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Copy No. 2 of 20 copies

Middle East (Policy)
PEI

Mo. 26/7



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

MAIN BUILDING, WHITEHALL, LONDON, S.W.1

TELEPHONE WHITEHALL 7022

SECRET

224 23rd May 1967.

Dear Sir,

TALK BETWEEN DEFENCE SECRETARY AND SHEIK KAMAL ADHAM

I should send a line to let you know that Sheik Kamal Adham, who was accompanied by Mr. Ray Brown (Head of Defence Sales), called on the Secretary of State for what turned out to be only a very short talk immediately before the Prime Minister's meeting with King Faisal this morning.

2. The Secretary of State raised the subject of the current Middle East crisis: President Nasser's announcement of a decision to close the Gulf of Aqaba; and the increased risk of war as a result of the potential Israeli reaction to this move. Mr. Healey said that he personally felt that it would be most important for HMG to consult Saudi Arabia on the line to be taken. Sheik Kamal Adham expressed the view that Egypt must be counting on the backing of the Soviet Union; and that it seemed likely that Nasser's policy was part of a general political manoeuvre to apply pressure to the Americans in the Middle East at a time when, following their entry into the demilitarised zone, the latter were under growing pressure in relation to Vietnam. He shared Mr. Healey's view that Mr. Gromyko had urged Nasser, when he visited Cairo, to avoid getting further embroiled in the Yemen; but he made no comment on the possibility that Gromyko may have also discussed with Nasser plans for the present train of events. He did not think that Nasser would allow his troops to engage with the superior Israeli troops; but he did think that it was possible that the Egyptians would use aircraft to bomb Israel, particularly since Israel was likely to be weak in anti-aircraft defence for a little time to come and were not in a position to attack Cairo from the air.

3. As to the Yemen, when Mr. Healey mentioned that the Egyptians were taking further troops out and appeared, though it might be only a temporary move, to be holding back on further gas attacks, Sheik Kamal Adham said that a policy of using gas, which could

/ effectively...

C.M. MacLehose Esq., CMG, MBE,
Foreign Office.

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effectively penetrate the Royalist caves meant that the Egyptians could do with less men on the ground in the Yemen.

4. Mr. Healey referred to the political situation in South Arabia; and Sheik Kamal Adham made the point that there were two groups of the NLF - one which wished South Arabia to be part of the Yemen and one which did not - and that Saudi Arabia would hope to be able to co-operate with the latter group. Sheik Kamal Adham emphasised the importance which Saudi Arabia attached to the provision by the British of some effective defence support for the South Arabian Government after independence and volunteered that the Saudi Arabians would be ready to channel orders to the UK to an extent that would help to off-set the foreign exchange cost to HMG of that support. The Defence Secretary said that he would note this.

5. I am sending a copy of this letter to Michael Palliser (No. 10).

P.D. Nairne
P.D. Nairne
(P.D. NAIRNE)

R 23rd

Reference

Mr. Lawler

from by an in
Wick
22/5

The attached note
summarises the most important
statements made in the U.N.
in 1957 about the freedom of
passage through the Straits of Tiran.
2. We have spoken to the
Israeli Ambassador who is not
himself aware of any U.N.
resolution (as alleged by Mr. Fishel).
He ~~the~~ does not have a text
of Mr. Fishel's statement, but
believes that he was referring

to the attached statements.

J.M. Gas
23/5-

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Establishment of a U.N.E.F. presence at Sharm es Sheikh

I give below a summary of the loci classici of the negotiations for the establishment of a U.N.E.F. presence at Sharm es Sheikh and of the United Nations Assembly debate on this subject. The United Kingdom statement is in its chronological position at the end.

(a) Israel/United Nations Agreement

The Secretary-General presented a Note to the General Assembly on 27 February 1957 summarising an exchange of views between the Israel representative to the United Nations and the Secretary-General in discussions on 25 February. The gist of this agreement was that U.N.E.F.'s function would include the prevention of acts of belligerency; and that the procedure for [U.N.E.F.'s] withdrawal from Sharm es Sheikh would be for the Secretary-General to inform the Advisory Committee of the U.N.E.F., which would determine whether the matter should be brought to the attention of the Assembly.

(b) U.S. Memorandum of 11 February 1957

A United States memorandum of 11 February 1957 notes that Israel "will withdraw from Sharm es Sheikh if continued freedom of passage through the Straits is assured", and states that "the Gulf comprehends international waters and that no nation has the right to prevent free and innocent passage in the Gulf and through the Straits". It adds that "on behalf of vessels of United States registry, the United States is prepared to exercise the right of free and innocent passage and to join with others to secure general recognition of this right". It advocates that as a precautionary measure, the U.N.E.F. should move into the Straits area as the Israel forces are withdrawn.

(c) U.S. Statement of 28 January 1957

"It is essential that units of the United Nations Emergency Force be stationed at the Straits of Tiran in order to achieve there the separation of Egyptian and Israeli land and sea forces. This separation is essential until it is clear that the non-exercise of any claimed belligerent rights has established in practice the peaceful conditions which must govern navigation in waters having such an international interest."

/(d)

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(d) Israel's statement in the United Nations Assembly Debate of 1 March 1957

The Israel Minister of Foreign Affairs stated that her Government had "learned with gratification that other leading maritime powers were prepared to subscribe to the doctrine set out in the U.S. memorandum of 11 February and had a similar intention to exercise their rights".

She noted that her Government had received assurances of leading maritime powers that they foresaw a normal and regular flow of traffic of all cargoes in the Gulf of Aqaba.

She later stated: "Israel is resolved on behalf of vessels of Israel registry to exercise the right of free and innocent passage and is prepared to join with others to secure universal respect of this right. Israel will protect ships of its own flag exercising the right of free and innocent passage on the high seas and international waters. Interference, by armed force, with ships of Israel flag exercising free and innocent passage in the Gulf of Aqaba and through the Straits of Tiran, will be regarded by Israel as an attack entitling her to exercise her inherent right of self-defence under Article 51 of the Charter, and to take all such measures as are necessary to ensure the free and innocent passage of her ships in the Gulf and in the Straits."

She said that a declaration by President Eisenhower on 20 February 1957 that "we should not assume that if Israel withdraws, Egypt will prevent Israeli shipping from using the Suez Canal or the Gulf of Aqaba" had weighed heavily with her Government in determining its action. (It is very possible that the terms of this U.S. statement were agreed with the U.A.R. Government, or at least tacitly accepted by them. If this was so, the U.S. Government were unlikely to have informed us of it at the time, though they might be prepared to do so now.)

(e) U.S. Speech in the U.N. Assembly Debate of 2 March 1957

The U.S. Ambassador, in noting the statement of the representative of Israel said that the U.S. did not consider that these declarations made Israel's withdrawal "conditional". The U.S. understood these declarations to constitute "restatements of what has already been said by this Assembly or by the Secretary-General in his reports, or hopes and expectations which seem to us not unreasonable in the light of the prior actions of this Assembly".

/(f)

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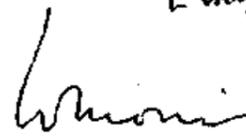
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(f) U.K. statement of 4 March 1957

Commander Noble, the Minister of State, noted the plans of the Israel Government "for full and prompt withdrawal not on the basis of any conditions but on the basis of certain facts, assumptions and expectations".

He noted that it was the view of H.M. Government "that the Straits of Tiran must be regarded as an international waterway through which the vessels of all nations have a right of passage. H.M. Government will assert this right on behalf of all British shipping, and they are prepared to join with others to secure a general recognition of this right." (A full text of this statement is attached.)

[brought over earlier]



W. Morris.
23 May, 1967.

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Statement by Mr Noble - the U.K. representative

14.3.57

He said.

" It is the view of H.M.G. in the United Kingdom that the Straits of Tiran must be regarded as an international waterway through which the vessels of all nations have a right of passage.

Her Majesty's Government will assert this right on behalf of all British shipping and is prepared to join with others to secure general recognition of this right

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NOTE OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER
AND THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
(MR. GEORGE THOMSON) AT NO. 10 DOWNING STREET
SHORTLY BEFORE MIDNIGHT ON TUESDAY, MAY 23

Sir Denis Allen and Mr. Palliser were also present

Mr. Thomson said that he wished to seek some final advice from the Prime Minister before leaving for Washington. This was particularly relevant to the speech the Prime Minister would be making on May 24 about the Middle East situation. He had just been meeting with representatives of the Ministry of Defence who had told him that, in the view of the Chiefs of Staff, no sensible naval operation could be conducted in the Gulf of Aqaba. It would be preferable to deploy naval forces in the Eastern Mediterranean and thereby to offer a generalised deterrent to Egyptian military action, with the threat of taking out Egyptian airforce bases. He had told Admiral Bartosik that this strategy would be in contradiction of the political purposes expressed in Cabinet that day; and under pressure the Admiral, who had adopted a consistently helpful and constructive line, admitted that he thought that some form of escort force might be able to conduct what would be no more than a probing operation in or near the Gulf. But clearly this might provoke an Egyptian reaction and thereby involve the need to deploy the deterrent forces from the Eastern Mediterranean into action against Egypt.

