser's touch seemed unusually unsure.

7. On paper a great deal has been done during the past 12 months. The structure of the National Union has been completed, a National Assembly has been set up and entrusted with the preparation of a constitution, local government has been reorganised and greater authority delegated to provincial governors and their councils. It is possible that these institutions will ultimately help to transform and vitalise Egyptian society; but their effect so far, at any rate on the Cairo middle class—I cannot speak of provincial life—has been small. For whatever official propaganda may claim for the National Union and the National Assembly, everybody knows where the real power lies. It is not with the people.

8. I do not think that the Egyptians object to dictatorship as such; and most of them, apart from those he has replaced or damaged, believe that Nasser is the best ruler they could get. But the last year has seen a surprising increase in criticism of the manner and instruments of his Government. The focus of this criticism is the extensive and apparently growing power and privilege of Army officers. That the top positions in the country should be held by Nasser and his officer friends is inevitable, given the origin and character of the Egyptian revolution, and it is generally accepted. But Colonels and Majors are to be found in key positions in almost every department of State, and there are few civilians who would venture to dispute their decisions. Above all are the powerful branches of the Intelligence, themselves mainly staffed, at any rate in the higher posts, by Army officers. It is difficult for a civilian to reach a post of responsibility and power. Members of the Foreign Ministry, which receives a constant influx of Army officers at a high level, are surprisingly frank in their criticism of their ex-military colleagues; and we have reason to believe that the same sense of frustration is to be found in most departments. It is

beginning to look as though it is the Army, and not the middle class as a whole, that has succeeded to the privileges which the wealthy enjoyed under the old régime.

9. There would be much less dissatisfaction if the Army officers who have the power were the fittest to exercise it. Their civilian critics contend that they are not. Some of them are honest and capable men; but the majority are at best ill-informed, at worst obstinate and incompetent. There is a growing feeling that the country's best talent is not being put to best use; and the criticism sometimes extends to the President's closest advisers. One of the most remarkable features of the past year has been the rise of Kemaluddin Hussein, an officer, as is generally thought, of no great merit who was Central Minister of Education until the autumn of 1959. He has since added to his original portfolio the jobs of Controller-General of the National Union in Egypt, President of the Egyptian Executive Council and Minister of Local Government in the Southern Region. In a sense he is Nasser's viceroy in Egypt as Abdul Hamid Sarraj is in Syria. It is largely in his name that the reins of Government have been tightened in Egypt; and few, apart from President Nasser and his military colleagues, have any confidence in his capability or his intentions.

10. Kemaluddin Hussein is alleged to hold particularly severe views on minorities and foreign residents. It is certainly true, though it is not due to him alone, that these two classes are beginning to feel the pinch. I was somewhat surprised, when I arrived in Egypt, to find how mild the revolution had been and how comparatively well-off the cosmopolitan and "Levantine" society still are; but there is a growing malaise among them, a feeling that their days are numbered. All the currents of thought that go to make up "Arab nationalism", pan-Africanism, or the prevalent ideas on social and economic development—everything is working against the Copt, the Greek and the Italian. Many foreigners are getting out while they can, and most others are wondering how much longer they can hold on. The Copts are finding it progressively harder to get the good jobs in competition with their Moslem fellow-citizens, and many of them are subject to constant attention from the secret police.

11. The Copts are far from monopolising the interest of the police, however; one or two of our Moslem acquaintances have confessed that they are expected to explain and

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report on their contacts with us to the "mubahis" or "investigator". A foreign diplomat in Cairo (and not least a British diplomat!) tends to exaggerate the ubiquity of the secret police: I do not find it easy to say to what extent Nasser's Egypt can to-day be described as a police State. It is certainly not like an iron curtain country, partly perhaps because the Egyptian Government machine is less efficient and less ruthless than the Soviet. Many people still speak with surprising frankness. But the shadow is always there; and we often hear of surprise searches, unexpected visits and unexplained imprisonment. One thing is fairly certain: the police are even more severe on the contacts of Communist Missions than on ours, and more interested in local Communists, fellow-travellers and persons with Left-wing views than in "reactionaries" or persons with pro-Western sympathies. Communists, real or imagined, are rounded up with surprising regularity: another 40-odd were apparently put in prison recently. One gets the impression that, in spite of official propaganda which constantly attacks the West and almost never the Soviet Union, the régime is far more afraid of the spread of Soviet than of a revival of Western influence inside Egypt.