In discussion, the Prime Minister said that he thought

some form of probing operation of this kind would, nevertheless, be desirable. Otherwise, forces deployed in the Eastern Mediterranean would in effect represent only the ultimate deterrent and might therefore lose some degree of credibility. If, however, the Eastern Mediterranean deterrent were related (or thought by the Egyptians to be related) to some form of naval probe in the Gulf, it could well constitute a valuable strengthening for that probe. Mr. Thomson said that the Chiefs of Staff, as he understood it, remained opposed to any such operation. He was at this stage only retailing Admiral Bartosik's personal view.

There was some discussion of American intentions. The Prime Minister expressed concern at the implication in Washington Telegram No.1729 that the United States Government expected Britain to take the lead in the formation of the proposed maritime force. Mr. Thomson said that this Telegram had arrived after the Cabinet meeting; and it was fair to say that the Americans had taken the lead in seeking our support for a statement that Israel should not be allowed to be driven into the sea; and that they had not been so committed to the idea of the maritime force. But he and the Prime Minister agreed that, in his talks in Washington, he would need to probe further into the American intentions and make it clear that Britain could not be expected to be in too prominent a position in urging the formation of such a force.

There was some discussion of British and American naval dispositions. Mr. Thomson said that he understood that the

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United States Carrier "INTREPID" would shortly be sent through the Suez Canal on its way to Vietnam; and it would be interesting to see whether the Egyptians made any difficulty about allowing the transit of this Carrier and its Escorts. The British Carrier "VICTORIOUS" was in Malta and "HERMES" in Gan. The Prime Minister instructed that the Ministry of Defence should be asked the following morning what dispositions were being made for these ships in the light of what the Defence Secretary had said in Cabinet that afternoon.

Mr. Thomson said that the Israeli Foreign Minister might be passing through London the following day on his way to Washington. The Prime Minister agreed that if Mr. Eban came to London, he would see him.

JP

Distribution

Foreign Office
Private Secretary

✓ Sir Burke Trend

SW 24/5.

May 24, 1967

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Cypher/Cat A

IMMEDIATE DAMASCUS TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Telno 311 23 May, 1967

CONFIDENTIAL

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 311 of 23 May.
Repeated for information to:

- | | |
|------------|----------------|
| Moscow | Tel Aviv |
| Washington | UKMis New York |
| Amman | Beirut |
| Jerusalem | Baghdad |
| Jedda | JIG Cyprus |
| Cairo | MOD (DI4) |

My immediately preceding telegram: Syria/Israel.

The Syrian Minister of Foreign Affairs claimed that the Arabs have not chosen this moment to bring things to a head. This is not very convincing. Does it mean that they are counting on the Americans or the Russians to restrain Israel, who, they must know, regard the Straits of Trian as a matter of life and death? In other words, are they at this juncture prepared to be satisfied with a political victory?

2. At the same time the Syrians and the Egyptians cannot but know that there is a very real risk that the Israelis will not be restrained. If so, they may be gambling

- (1) on the belief that militarily the Arabs are now in a position to at least stalemate Israel.
- (2) On the United States being so preoccupied with Viet Nam that they will not intervene seriously.
- (3) That the support that they have from the USSR, if not absolute, is never likely to be better.
- (4) That Nasser who is now in his fifties, cannot wait much longer.

3. If this analysis is correct, all concerned, Americans, Russians and ourselves, must now make every effort to induce the Israelis to play it long and the Egyptians to be more realistic.

Foreign Office pass Immediate to Moscow, Routine to Tel Aviv, Washington, UKMis New York, Amman, Beirut, Jerusalem, Baghdad, Jedda, JIG Cyprus and Cairo as my telegrams Nos. 5, 51, 40, 39, 69, 116, 31, 83, 14, 39 and 15 respectively, and pass copy to MOD (DI4).

Mr. Evans

Sent 2030Z 23 May
Recd 2129Z 23 May

[Repetition to Tel Aviv, Amman, Beirut, Jerusalem, Baghdad and Cairo referred for Departmental decision, repeated as requested to other posts.

[Sent to D.C.C.]

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En Clair

IMMEDIATE TEL AVIV TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Tel. No. 344

23 May, 1967

UNCLASSIFIED

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 344 of 23 May. Repeated for information to UKMIS New York and Priority to Washington, Cairo, Damascus, Amman, Beirut, JIG Cyprus.

Middle East situation.

Following is text of Israel Prime Minister's statement to Knesset this evening.

At this grave hour, I have no intention of replying in detail to all the things that have been said in the debate.

From the speeches and the inter-Party consultations I have held today, I have gained the impression that the Knesset is united in its views and its will. The events of the past day make it necessary for me to be content with a brief statement on one single subject.

This morning a statement by the Egyptian President was published declaring his intention to block the international waterway which passes through the Straits of Tiran and joins the Gulf of Eilat with the Red Sea to the passage of Israel flag ships and ships of other flags whose cargoes are of a strategic character. Members of the Knesset, any interference with freedom of passage in the Gulf and the Strait constitutes a gross violation of international law, a blow at the sovereign rights of other nations and an act of aggression against Israel. As the Knesset is aware, a number of Governments, including the major maritime Powers, have publicly stated, since 1957, their intention of exercising their rights to free passage through the Straits of Tiran and the Gulf of Eilat.

During the past few days, the Government of Israel has been in close touch with the Governments that have proclaimed and exercised principle of free passage in these waters since 1957.

After these exchanges, I can say that international support for these rights is serious and widespread. And indeed, what is at stake is a clear and formal international undertaking, in compliance with which the maintenance of international law and order depends. Hence, we are confronted with a fateful hour not only for Israel, but for the whole world. In view of this situation I call upon the Powers once again to act without delay for the maintenance of the right to free passage to our southernmost port, a right which applies to every State without distinction. The Government of Israel will adhere to the policy /which

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Tel Aviv telegram No. 344 to Foreign Office

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which it announced in the United Nations Assembly on 1 March, 1957. Since this statement was made, free passage in the Straits and the Gulf has taken shape during the past ten years as a well-rooted international reality, expressed in the form of hundreds of sailings dozens of flags and the creation of a variegated and developing network of commerce and communications.

The illegal statement of the Egyptian President is another link in the violation of law that Egypt has been maintaining for many years by imposing a blockade in the Suez Canal, in violation of its undertakings to permit free passage through the Canal to all ships of all nations. Members of the Knesset, in my statement yesterday I called upon the nations of the Middle East for reciprocal respect of the territorial integrity, political sovereignty and rights of all States in the area. I announced Israel's readiness to participate in an effort for the relaxation of tension and the consolidation of peace in our area.

If a criminal attempt is made to impose a blockade on the shipping of a member State of the United Nations, that will be a dangerous precedent, with grave consequences for international relations and the freedom of these seas. The latest development clearly demonstrates the dangerous significance of Egypt's moves. I call upon international factors to demonstrate practical and effective responsibility for the preservation of peace. I shall give further details to the Foreign Affairs and Security Committee and we shall continue to consider them. The debate in the Knesset has demonstrated the unity of the nation in meeting the future. With unity and a spirit of alertness and confidence in our midst, we shall meet the days to come.

Foreign Office pass Immediate UKMIS New York, Washington and JIG Cyprus as my telegrams 53, 57 and 43 respectively.

Mr. Hadow

Sent 2020Z/23 May
Recd. 2158Z/23 May

[Repeated as requested]

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Cypher/Cat A

IMMEDIATE NEW DELHI TO COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

Telno 1052 23 May, 1967

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Addressed to C.O. telegram No. 1052 of 23 May.

Repeated for information to: UKMis New York Washington
Paris.

Arab/Israel.

I saw Foreign Minister at his house after dinner this evening and spoke as instructed.

2. As regards a meeting of the Security Council Chagla said that there should be no difficulty. His immediate thought was that it would be a good thing.
3. As regards warlike acts, he immediately harked back to 1965 when he said India, who was not the aggressor, was equated with Pakistan, who was. Egypt might be expected similarly to resent being equated with Israel, whose threats had led to the present situation. I stressed that in the present circumstances no act of aggression had been committed. We all surely wanted to prevent this. Chagla then admitted somewhat uncertainly that he expected a form of words could be found, though Nasser's position would have to be carefully considered and the drafting might present difficulties.
4. On free navigation Chagla was totally non-committal. Today had been a public holiday. His staff had not examined it. He would have a meeting early tomorrow to form a view.
5. In leaving I stressed the seriousness of my communication and emphasised the grave concern of the Maritime Powers and that freedom of navigation had been one of the major issues in 1956.
6. I am satisfied that Chagla, who is an experienced high court judge, fully grasped what I said to him, though no one else was present. He said that he would have a senior official telephone tomorrow to inform me of the Government's views.
7. I am sure that Chagla will have been impressed by the seriousness of my representations twice in one day. But I should warn you that in the eyes of the present Indian Government Egypt is rated just about the closest friend of all and that the best we can hope for is that Indian influence may discreetly be used behind

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New Delhi telegram No. 1052 to Commonwealth Office

- 2 -

the scenes to counsel moderation on Nasser. Once the matter comes before the Security Council, I believe that Patersarathy's advice is likely to weigh heaviest with Government of India.

8. I shall touch on this of course with Mrs. Gandhi tomorrow at 16.00 hours Indian standard time. You will no doubt let me know if there is any new point you would like me to make.

C.O. pass UKMis New York No. 13, Washington No. 67,
Paris No. 4.

Mr. Freeman

Sent 1805Z 23 May
Recd 1840Z 23 May

[Repeated as requested].

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FLASH: WASHINGTON TO FOREIGN OFFICE

TELNO. 1729 23 MAY 1967

SECRET

ADDRESSED TO FOREIGN OFFICE TELEGRAM NO. 1729 OF 23 MAY REPEATED FOR INFORMATION TO UKMIS NEW YORK CAIRO TEL AVIV DAMASCUS AMMAN BEIRUT JIG CYPRUS BAGHDAD MOSCOW.

YOUR TELEGRAM NO. 5167: MIDDLE EAST.

I SPOKE ACCORDINGLY TO ROSTOW EARLY TODAY. LATER THIS MORNING HE ASKED ME TO CALL AND SAID THAT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT WERE ENCOURAGED BY YOUR RESPONSE. THERE WAS NO DOUBT ABOUT THE FIRMNESS OF THE U.S. COMMITMENT AND THE U.S. INTENTION TO FULFIL THEIR OBLIGATIONS. THE ADMINISTRATION BELIEVED THAT THE U.K. AND FRANCE HAD THE SAME OBLIGATIONS.

2. ROSTOW SAID THAT THE U.S. STRONGLY WELCOMED THE BRITISH INITIATIVE WITH REGARD TO A DECLARATION BY MARITIME POWERS AND WOULD COOPERATE WITH IT. THE PRESIDENT DID NOT WISH THE UNITED STATES TO GET OUT IN FRONT BECAUSE OF VIET NAM ETC. HE WISHED TO BUILD FROM A STRONG BASE IN CONGRESS AND MIGHT WISH TO GET A JOINT CONGRESSIONAL RESOLUTION. BOTH THE PRESIDENT AND RUSK WERE AT WORK ON CONGRESS AND THE PROCESS WOULD TAKE AT LEAST 24 HOURS. THERE WOULD BE NO PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT U.S. INTENTIONS UNTIL THE CONGRESSIONAL PROCESS HAD BEEN COMPLETED AND POSSIBLY NOT BEFORE A SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING.

3. WITH REGARD TO THE MARITIME DECLARATION, ROSTOW HOPED THAT THE U.K. WOULD TAKE THE LEAD. HE SUGGESTED WE SHOULD APPROACH JAPAN, THE NETHERLANDS, BELGIUM AND ARGENTINE. IN DOING SO, WE COULD INDICATE THAT THE U.S. WAS IN GENERAL SUPPORT. ROSTOW SAID HE WAS

/SURE

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WASHINGTON TELEGRAM NO. 1729 TO FOREIGN OFFICE

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SURE THAT THE CANADIANS WOULD GO ALONG WITH THIS.

4. IN THE LIGHT OF PARA 3 OF YOUR TEL UNDER REFERENCE, I SAID THAT WHAT YOU WERE ENVISAGING WAS JOINT ACTION RATHER THAN A BRITISH INITIATIVE BUT I WOULD OF COURSE REFER HIS APPROACH TO YOU. ROSTOW MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE U.S. WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE TO SEE A BRITISH INITIATIVE BUT SOME OF HIS REMARKS INDICATED THAT THE U.S. MIGHT BE PREPARED TO PLAY A LARGER ROLE IF WE INSISTED.

5. ROSTOW SAID THAT FOLLOWING UP PARA 4 OF YOUR TEL. WE SHOULD ARRANGE NAVAL TALKS. I POINTED OUT THAT THIS WOULD HAVE TO WAIT THE DECISION OF THE CABINET.

6. WHILE WE WERE TALKING THE U.S. AMBASSADOR, TEL AVIV, MR BARBOUR, TELEPHONED TO SAY THAT THE ISRAELIS WERE IN A VERY JUMPY MOOD AND HE WOULD NEED ALL THE AMMUNITION HE COULD GET TO HOLD THEM BACK. I SUGGESTED THAT BARBOUR SHOULD CONSULT WITH H.M. AMBASSADOR, TEL AVIV, TO DISCUSS WHETHER ANYTHING COULD BE SAID TO THE ISRAELIS ABOUT THE SUGGESTIONS IN YOUR TELEGRAM UNDER REFERENCE.

7. AT THE END OF THE CONVERSATION ROSTOW SAID THAT WE WOULD HAVE TO BEGIN CONSIDERING WHEN INTERVENTION IN THE AREA IN THE INTERESTS OF PEACE SHOULD TAKE PLACE IF THE WORST OCCURRED AND HOSTILITIES BROKE OUT. I HAD OF COURSE EMPHASIZED TO HIM EARLIER THAT OUR COMMITMENT WAS LIMITED TO THE GULF OF AQABA AND WE HAVE ALSO MADE THIS CLEAR LOWER IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT.

8. I TOLD ROSTOW THAT I WOULD GET IN TOUCH WITH HIM AGAIN AS SOON AS I KNOW WHAT HAD BEEN DECIDED IN CABINET.

F.O. PASS IMMEDIATE TO TEL AVIV 18 AND ROUTINE TO CAIRO 42 DAMASCUS 34 AMMAN 25 BEIRUT 42 JIG CYPRUS U/N BAGHDAD 51 AND MOSCOW 96.
SIR P DEAN SENT 1616Z/23 MAY.

[SENT TO D.C.C.]
[REPETITION TO ALMAN, BEIRUT, CAIRO, DAMASCUS, BAGHDAD REFERRED FOR DEPARTMENTAL DECISION, REPEATED AS REQUESTED TO OTHER POSTS]

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G.O. M.E.W. & U.N.D.

D.I.S. M.O.D.

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IMMEDIATE AMMAN TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Telno 417 23 May, 1967

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Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 417 of 23 May
Repeated for information to:-MOD D14 and MO4 Washington,
U.K.Mis New York, Damascus, Cairo, Beirut, Jerusalem,
Tel Aviv and JIG Cyprus.

Middle East Situation.

My immediately preceding telegram (not to all)

When I saw King Hussein this morning he said he found Nasser's threat to close the Straits of Tiran incomprehensible and extremely dangerous. He had no appreciation of the military situation since that statement and would be grateful for any information we could give him.

2. King said Jordanian Chief of Staff had been sent to Cairo on 21 May with instructions to find out Egyptian military intentions and whether any co-ordination of military plans with other Arab States was possible. He had reported that at that time Egyptians seemed to have no overall military plan but dispositions being made seemed to be primarily defensive. King Hussein commented that it was difficult to believe this could still be the case.

3. As to co-ordination it was clear that the UAC machinery was not working at all. The Egyptians were consulting only the Syrians on a bilateral basis. Chief of Staff had been authorised to say that King Hussein was prepared to withdraw his earlier objection to stationing of other Arab troops (including, I think, Air Forces) on Jordanian soil if co-ordinated plans could be worked out. This point had been referred to Nasser (whom Chief of Staff did not meet personally) and reply had been that it would be inappropriate in the present circumstances and that the most important thing for Jordan was to put her own defences into best possible state of readiness and at all costs to avoid provocative acts.

4. King Hussein commented that this advice conflicted sadly with what Nasser had himself now done. Nevertheless, Jordan was determined to keep calm and to avoid incidents. He was sorry that the Americans had found it necessary to advise their citizens to leave and hoped that we should not take similar action precipitately. I said that we had this /question

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Amman telegram No. 417 to Foreign Office

-2-

question under review and might soon think it wise at least to deter further tourists from coming here for the time being.

5. King Hussein is inclined to see Soviet influence behind the deterioration in the Middle East situation. He is not hopeful that U Thant will be able to make any useful impression on Nasser, whom he considers to be behaving like a madman. His Majesty is looking closely for indications of Egyptian military intentions and I undertook to pass on to him anything I could.

Foreign Office please pass Washington 49, U.K. Mis New York 14, Damascus 51, Jerusalem 25, Tel Aviv 41, JIG Cyprus 31 and MOD (MOD pass MOD D14 and MO4.)

Mr. Adams	Sent 1300Z	23 May, 1967
	Recd 1508Z	23 May, 1967

[Sent to D.C.C.]

[Repetition to Damascus, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem referred for departmental decision, repeated as requested to other posts]

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NOTE OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER, THE FOREIGN SECRETARY AND THE DEFENCE SECRETARY AT NO. 10 DOWNING STREET AT 10 A.M. ON TUESDAY, MAY 23, 1967

Also
~~Those~~ present:-

- Sir Burke Trend
- Sir ~~Douglas~~ *Denis* Allen
- Mr. Halls
- Mr. Palliser

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*Passage deleted and
retained under
Section 3(4) J.R. Green
3.4.97*

THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS

The Foreign Secretary briefly described the latest situation, in the light of President Nasser's announcement that the U.A.R. intended to blockade the entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba; and of information [redacted] that the Egyptians intended to deny entry both to Israel's ships and to ships of other nationalities taking "strategic supplies" to Israel (i.e. oil tankers). The U.S. Government had been pressing the previous day for tripartite action and were contemplating a public declaration to the effect that Israel should be preserved from destruction as a State. His position had been to insist that any action taken must be within the U.N. framework. But there was a real danger of early military counter-action by Israel: and the U.S. Government were determined not to be left to deal with the situation single-handed. U Thant was now in Cairo, but was only likely to stay there 24 hours and would then probably return to New York at once. The Foreign Secretary said that he thought the following

action was required. The Security Council should be convened immediately. Meanwhile he should inform Mr. Rusk that H.M.G. would be prepared to join with the U.S. and any other maritime powers in organising an international naval force, the purpose of which would not be described as to help Israel (Jordan too was involved here), but as to keep open and permit freedom of international passage through the Straits into the Gulf of Aqaba. Ideally this should be a U.N. Force: but if no agreement could be reached at the U.N. to set it up, it should be established independently. We must of course recognise and take account of the likelihood of Egyptian retaliation against shipping in the Suez Canal if such a force were set up. But its establishment might help to restrain Nasser from excesses.