12. Nevertheless, the drift towards the Soviet Union continues and is bound to have an effect on the internal situation. The Army is equipped with Soviet weapons and exposed to Soviet instruction. Soviet money is building the High Dam and Soviet experts are active in Cairo and Aswan. Soviet penetration is reinforced by trade, cultural exchanges and the education of students in iron curtain countries. Soviet and U.A.R. policies often coincide. All this too is worrying the middle class. After the first delights of independence, and in spite of the economic advantages of positive neutralism, many Egyptian supporters of Nasser are worried about where he is taking them. Their ties with the West, though gradually disintegrating (the next generation will probably feel differently), are still very strong: they do not feel comfortable in other company. They can see why Nasser took Soviet arms, and for this they blame the West; but they would rather not have unnecessary quarrels, for example over the

Congo. Once they understood Nasser's policies, now they are sometimes at sea. They will crack jokes about Lumumba or the Somali loan, but not about Israel or Algeria.

13. As the first flush of the revolution pales and the excitement of its victories in the cause of Arab nationalism wears thin, many of Nasser's supporters, whilst retaining their confidence in the President himself, are distressed at the poor quality of his subordinates, confused and disillusioned by his policies, and nauseated by the adulation he receives from the propaganda machine. Behind the façade of enthusiasm for the past achievements and future promise of the régime the easy-going cynicism of the Egyptians has so reasserted itself that most observers are surprised at the change in the atmosphere. Without the artificial stimulus of the struggle against imperialism and Zionism the local demagogues would be hard put to it to raise a cheer. Yet there is no real opposition; and provided President Nasser can avoid total disaster abroad (including—and perhaps especially—in Syria), and provided he retains the confidence of his Army, there seems no reason to suppose that his power over Egypt will diminish. Egyptian society is basically stable and can tolerate experiment. It is perhaps this feeling that their base is secure that gives Nasser and his henchmen their extraordinary confidence. They seem to be utterly convinced that they are in the right and on the winning side, whatever the battle. Their enemies—Sir Anthony Eden, Guy Mollet, Nuri Said, Camille Chamoun, Adnan Menderes, and soon (they hope) the Shah of Iran—fall by the wayside and they continue their "sacred march". It is sometimes hard to resist the conclusion that the internal affairs of Egypt have little significance in relation to the international conduct of President Nasser and the Government of the United Arab Republic.

14. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Ambassadors at Amman, Baghdad, Beirut, Tel Aviv and Washington, and to the Heads of the Political Offices with Middle East Forces and the British Forces in the Arabian Peninsula.

I have, &c.

C. T. CROWE.

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**RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE
AND Mr. BLACK AT No. 1 CARLTON GARDENS ON MAY 7, 1959**

Mr. Black came to see me at 1 Carlton Gardens yesterday. He spoke to me at length about a conversation he had had with the Egyptian Ambassador in Washington. He thought that the Ambassador was to some extent reflecting his own views but also saying things that Colonel Nasser wanted Mr. Black to hear. Through his remarks ran a vein of intense suspicion of the United Kingdom. The Egyptians for example are convinced that we deliberately unblocked their balances so as to put them in a difficulty over the extra instalment of the Canal compensation. They particularly believe this because of our holding in the old Canal Company. They are also convinced, the Ambassador told Mr. Black, that we are out to "get" Nasser.

So far as Iraq is concerned, they believe that we are deliberately siding with the Communists in order to do Nasser down.