In discussion the following points were made. Clearly the Security Council should be immediately seized of the situation. But in reaching decisions on the lines suggested by the Foreign Secretary, we had to take account of the implications for our Arab policy as a whole and for the possible effect on our position in Southern Arabia; especially on the likely attitude of FLOSY if we took really drastic action against Nasser. A full assessment of likely Soviet aims and tactics was also required.

The U.S. Secretary of State had indicated that he would be content with essentially a token British contribution to the suggested international naval force. It was very important for Anglo-American relations that we should not fail to support the U.S. in their efforts

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or leave them on their own. Equally we should not wish this to be a solely Anglo-American enterprise.

We should not formally revive the Tripartite Declaration or act too evidently as if we were seeking to perpetuate the tripartite machinery. But we should try to involve at least the French and the Canadians in any force that might be set up.

The U.S. claimed to have powerful naval forces within one day's sailing of the Gulf of Aqaba. It was not clear whether these were exclusively in the Mediterranean or were near the Red Sea. British ships were dispersed as follows. The carrier "Victorious" was at Malta (and had been told to stay there) with a submarine, two frigates and six minesweepers. The carrier "Hermes" was at ~~Gulf~~ (4-5 days' sailing from the Gulf of Aqaba). The frigate "Ashanti" was at Bahrein and could be at the spot by June 3. The ships on the Beira patrol were even further away. The Navy would be reluctant openly to challenge Nasser by sailing the ships from Malta through the Suez Canal; but if this were done in company with U.S. warships the risk of Egyptian action might be less. It was not known whether any French warships were in the area, e.g. at Djibouti, but enquiries would be made.

The Israeli Government have summoned the former H.M.S. Leviathan, which had been transferred recently to the Israeli Navy, to join the Israeli Navy in the Mediterranean. They also wished to have despatched urgently to Israel three further plane loads of tank ammunition, which they have purchased in Britain.

- 4 -

It would be desirable to discuss the situation that morning with King Feisal; and to seek private assurances of his support for the proposed naval force. Private support for Jordan would also be desirable. Neither Government could be expected to give public support.

Summing up the discussion, the Prime Minister said that the Cabinet should be called that afternoon. A decision to support the convening of the Security Council did not require Cabinet authority, but the Foreign Secretary would wish to seek his colleagues' support for the proposed naval force; this should if possible be a U.N. force: but if this could not be achieved we should certainly seek to make it as widely based as possible, including in particular Canada and France.

The Prime Minister said that the despatch of the tank ammunition to Israel could be authorised. He also approved a statement of advice to British subjects in or travelling to the Middle East which the Foreign Secretary had drafted.

The meeting ended at 10.30 a.m. *DP*

Distribution The Foreign Secretary
 The Defence Secretary
 Sir Burke Trend.

May 23, 1967

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Meeting between the Foreign Secretary and
Sir Alec Douglas-Home at the Foreign Office,
1 P.M. on 22 May, 1967

Sir Alec Douglas-Home called on Mr. Brown to enquire about the situation in the Middle East. The Secretary of State summarised the military moves made in the area and expressed the view that the two danger spots were the Gaza Strip and Sharm el Shaikh. He regretted the steps that U Thant had taken to disband the UNEF and explained the message that Lord Caradon was now passing to the Secretary-General.

2. Sir Alec Douglas-Home wondered whether President Nasser was not counting on the preoccupation of the United States in Vietnam in order to make a move against Israel. Mr. Brown said that the current American attitude was belligerent and that the Americans were suggesting that action should be taken under the Tripartite Declaration and were very anxious to get support from us. Sir Alec Douglas-Home asked what was the status of the Tripartite Declaration. Mr. Brown referred to Mr. Macmillan's statement of 1963 and the confirmation of the position that Mr. Wilson and he himself had made of it. He said he considered that the Declaration was now "unbuttoned". Sir Alec Douglas-Home did not dissent but suggested that it would be impossible to say so in public. Mr. Brown went

/on

Advance
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Mr. A.E. Palliser,
 CRO,
No. 10
P.U.S.
Sir D. Allen
Mr. de la Mare

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on to say that he considered the previous Government and the present Government considered the Declaration to be superseded. He was working to get the problem into the U.K. context. He hoped there would be no move in the Middle East whilst U Thant was there. Sir Alec Douglas-Home enquired about Russian motives. Mr. Brown said that the Russians seemed to be prepared to give the Arabs all aid short of war but at the same time we had had indications that they were trying to keep the situation under control. Debrynin had spoken to the American Ambassador in Moscow and there were other signs that they were working to prevent an outbreak of hostilities. In answer to Sir Alec Douglas-Home's question, Mr. Brown said he thought that Parliament would not be recalled early but that he would make a statement on the situation on the day that Parliament reassembled. The Aden debate might be the following week.

3. After some discussion about the situation in the Yemen and Jordan, Mr. Brown asked Sir Alec Douglas-Home whether in the circumstances he thought he should go to Moscow. Sir Alec Douglas-Home said that he agreed that Mr. Brown should go but should not go outside the city. Sir Alec Douglas-Home said that he was most grateful for the information he had received which had confirmed his instinct that the situation was nasty.

4. The conversation then turned to Hong Kong. Mr. Brown explained the situation in

/Hong

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Hong Kong where he thought the Governor had had matters under control. The Chinese were, however, asking us to quit Shanghai within 48 hours. His instinct was to react against this but the Department was now considering the matter. Sir Alec Douglas-Home asked whether Mr. Brown thought that the Communists in Hong Kong should be threatened with deportation to the mainland. There was some discussion on this point and it was generally agreed that this presented grave difficulties.

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En Clair

IMMEDIATE TEL AVIV TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Telno. 334 22 May, 1967

UNCLASSIFIED

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 334 of 22 May
Repeated for information to:

Priority to MOD DIV Washington, U.K. Mission
New York,
Damascus, Cairo, Amman, Beirut,
JIG Cyprus.

Middle East Situation.

Following is official Israel Government summary of statement
made by Prime Minister to Knesset this evening:

The Prime Minister expressed the hope that Secretary General U Thant's visit to the Middle East would have constructive results. In outlining the developments which had led to the tension of the past week, Mr. Eshkol declared that the primary cause lay in a long series of over a hundred Syrian-inspired infiltrating into, and assaults on, Israel. He said that Israel had shown great restraint in the face of Syrian aggression, and only after all political means had been exhausted had she been compelled, in self defence, to resort to more forceful action.

During the past six weeks, there had been an unbroken succession of the Syrian-inspired assaults. On this point, the Prime Minister said "on the heightening and growing effectiveness of these sabotage activities, I found it necessary to address clear and explicit warning to Syria that we were not prepared to put up with their continuation."

Mr. Eshkol quoted from Secretary-General U Thant's report on 19 May, which said "El-Fatah activities, consisting of terrorism and sabotage, are a major factor in that they provoke strong reaction in Israel by Government and people alike". The Secretary General added, that these activities "serve to aggravate the situation to an unusual degree of tension and danger". In continuing his description of events along the Syrian frontier, Mr. Eshkol noted United Nations requests, which Israel had accepted and Syria had rejected, for the inspection of troops' disposition in the defensive zone on both sides of the frontier.

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Tel Aviv telegram No. 334 to Foreign Office

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The last of these requests had been answered affirmatively by Israel on 4 May, while Syria had not responded to this request. Concerning the United Nations Emergency Force and its withdrawal from Egypt, the Prime Minister said that these developments were undoubtedly a serious setback to the security functions of the United Nations. Many a Statesman throughout the world had expressed serious concern at the implications of this act on the prestige and efficacy of the United Nations as an instrument for reinforcing world peace.

Mr. Eshkol drew attention to the fact that, as far back as the beginning of 1957, the late United Nations Secretary General, Mr. Dag Hammarskjold, had informed the Government of Israel of the understanding that any withdrawal of the United Nations Emergency Force would be carried out in consultation with the Advisory Committee of UNEF, which would decide whether to bring such a request to the attention of the General Assembly.

According to the best of his knowledge, Secretary General U Thant said to followed [sic] this procedure, various countries represented on the Advisory Committee had voiced misgivings as to the procedures followed by the Secretary General.

Israel had had every reason to believe that any demand for the withdrawal of UNEF would be discussed at length, so as to clarify all the consequences that such a step would entail. The Prime Minister divulged that, long before the Egyptian troop movements began, the United Nations had informed Egypt that the reports of Israeli forces poised for an attack were unfounded. The fact that Egypt had, nevertheless, increased her troop strength in Sinai from 35,000 to 80,000 men in a few days had compelled Israel to take precautionary measures. "If Egypt recalls her reinforcements from the frontier, Israel will do likewise", Mr. Eshkol said.

Summing up, the Prime Minister said that it could only be hoped that, in face of the latest developments, the big powers would exercise their influence to avert the danger of a conflagration in the Middle East. The urgent tasks facing the United Nations and its principal members, the Prime Minister stressed, were:

1. To bring about the dispersal of Egyptian troops concentrated on Israel's borders and a return to the previous situation.

/Israel

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Israel, on her part, would, of course, reciprocate such a step.

2. In response to the Secretary General's statements, it was incumbent on the big powers and the United Nations to declare in unmistakable terms their strongest opposition to the acts of sabotage carried out against a member-State of the United Nations and to demand the complete cessation of such acts, which are contrary to International Law and the principles of the United Nations Charter.

3. International influence should be exerted to ensure a continuation of the quest which had prevailed on the Egyptian-Israel border since 1957 by respecting the vital national and international rights of all States, including Israel. The Prime Minister affirmed: "I would like to say to the Arab countries, from this rostrum, particularly to Egypt and Syria, that we harbour no aggressive designs, we have no possible interest in violating either their security, their territory or their legitimate rights. We, on our part, expect the same principles to be applied towards us. In conclusion, the Prime Minister said "I call upon all peoples of the Middle East for reciprocal respect for the sovereignty, integrity and international rights of each of our countries. Israel, with complete confidence in her defensive capacity and her steadfastness of strength and spirit, expresses at this hour her readiness to participate in an effort to reinforce stability and advance peace in our region."

Foreign Office pass Washington 51, U.K. Mission New York 48,
MOD pass JIG Cyprus 38.

Mr. Hadow Sent 1730Z 22 May
Recd 2000Z 22 May

[Repeated as requested] [Sent to MOD]

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38.033009 Gp. 263

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RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE FOREIGN SECRETARY AND THE ISRAEL AMBASSADOR HELD AT THE FOREIGN OFFICE ON SUNDAY, 21 MAY, 1967 AT 6 p.m.

Present:

- The Rt. Hon. George Brown, M.P.
- Mr. A. Remez.
- Mr. T.R. Branchley, C.M.G.
- Mr. W. Morris, C.M.G.

Mr. Remez opened by saying that President Nasser was beginning to take himself too seriously. Reports during the past twenty-four or thirty-six hours were distinctly worrying. The Israel assessment was that President Nasser had not expected such a quick response from U Thant when they demanded the withdrawal of the United Nations Emergency Force, and the Israel Government believed that it had not in fact been necessary. President Nasser had not mentioned in the first instance withdrawal from Sharm esh Sheikh or the Gaza Strip. He had been taken by surprise at the magnitude of his success; Cairo was re-established as the centre of international tension and his leadership in the Arab world reasserted. It seemed that what had begun as a mere show of strength was now developing into something more threatening. Egyptian naval units had been moved through the Suez Canal to the Red Sea with the apparent intention of putting the Egyptians in a position to blockade the Straits of Tiran. All their reserves were mobilised. Armour and nearly 1,000 tanks, artillery and a

/mobile

mobile unit were being positioned in Sinai at Jebel Libney just south of Abu Agheila with the appearance of getting into a position for a strike deep into Israel - perhaps against Dimona, Beersheba or Ashkelon. There was also information not about a reduction of forces in Yemen, but a rationalisation. More paratroops and commandos were being sent there; armour and artillery were being brought away. There had been a large scale movement by air on the night 20/21 May. All this must have been set in motion 4 or 5 days ago. Meanwhile, the Syrian Prime Minister and Chief of Staff had been making speeches calling for a show-down with Israel, and it seemed that they were now anxious to get the Egyptians involved in something.

2. Israel, Mr. Remez went on, had three main worries in the present situation:

- (a) The Syrian border, or Syrian infiltration through Jordan. There has been little activity on the Syrian border in the last few days, but there have been two cases on the morning of 21 May of attempted sabotage in the Beersheba/Hebron area, though they had been discovered in time to prevent damage.
- (b) The Gaza Strip. This was no problem militarily to Israel; it could easily be cut off. The danger was of fedayeen (guerilla) activity mounted from there. It was not at all sure whether the Egyptians were now going to constrain Shuqatri and his Palestine

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Liberation Army operating from this area.

(c) The Straits of Tiran. There had been no interference with two ships which had passed through the Straits on 21 May. But the Egyptians had moved some torpedo boats through the Canal, and announced this on their radio. Within an hour of UNEF troops evacuating the post at Sharm esh Sheikh, the Egyptians dropped paratroops there. They had in any case previously established artillery 15 kilometres away. They now seem to be physically in a safe position from which to interfere with the passage of shipping.

3. The Israel Government were taking precautions, but following a policy of extreme restraint. They were saying firmly that they would not accept interference with shipping in the Straits, but they were avoiding anything provocative. There was no concentration of forces in the North and they had avoided a general call-up of reserves.

4. In reply to a question by Mr. Brown, Mr. Rogers said he thought that U Thant's visit to the Middle East would tend to make an explosion in the next few days less likely. His Government preferred this move to the calling of a meeting of the Security Council, since the outcome of the Security Council ~~was~~ discussion was unpredictable. Nevertheless, ~~he~~ he thought something

/should

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should be done to forestall a deterioration in the next few days.

5. Mr. Brown thanked the Ambassador for his exposition of the situation. It confirmed our own information, except on two new points: we had not heard of the passage of United Arab Republic war vessels through the Canal, or that the UNEF force had actually left Sharm esh Sheikh area: this obviously affected the possibility of getting it back there.

6. Mr. Brown said he was telling U Thant frankly that he did not like the haste with which the request for the withdrawal of UNEF had been handled, that he regretted that there had not been a Security Council meeting to discuss the situation, that there should be a meeting after U Thant's return; and that U Thant should, on his visit to the Middle East, try to re-establish a U.N. presence on the border and at Sharm esh Sheikh. Meanwhile he thought that the Israel Government should consider seriously whether they could not accept a United Nations presence in Israel.

7. Mr. Remez said that he had put this question to Jerusalem. The reply was that a UNEF in Israel could do very little about the two main problems, viz., Sharm esh Sheikh and the Gaza Strip. The only way to control infiltration from the Gaza Strip was for somebody to be actually engaged in the Gaza Strip itself; and Sharm esh Sheikh was of course remote from the Israel border. A force in Israel would thus be ineffective; it would also be politically dangerous since it would

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enable the Egyptians to say that the Israelis were hiding behind the skirts of the United Nations. Mr. Brown disagreed; a UNEF in Israel might not be able to do anything about infiltration, but it would be political advantageous. The position would be much better if Israel could let it be known that this idea was not ruled out as part of a package.

8. As regards the Straits of Tiran, Mr. Brown said this was regarded by Britain as an international waterway. The maritime powers could not accept or permit interference with the freedom of passage through it. It was most important that this matter should be kept outside and above the Arab/Israel context. The Ambassador could assure his Foreign Minister that we would take this most seriously; we had in any case our own interests to protect. But it was important that whatever was done should be on an international basis. Mr. Brown had asked U Thant to do something about the Sharm esh Sheikh. He had asked him not to take the UNEF force away, but this was not necessarily the only possibility: there were various alternatives, such as U.N.T.S.O. or some other kind of United Nations presence.

9. Mr. Remez suggested that it might be possible to establish an international maritime force to patrol the Straits. Mr. Brown said he did not rule this out in principle, but did not see how it could be achieved. Mr. Remez suggested that previous United Nations decisions gave U Thant power to do this /without

without seeking further authority; he could perhaps argue that, although the Egyptians had made it impossible to have a force on Egyptian soil, he still had continuing authority to have a UNEF, and could therefore supply an alternative. - If he should authority from the Security Council there would be a veto. Mr. Brown commented that it would not be in character for U Thant to interpret his authority so widely. It was clear that there must be some international action, preferably through the United Nations; but he could not at this point see how it could be organised.

10. Mr. Remez said that the Jordan Government had contributed to the present situation by needling the Egyptians about UNEF. He hoped they would not now do the same about Sharm esh Sheikh. They were in any case threatened by the present situation; Shuqairi was calling for the overthrow of King Hussein as a first step towards the liberation of Palestine.

11. Mr. Brown asked Mr. Remez to inform his Foreign Minister that he would be going to Moscow, after U Thant had left for the Middle East. He would naturally be discussing the Middle East, but did not want it to appear that he was going to put the Israel case there. Mr. Remez would have heard that Dobrynin had told the American Ambassador that the Russians were restraining the Arabs. Mr. Brown thought that the Russians were taking risks but did not wish to go over the brink.

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12. Mr. Remez said the Israelis were revising their assessment of the Russian attitude. They thought there had been a hardening of the Russian position world-wide - perhaps a reflection of the struggle for leadership of the world communist movement. They were more and more inclined to think that Gromyko on his mysterious visit to Cairo had enlarged the permitted limits of risk for the Egyptians - both in South Arabia and in the Arab/Israel situation. In any case, the Israelis had hoped that Mr. Brown would go through with his Moscow visit because it might throw some light on the Russian attitude.