I said that I thought that Mr. Black could help a great deal in persuading Colonel Nasser of our true attitude. We wished to go forward step by step to a better relationship but it must be based on fact and not on promise. For example, had Nasser speedily agreed to our Mission, released Swinburn and Zarb and made things easy for the British people getting back their Egyptian property, I think there would have been a wave of pro-Egyptian feeling in this country. We responded very readily to anyone behaving in a forthcoming manner. As things were at present, the Egyptians really had dissipated any good will that they could have acquired by niggling about the Mission.

I gave him the paper about the immunities, &c., for the Mission. I also gave him a paper on Zarb and Swinburn. I explained to him in great detail the reasoning behind our decision to accept orders for arms and gave him the document relating to that. He said that he always tried to avoid getting involved in these political matters, but he was certain that Nasser would ask him his views and he would have a chance of trying to keep the matter in the right perspective. He did not express a strong view as to whether we were right or wrong for this action, but he did say that he knew that Mr. Loudon of Shell was very strongly in favour of our acting in this way.

We talked about the Sudan, and the telegram despatched this morning indicates the purport of our conversation. Nothing very new came out of it except that he wished us to get the Sudanese to ask for mediation, not just accept it. He agreed with me that we might have a very tricky situation later in the year if there was no agreement between the Sudan and U.A.R.

He spoke about aid for Egypt. He said the Egyptians believed that the British were always holding the Americans back. I said they were quite right. We did not want the Americans to give large quantities of aid before the Egyptians had done something to carry out their agreements.

Mr. Black then said that when he had put that point to the Egyptian Ambassador in Washington, the Ambassador had said: "Oh, but we are doing things all the time for you. We have accepted your wheat and we are accepting a loan." Mr. Black said that he did not think that that argument would be very convincing to anyone.

He said that one of the problems was that the Egyptians intensely resented the fact that no high-level Americans had been to Cairo. They felt the same about Britain, but of course there being no diplomatic relations it was more difficult. Kaissouni had been very hurt when we expected him to sign an agreement with a comparatively junior official. Mr. Erroll when he went had done extremely well. I asked whether it would be a good idea for Mr. Erroll to go out again in a week or

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two to discuss the outstanding details. Mr. Black said no, he did not think it a good idea. It would be much better for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to invite Mr. Kaissouni to come to London for talks. I said that in the absence of diplomatic relations, I doubted whether Mr. Kaissouni would come. Mr. Black said he knew that Mr. Kaissouni's English wife was longing to come back to London again and he might come.

He had asked Mr. Allen Dulles what were the prospects of some senior American official going to Cairo and had mentioned the Vice-President. Mr. Allen Dulles said it would be quite impossible for any senior American to go unless Cairo was one of a number of ports of call. They had discussed whether Mr. Anderson could perhaps go there. I said that a special visit by a senior American Minister to Cairo alone, would create a bad impression here, pending progress with the various matters in dispute.

Mr. Black said that he might well come to see me in Geneva on his way back. He thought that he could conveniently come to Geneva and change aeroplanes there, and see me without any great fuss being caused.

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FROM FOREIGN OFFICE TO WASHINGTON

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No. 1940
April 14, 1959.

D. 6.20 p.m April 14, 1959.

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Addressed to Washington telegram No. 1940 of April 14
Repeated for information Saving to:- Amman No. 126
P.O.M.E.F. No. 355

Guard.

My immediately preceding telegram.

I have been thinking about American policy towards Egypt and our efforts to reach some modus vivendi with Nasser. Sometimes I wonder whether the United States Administration fully realises what we have had to put up with and the patience we have shown. They do not seem to realise how unreliable Nasser is and what havoc he is playing in the very delicate situation in the Middle East today.

2. I should like to get my thoughts on this subject across to Mr. Herter, who in our recent talks appeared ready to understand our point of view. You cannot of course refer to the subject matter of Amman telegram No. 301, but I should be glad if you could find a suitable opportunity to raise the subject with him and speak along the following lines.