13. Returning to the situation in Sinai, Mr. Brown expressed the hope that the Israel Government would continue to avoid provocation, would avoid getting embroiled in the Gaza Strip, and would see the need for the problem of the Straits of Tiran to be covered by international action. Mr. Remez said the Israel Government were anxious not to get embroiled with the United Arab Republic. They were not worried that they could not cope with the Egyptians, but they were very keen not to have to. They were much more worried about the Sinai force being poised to cover a move in the Straits. If there were interference with an Israel ship, it would be impossible for the Israel Government to do nothing. But of course they would welcome international action. Perhaps a reaffirmation by the maritime

/powers

Powers of their views on the established position on the Gulf of Aqaba would help.

14. Mr. Brenchley enquired what would be the position of the Israel Government if President Nasser acted as he did after the seizure of the Suez Canal in 1956; that is, if he sat tight and did nothing. How difficult would this be for Israel? Would it be possible for Israel, without unacceptable damage to her economy, to keep forces in being to defend Israel against the threat for as long as the Egyptian force was poised in Sinai? It seemed to be less of a problem for the U.A.R. with her greater population to keep a force there. Mr. Remez said it would indeed be an extremely difficult and dangerous situation. Something must be done to bring about a de-escalation. Nevertheless, he was confident that Israel could live with this situation for as long as the Egyptians. If a solution could be found in a force for Sharm esh Sheikh and the Gaza Strip, that would take a lot of the danger out of the situation. Mr. Brown suggested that there might be a way out here.

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27

Garnel

NOTE OF A DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE FOREIGN SECRETARY ON THE TELEPHONE AT 1.00 P.M. ON SUNDAY, MAY 21, 1967

The Foreign Secretary said ^{he} had just finished a series of meetings at the Foreign Office. Nothing dramatic had happened to alter the situation. He wondered if the Prime Minister would like him to go out ~~to discuss the situation~~ ^{to discuss} and take stock of the situation. The advice from his officials was that, once U Thant had left for the Middle East, then it would seem sensible for him to go to Moscow. He would arrive on Tuesday in time for the programme of talks which had been arranged. The part of his programme that he would have missed was not of any importance.

The Prime Minister said that he had an engagement later today which made it impossible for him to see the Foreign Secretary. He thought the line that was being taken, however, was the right one in the circumstances and he was content to leave it to the Foreign Secretary to handle the situation. He agreed that it was right for the Foreign Secretary to go ahead with his visit to Moscow. It was important to get an up to date picture of Russian thinking before his discussions in the United States in a fortnight's time.

The Foreign Secretary said that he understood that the American President was sending messages to the Russians about both the Middle East situation and Vietnam. He had made it clear to the Secretary of State that it was essential that he should know what was in

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those communications before he went into his own discussions with the Russians.

The Foreign Secretary said that officials were in the process of considering, in the light of the latest developments in Vietnam, what our position should be.

It was agreed that the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary would have a discussion together on the latest position sometime on Monday.

DHA

May 21, 1967

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SUBJECT

PRIME MINISTER:
PERSONAL TELEGRAM
SERIAL No 7128/67

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CYPHER/CAT A
IMMEDIATE FOREIGN OFFICE TO TEL AVIV
TELNO 469 21 MAY, 1967 (E)

SECRET
ADDRESSED TO TEL AVIV TELEGRAM NO 469 OF 21 MAY REPEATED FOR INFORMATION TO WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK AND SAVING TO DAMASCUS AMMAN, BEIRUT, CAIRO, BAGHDAD, JERUSALEM, PARIS, J.I.G. CYPRUS. MY TELEGRAM NO 456: ESHKOL'S LETTER.
AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY PLEASE DELIVER TO MR ESHKOL THE FOLLOWING REPLY FROM THE PRIME MINISTER: BEGINS. THANK YOU FOR YOUR LETTER OF MAY 18TH. THE SITUATION IN YOUR AREA IS ALSO CAUSING US GREAT CONCERN, AND I CAN WELL UNDERSTAND AND SYMPATHISE WITH YOUR ANXIETIES ABOUT THE OUTCOME. I AM PLEASED THAT OUR AMBASSADOR IN ISRAEL AND YOUR FOREIGN MINISTER, AND YOUR AMBASSADOR HERE AND THE FOREIGN SECRETARY, ARE IN CLOSE TOUCH: THIS IS ESSENTIAL. I AM ALSO GLAD THAT WE WERE ABLE TO HELP YOU OVER THE TANK AMMUNITION: THOUGH I AM SURE YOU WILL UNDERSTAND OUR CONCERN THAT THE UTMOST SECRECY SHOULD BE MAINTAINED.
AS REGARDS THE CONCLUSIONS SET OUT IN YOUR LETTER, YOU WILL KNOW THAT WE HAVE MADE STRONG REPRESENTATIONS TO THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT ABOUT THE NEED TO STOP THE INFILTRATION OF TERRORISTS FROM SYRIA INTO ISRAEL. WE MADE CLEAR OUR CONDEMNATION OF THESE ACTS IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL LAST AUTUMN AND WILL CERTAINLY REPEAT IT AT ALL APPROPRIATE TIMES IN THAT AND ANY OTHER FORUM. AT THE SAME TIME I HOPE YOU WILL FORGIVE MY RECALLING THAT WE HAVE ALWAYS HAD SERIOUS MISGIVINGS ABOUT THE DANGERS INVOLVED IN FORCEFUL REPRISALS, NOT BECAUSE WE HAVE LACKED SYMPATHY, FOR YOUR SITUATION, BUT BECAUSE WE BELIEVE IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO PREDICT OR CONTROL THE CONSEQUENCES. THE PRESENT BUILD UP OF TENSION IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE APPARENTLY /IRRATIONAL

SECRET

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FOREIGN OFFICE TELEGRAM NO. 469 TO TEL AVIV

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IRRATIONAL AND UNPREDICTABLE WAY IN WHICH THE SITUATION CAN ESCALATE. WE CERTAINLY UNDERSTAND THAT THE BUILD UP OF EGYPTIAN FORCES IN SINAI MAKES IT NECESSARY FOR YOU TO TAKE YOUR PRECAUTIONS. I AM CONFIDENT THAT YOU WILL DO NOTHING OF THIS KIND BEYOND WHAT IS NECESSARY. AND WE SHALL CERTAINLY SUPPORT EFFORTS TO SECURE THE END OF ABNORMAL TROOP CONCENTRATIONS.

AS REGARDS UNEF, YOU WILL HAVE SEEN THE FOREIGN SECRETARY'S PUBLIC COMMENT, MADE ON 18 MAY, ON THE SUBSTANCE AS WELL AS THE MANNER OF THE U.A.R. GOVERNMENT'S ACTIONS. WE STILL HOPE THAT THE SITUATION IS NOT TOTALLY IRREVOCABLE. MAY I EARNESTLY ASK YOU TO RECONSIDER THE ISRAEL GOVERNMENT'S OWN POLICY OF NOT PERMITTING THE U.N.E.F. TO OPERATE ON ISRAEL TERRITORY? THIS POLICY HAS AFTER ALL PUT THE U.A.R. GOVERNMENT IN A POSITION TO DICTATE THE FATE OF U.N.E.F.: ITS REVERSAL COULD QUITE DRAMATICALLY ALTER THE SITUATION, EVEN IF IT DID NOT PERMIT THE REACTIVATION OF THE U.N.E.F. POST (IF INDEED IT HAS BEEN EVACUATED) AT SHARM ESH SHEIKH.

ON THE LATTER POINT, WE SHARE YOUR ANXIETY ABOUT THE MAINTENANCE OF FREE PASSAGE THROUGH THE STRAITS OF TIRAN. I AM ON PUBLIC RECORD AS SAYING THAT THE STRAITS QUOTE CONSTITUTE AN INTERNATIONAL WATERWAY WHICH SHOULD REMAIN OPEN TO THE SHIPS OF ALL NATIONS. IF IT APPEARED THAT ANY ATTEMPT TO INTERFERE WITH THE PASSAGE OF SHIPS THROUGH THE WATERWAY WAS LIKELY TO BE MADE WE SHOULD PROMOTE AND SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL ACTION THROUGH THE UNITED NATIONS TO SECURE FREE PASSAGE UNQUOTE.

WE STAND BY THIS STATEMENT. WE THINK IT IMPORTANT, HOWEVER, THAT ATTENTION SHOULD BE CONCENTRATED ON FREE PASSAGE, AND NOT ON THE /SHORE

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S E C R E T

FOREIGN OFFICE TELEGRAM NO. 469 TO TEL AVIV

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SHORE POST: IF WE ARE TO GIVE YOU THE INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT WE WISH, IT MUST BE BASED ON YOUR UNDOUBTED RIGHTS.

AS REGARDS THE RUSSIANS, THE FOREIGN SECRETARY WILL SOON BE LEAVING ON HIS POSTPONED JOURNEY TO MOSCOW. WE AGREE WITH YOU THAT THE RUSSIAN ATTITUDE IS IMPORTANT, AND MR. BROWN WILL BE CONCERNED TO EXPLORE IT AND URGE THE USE OF RUSSIAN INFLUENCE IN FAVOUR OF RESTRAINT.

FINALLY, WE WILL LOOK INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF REITERATING AT A SUITABLE OPPORTUNITY HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT'S INTEREST IN PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND OPPOSITION TO THE USE OF FORCE IN THE SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES IN THE AREA. ENDS.

2. THE LETTER TO MR ESHKOL IS GRADED SECRET OWING TO THE REFERENCE IN PARAGRAPH 1 TO TANK AMMUNITION (MY TELEGRAM NO 460 REFERS).

SOSFA SENT 1250Z 21 MAY, 1967

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CYPHER/CAT A
IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON
TELEGRAM NUMBER 1710

TO FOREIGN OFFICE
21 MAY 1967

SECRET.
ADDRESSED TO FOREIGN OFFICE TELEGRAM NUMBER 1710 OF 21 MAY
REPEATED FOR INFORMATION TO UK MISSION NEW YORK.

YOUR TELEGRAM NUMBER 5093: ARAB - ISRAEL.

1 SPOKE TO ROSTOW ACCORDINGLY AND STRESSED IN PARTICULAR
YOUR WISH TO KEEP IN CONSTANT TOUCH.
2. ROSTOW APPEARED TO ACCEPT THAT IT WOULD BE UNWISE TO HAVE
FORMAL FRENCH/BRITISH/U.S. MEETINGS BUT HE EMPHASISED THAT
THE UNITED STATES REGARDED THE TRIPARTITE DECLARATION AS
STILL BEING VALID. HE SAID THAT HIS IMPRESSION (FROM A RECENT
CONVERSATION WITH COUVE DE MURVILLE) WAS THAT THE FRENCH DID
TOO. IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION FROM ROSTOW, WE SAID THAT IN
OUR VIEW THE TRIPARTITE DECLARATION HAD BEEN OUT-DATED BY
THE KENNEDY - MACMILLAN STATEMENTS OF MAY 1963. ROSTOW SAID
THAT HE AGREED THAT EVERY POSSIBLE EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE THROUGH
THE UNITED NATIONS, AND THAT AS PART OF THE WIDER ANGLO-U.S.
RELATIONSHIP THE TWO OF US SHOULD KEEP IN CLOSE TOUCH BUT ADDED
THAT, WHATEVER THE BACKGROUND OF THE KENNEDY - MACMILLAN
STATEMENT, THE U.S. SAW ADVANTAGE (NOT LEAST FROM THE POINT
OF VIEW OF THE U.K.'S APPLICATION TO JOIN THE COMMON MARKET)
IN BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO THE TRIPARTITE DECLARATION. ROSTOW
SAID THAT THE U.S. WANTED TO AVOID UNNECESSARY PUBLIC PROVOCATION
TO THE ARABS IN THEIR PUBLIC STATEMENTS, AND THEY WERE THEREFORE
HARKING BACK TO EARLIER DECLARATIONS AND STATEMENTS. HE SHOWED
ME A PAPER OF EXCERPTS FROM AMERICAN STATEMENTS INCLUDING THE
TRIPARTITE DECLARATION WHICH IS BEING GIVEN TO THE PRESS. HE
SAID THAT PRESIDENT JOHNSON WOULD BE MAKING A STATEMENT IN THE
NEXT FEW DAYS, WHICH WAS VERY LIKELY TO SAY THAT THE U.S.
REGARDED ALL PREVIOUS STATEMENTS AS BINDING AND VALID. ROSTOW
AGREED WITH ME THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO UNDERLINE FOLLOWING
WORD PUBLIC DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN THE U.S. AND U.K. ON THIS
/POINT

S E C R E T

S E C R E T

WASHINGTON TELEGRAM NO. 1710 TO FOREIGN OFFICE

2.

POINT (PLEASE ALSO SEE MY TELEGRAM 1713).

3. ROSTOW SAID THAT CONTINGENCY PLANNING WAS EQUALLY IMPORTANT. HE WAS CLEARLY SOMEWHAT TAKEN ABACK WHEN I SAID THAT WE DID NOT WISH TO BECOME INVOLVED IN PLANNING MILITARY ACTION. AFTER SOME REFLECTION HE SAID THAT

- (i) THE U.S. WOULD TRY EVERY CONCEIVABLE POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC COURSE TO PREVENT AN OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES;
- (ii) A FLARE-UP COULD NOT BE EXCLUDED AND EFFECTIVE U.N. ACTION TO SUPPRESS IT WAS UNLIKELY;
- (iii) THE U.S. MUST FACE THIS CONTINGENCY;
- (iv) IF THE WORST CAME TO THE WORST, THE U.S. HOPED THE U.K. WOULD STAND WITH THEM.

4. I UNDERTOOK TO REPORT ROSTOW'S VIEWS TO YOU. AS I WAS LEAVING ROSTOW ADMITTED WRYLY THAT THE U.S. WANTED QUOTE AS MUCH COMPANY AS POSSIBLE UNQUOTE. HE ALSO INDICATED THAT HE WAS NOT REALLY AS CONFIDENT AS HE HAD FIRST APPEARED THAT THE FRENCH WOULD ACCEPT THE CONTINUING VALIDITY OF THE TRIPARTITE DECLARATION, DESPITE THE HARD WORK THE AMERICANS WERE DOING TO PERSUADE THEM.

SIR P. DEAN

SENT 2205Z 21 MAY 1967
RECD 2205Z 21 MAY 1967

[COPIES SENT TO NO. 10, DOWNING STREET]

FRISEC (F.O.)

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Subject
CYPH /CAT.A. AND BY BAG
PRIORITY FOREIGN OFFICE TO TEL AVIV
TELNO. 456 20 MAY, 1967.
CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL TELEGRAM
SERIAL No T 127/67
(ER)

ADDRESSED TO TEL AVIV TELEGRAM NUMBER 456 OF 20 MAY REPEATED FOR INFORMATION TO WASHINGTON UKMIS NEW YORK DAMASCUS AMMAN BEIRUT CAIRO BAGHDAD AND SAVING TO JERUSALEM JIG CYPRUS AND PARIS.

FOLLOWING LETTER FROM MR. ESHKOL WAS DELIVERED TO THE PRIME MINISTER YESTERDAY:-

THE INCREASINGLY TENSE SITUATION IN OUR AREA IMPELS ME TO SUPPLEMENT IN THIS PERSONAL LETTER TO YOU THE DETAILED INFORMATION GIVEN TODAY BY FOREIGN MINISTER EBAN TO AMBASSADOR HADOW, AND THE ACCOMPANYING EXCHANGE OF VIEWS.
I SHOULD LIKE TO SUMMARISE MY MAIN CONCLUSIONS:

FIRST: THE PRIMARY LINK IN THE CHAIN OF TENSION IS THE SYRIAN POLICY OF TERRORIST INFILTRATION AND SABOTAGE. THERE HAVE BEEN 15 ATTEMPTS AT MURDER AND SABOTAGE IN THE PAST SIX WEEKS. WE HAVE NOT REACTED. THIS IN ITSELF PROVES THAT THERE IS NO LACK OF TEMPERANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY ON OUR PART. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE PROBLEM IS NOT SOLVED INDEFINITELY BY INACTION. WE CANNOT ALWAYS RELY ON THE STROKE OF FORTUNE WHICH HAS SO FAR PREVENTED THE TERRORIST ACTS FROM TAKING THE TOLL OF LIFE AND INJURY INTENDED BY THE PERPETRATORS. ALTHOUGH MANY ACTS HAVE BEEN COMMITTED FROM LEBANON AND JORDAN, OUR PRESENT CONVICTION IS THAT SYRIA IS RESPONSIBLE AND IS ATTEMPTING TO EMBROIL OTHER ARAB STATES. WE ARE ALIVE TO THIS STRATAGEM AND SHALL NOT COOPERATE WITH IT.

MY FIRST CONCLUSION, THEREFORE, IS THAT EVERY EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO EMPHASIZE, PROCLAIM AND CONDEMN SYRIAN RESPONSIBILITY FOR THESE TERRORIST ACTS, IN ORDER TO DETER THEIR CONTINUATION.

SECOND: THE EGYPTIAN BUILD-UP OF ARMOUR AND INFANTRY IN SINAI, TO THE EXTENT SO FAR OF APPROXIMATELY FOUR DIVISIONS INCLUDING 600 TANKS, IS GREATER THAN EVER BEFORE, AND HAS NO OBJECTIVE JUSTIFICATION. EGYPT KNOWS THAT THERE IS NO FOUNDATION FOR REPORTS OF TROOP CONCENTRATIONS AGAINST SYRIA. YET EVEN AFTER RECEIVING INFORMATION ON THIS SUBJECT FROM U.N. AND OTHER SOURCES, THE UAR HAS INCREASED ITS TROOP CONCENTRATIONS. THIS NATURALLY FORCES ME TO UNDERTAKE PRECAUTIONARY REINFORCEMENT IN THE SOUTH. ONE OF THE DANGERS THAT WE FACE IS THAT THE EGYPTIAN TROOP CONCENTRATION MAY ENCOURAGE SYRIA TO RESUME TERRORISTIC ACTS UNDER THE FALSE IMPRESSION OF IMMUNITY.