3. I am very much concerned with the way in which Nasser is still proving an obstacle to any kind of progress and harmony in his part of the world. He is at least partly responsible for driving Qasim further into the arms of the Communists. He is now according to his statements to the Press trying to imply that Britain and France are in some way involved in trying to create a Communist régime in Iraq. He remains on bad terms with Jordan, which has shown such remarkable stability during the absence of King and Prime Minister, whose courage has greatly impressed me. To judge from what we have heard about the Arab League meeting in Beirut, he is working at cross purposes with other Arab States such as the Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Tunis and Morocco, and instead of trying to create some harmony in which Communism would be less likely to prosper he still seems intent on stirring up trouble, which can only operate to the benefit of those who he now professes are his enemies.

/4. We

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4. We are one of the principle sufferers from this trend of events. In particular we have been put in a false position since the conclusion of the financial agreement. Contrary to Fawzi's specific promise in writing to me, we have been unable to get the necessary diplomatic privileges and immunities for our Mission, the purpose of which would be to carry out the agreement. We have shown the utmost restraint under these difficult circumstances but time is marching on. We do not expect the U.A.R. to fall over themselves in appearing friendly to the West, but we do consider that having done our part we are entitled to expect that they will give us the facilities which we counted on when concluding the financial agreement. Once we have those facilities we would hope that we could make some progress in disabusing the U.A.R. Government of some of the illusions which it still harbours about our policy. We do not expect this process will be easy, but it is high time that it was enabled to start in view of the wider issues involved and in particular the danger which the advance of Communism in Iraq represents to the whole of the Middle East.

5. We should be grateful for anything which the State Department feel they are able to do by way of instructing their Ambassador in Cairo to represent in the strongest possible terms to the U.A.R. Government the desirability of breaking the present deadlock in connexion with the establishment of the Crowe Mission.

6. I do not imagine that Mr. Herter will feel it is any use going further than this; American lectures to Nasser on how he should behave are not likely to have much influence on him and might be counter-productive. The U.A.R.'s new stand against Communism may be genuine but I think that Nasser would change sides again at a moment's notice. We should be a great deal happier if we felt that the State Department share our view on the difficulty of dealing with Nasser and on the danger which his present policy constitutes to developments in the Middle East generally. We sometimes have the impression that they regard him as a potentially reliable partner on whom a sane and constructive policy in the Middle East might be based. I think that he is unreliable and unbalanced. We must try to do business with him but cautiously. I hope the United States realise the dangers of building too much on him. In particular, the West must not be in too much of a hurry to give him economic assistance.

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Mr de Zube 14

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FROM FOREIGN OFFICE TO WASHINGTON

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No. 1939
April 14, 1959.

D. 6.50 p.m. April 14, 1959.

PRIORITY
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Addressed to Washington telegram No. 1939 of April 14
Repeated for information Saving to:- Amman No. 125
P.O.M.E.F. No. 354

Guard.

Amman telegram No. 301 [of April 7: United States/Jordan].

I am not at the moment disposed to take this "bold and imaginative" new policy too seriously. No doubt it is a reflexion of the sort of policy discussions which normally and rightly take place between Foreign Offices and diplomatic missions from time to time. Though there may have been a whisper of such thoughts during our discussions at Camp David there was no suggestion that the State Department were seriously thinking of adopting such a drastic policy in the near future. Nevertheless we know that the State Department will want to review with us, perhaps in the fairly near future, our joint policy towards Jordan; they have put a question mark against continued financial support on any large scale to the present régime, and it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that the sort of thinking described by the United States Chargé d'Affaires in Amman may have superficial attractions in Washington. For this reason I think it advisable to let you have my preliminary views on this order of ideas for such use as you wish or may be able to make of them. See also my immediately following telegram.

2. So far as the internal situation in Jordan is concerned, I fully subscribe to the views expressed by Sir Charles Johnston, who spoke very well. This telegram will deal more particularly with some of the wider issues involved.

3. First of all, I am all in favour of the development of an Arab anti-Communist front. This would be desirable whatever the outcome in Iraq may be. I think, however, that the front will be on a more stable and healthy basis if it grows from within rather than is built up from without; and I am not sure that it will work most smoothly and effectively by Nasser having it all his own way. Beirut telegram No. 42 Saving describing the Arab League meeting suggests that there are considerable differences of view within the non-Communist Arab world as to the

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best procedure, and that if Nasser is too exclusively in the lead it can only result in friction. I do not believe that he can be relied upon to pursue a consistent policy. All our dealings with him suggest that he is completely untrustworthy. His cooperation, however, would clearly be desirable.

4. Next there is the question of the future of Jordan itself. It is undoubtedly necessary to conceive of some way of integrating Jordan into the policy of her neighbours and perhaps associating her with them in some manner in the long run. The present position by which Jordan is only on speaking terms with Saudi Arabia and the Lebanon is clearly most unsatisfactory. But the present very fluid state of inter-Arab relationships does not seem to me to be at all an appropriate time for any outside Powers to set to work on this problem. The most natural association for Jordan on geographical and commercial grounds would no doubt be with Syria. But the present state of Syria does not lend itself to any very useful speculation in this direction, least of all on the basis some time ago mooted by the Jordanians that they should take it over by force. Meanwhile, however, there seems a reasonable prospect that the logical sequence of events will gradually bring together the Arab world, other than Iraq, into an anti-Communist front. I certainly should not wish to discourage this tendency, and if there is one matter relating to it on which I would hope that we and the United States Administration could agree it would be that we might both urge on the Jordanians at every possible opportunity the desirability of mending their fences with the United Arab Republic and playing their proper part in Arab councils rather than continuing to dwell in isolation. I regard their absence from the recent Arab League meeting at Beirut, for example, as most regrettable. It is time they recognized that they have certain interests in common with the U.A.R., such as keeping the Communists out of Syria, and that it will not pay them to go on standing on their dignity because they have not had a full apology from the U.A.R. about the incident over King Hussein's aircraft last autumn.

5. There are also weighty arguments against an external attempt to change the status quo such as the "bold and imaginative" policy apparently contemplated. First of all, it is obviously inconsistent with Mr. Dulles' "hands-off" policy, which I believe to be entirely sound. Secondly, it fails to take account of Israeli reactions. Whatever there is to be said against the status quo in Jordan it at least has the advantage of keeping the Israelis below boiling-point. The converse is equally true. Thirdly, I am not sure that even Nasser is desperately keen for a change in the status quo at the moment; he has too many other problems on his hands.

/6. Finally,

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6. Finally, the "new policy" has wider implications. It would seem to be based on the principle that the only way of coming to terms with Nasser is to eliminate potential sources of friction by unilateral action and concessions from the Western side. If this policy were to be followed through to its logical conclusion it would have implications in the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula (including Saudi Arabia) which neither of us could possibly accept. If this is the price that is to be paid for getting Nasser to lead an anti-Communist front in the Arab world, then so far as I am concerned I would be bound to oppose it. This is not to say that I am opposed to trying to work out a rapprochement with Nasser. I regard this as a highly desirable aim. I recognise that the Western position in Jordan and the present attitude of the Jordanian Government may constitute something of a stumbling-block; but do not let us exaggerate its size. Events are not only pushing Nasser towards an anti-Communist position (from which incidentally it is more than ever necessary for him to display his independence of the West) but have also set a considerable curb on his expansionist ambitions and activities. This suggests that the possibility of a new relationship with Nasser on a live and let live basis may, to say the least, be worth exploring. He needs Western financial assistance, he is alarmed at the growth of Communism and perturbed at the success of a new form of nationalism in Iraq; at the same time the moral support of the rest of the Arab world, provided he does not try to dominate it too directly, can give him self-confidence and a sense of independence which he has hitherto lacked. Against this background the possibility of a real community of interest with the West may well emerge, given good will (a doubtful factor) and always providing that we pursue the substance of cooperation without too much regard for the appearance of it, which he will always seek to avoid.

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