/THE ONLY WAY

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FOREIGN OFFICE TELEGRAM NO. 456 TO TEL AVIV

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THE ONLY WAY OF AVOIDING THE EFFECTS OF AN ESCALATING RECIPROCAL BUILD-UP IS FOR EGYPT TO RETURN TO THE PREVIOUS POSTURE IN SINAI. THIS WOULD IMMEDIATELY AFFECT OUR OWN DECISIONS AND ARRANGEMENTS. I URGE THE FULL APPLICATION OF INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCE TO SECURE THE END OF ABNORMAL TROOP CONCENTRATIONS.

THIRD: IT WOULD BE VERY UNFORTUNATE IF THE U.N. AUTHORITIES WERE TO GIVE AN IMPRESSION OF IRRESOLUTION IN CONNECTION WITH THE PRESENCE OF THE U.N.E.F. IN SINAI. IT IS NOT THE FUNCTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS TO MOVE OUT OF THE WAY IN ORDER TO FACILITATE WARLIKE ACTS. I HOPE THAT THE SECRETARY GENERAL WILL INSIST THAT HE CANNOT AFFECT THE STATUS QUO CONCERNING THE U.N. FORCE IN SINAI WITHOUT A MANDATE FROM THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. THERE IS AMPLE LEGAL BASIS FOR THIS.

I MUST POINT OUT THAT ISRAEL WAS A PARTY TO THE ARRANGEMENT WHICH LED IN MARCH 1957 TO THE STATIONING OF THE U.N.E.F. UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF SEVERAL POWERS INCLUDING THE UNITED KINGDOM, WE TOOK FAR-REACHING MEASURES IN EXCHANGE FOR THE U.N.E.F. ARRANGEMENT.

IN THIS CONNECTION I WISH TO RECALL THAT IN FEBRUARY 1966 THE SECRETARY GENERAL IN HIS REPORT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY EXPRESSED THE OPINION THAT THE REMOVAL OF THE FORCE COULD RESULT IN SERIOUS FIGHTING. THIS APPRAISAL WOULD HARDLY BE CONSISTENT WITH ANY PRECIPITATE RESPONSE TO REQUESTS FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF U.N.E.F.

FOURTH: THERE MAY BE AN IMPRESSION IN CAIRO AND DAMASCUS THAT SOVIET SUPPORT FOR EGYPT AND SYRIA IS ASSURED, AND THAT THEREFORE THEY HAVE NO NEED OF RESTRAINT. THIS COULD BE VERY DANGEROUS. THE ONLY COUNTERWEIGHT TO THIS FACTOR WOULD BE AN EMPHATIC CLARIFICATION TO THE SOVIET UNION OF BRITISH POLICY IN SUPPORT OF ISRAEL'S INDEPENDENCE AND INTEGRITY. I UNDERSTAND YOUR DISTINGUISHED SECRETARY OF STATE WILL VERY SHORTLY BE IN MOSCOW. I CAN HARDLY EXAGGERATE THE IMPORTANCE AND URGENCY OF SUCH AN APPROACH TO THE U.S.S.R. IT IS ONE OF THE CENTRAL KEYS TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE SITUATION.

/FIFTH

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FOREIGN OFFICE TELEGRAM NO. 456 TO TEL AVIV

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FIFTH: IT WOULD LIKEWISE BE OF THE GREATEST VALUE IN HELPING TO RESTORE A STABLE SITUATION IF THE OPPORTUNITY WERE TAKEN TO REASSERT YOUR GOVERNMENT'S DECLARED POLICY IN SUPPORT OF ISRAEL'S INTEGRITY AND INDEPENDENCE.

IN VIEW OF THE MAGNITUDE OF THE ISSUES INVOLVED, I HAVE FELT AT LIBERTY TO SPEAK WITH FRANKNESS ON FIVE PROBLEMS IN ALL OF WHICH I BELIEVE THAT THE UNITED KINGDOM IS IN A POSITION TO MAKE A VITAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE AVOIDANCE OF DANGERS AND THE REINFORCEMENT OF PEACE.

SOSFA SENT 1318Z 20 MAY.

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Cypher/Cat A

IMMEDIATE AMMAN TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Telno. 399 20 May, 1967

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Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 399 of 20 May.
Repeated for information to: Washington, Beirut, U.K. Mission
New York, Cairo, Tel Aviv, Damascus, JIG Cyprus, Moscow,
Ministry of Defence MO4, DI4, Baghdad, Jeddah, Jerusalem

Arab Israel.

My Defence Attaché on my instructions, saw General Khammash (Jordan Chief of Staff) this morning. In view of Khammash's key position you may be interested in the following summary of his personal assessment of the present situation.

2. Nasser started the present crisis in response to pleas from Syria to relieve Israel pressure on them and in an attempt to repair his somewhat damaged reputation among the Arabs, especially with regard to his inactivity over Palestine and lack of action following Israel's attack on Syrian aircraft on 7 April.

3. Nasser originally meant to do no more than to make a gesture for propaganda purpose. His ostentatious move of tanks and troops through Cairo to Sinai was not consistent with serious military intentions.

4. In Khammash's view Nasser counter on United Nations refusal to remove UNEF when asked to do so. He would then have been able to plead to his brother Arabs that he had tried to put his troops in a fighting posture on Israel's frontiers but had been prevented by United Nations' action.

5. The situation was now very dangerous since any "young mad Syrian Unit Commander" could provoke an engagement with Israel which might get out of hand. Public opinion in Arab countries might force Nasser to use his new positions in the Straits of Tiran to interfere with shipping to Eilat.

6. If it was true as reported that the plans were to take over the observation posts evacuated by the UNEF Nasser might not be able to prevent raids or an attack on Israel.

7. As regards Jordan, the Government wished at all costs to keep out of any trouble. He had impressed on Unit Commanders during his recent tour of the West Bank that they must tighten up their measures for preventing infiltration into Israel. At the same time, for prestige purposes, he had been forced to put the Army on the alert and to demonstrate that they were posed for action. He proposed to play every delaying card he could in order to keep Jordan out of any moves against Israel. However, we would appreciate that if the "balloon went up" Jordan could not avoid some action.

/8.

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Amman telegram No. 399 to Foreign Office

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8. Khamash confirmed that there was no U.A.R. co-ordination and that measures were being taken on country-to-country basis, i.e. Egypt-Syria, Syria-Iraq, etc.

9. In Khamash's view the Russians were the only people capable now of restraining both the Egyptians and Syrians from actions which might provoke a general Middle East conflagration.

Foreign Office pass Immediate M.O.D. MO4 DI4, Washington 44, U.K. Mission New York 13, Tel Aviv 35, Damascus 44, JIG Cyprus 25, Moscow M29 and Priority Baghdad 31, Jeddah 35, Jerusalem 20.

Mr. Adams

Sent 1204Z 20 May
Recd. 1500Z 20 May

[Repeated as requested]

[Sent to D.C.C.]

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Cypher/Cat A
IMMEDIATE TEL AVIV TO FOREIGN OFFICE
Telno 324 20 May, 1967
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Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 324 of 20 May.
Repeated for information to: M.O.D. (DEL) Moscow
Washington UKMis New York
Damascus Cairo
Amman Beirut
Jerusalem JIG Cyprus.

Middle East situation.

Lourie has just informed me that Mr. Eban saw Soviet Ambassador yesterday. From Chouvakhin's attitude Mr. Eban could only draw the gloomy conclusion that Soviet Union had promised full support to Syria and Egypt vis à vis Israel.

2. Chouvakhin had trotted out his old line that terrorist activities were sponsored by the CIA and made it clear that this Soviet view had been conveyed to the Syrians and the Egyptians. He had warned against any Israeli reaction and had pointed out that present situation arose from the fact that Israel had ignored previous Soviet warnings and now only had themselves to blame.

3. Mr. Eban's appreciation from this is that the Russians are bent on a trial of strength with the United States in the Middle East: the interview had reinforced his view that a clearer expression by the Western powers of support for the integrity and independence of Israel and maintenance of the 'status quo' was urgently necessary to counteract Arab belief that the Soviet Union would be behind them in any aggressive activities they might undertake against Israel.

4. Foreign Office pass Moscow No. 4, Washington No. 46, UKMis New York No. 43, Damascus No. 44, Cairo No. 24, Amman No. 56, Beirut No. 56, Jerusalem No. 22 and to M.O.D. for DIA unnumbered and JIG Cyprus No. 34.

Mr. Hadow

Sent 1150Z 20 May

Recd 1321Z 20 May

[Repeated as requested].

[Sent to D.C.C.].

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Cypher/Cat A

IMMEDIATE TEL AVIV TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Telno 323

20 May 1967

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Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 323 of 20 May, Repeated for information to MOD (D14), Damascus, Cairo, UKMIS New York, Beirut, Jerusalem, Amman and JIG Cyprus.

My telegram No. 312: Middle East situation.

Sitrep at 0600 hours G.M.T. 20 May.

Mr. Eshkol made statement yesterday evening to effect that he was surprised at U Thant's hasty decision to withdraw UNEF. Israel relied on her own resources and not international Forces, but he agreed with view of other Governments concerning the serious implications of the Egyptian request which changed the security balance in the area. Israel radio reports that a Note on these lines has been sent to U Thant by Mr. Eban.

2. There are clear indications that following on news of withdrawal of UNEF fairly extensive mobilisation has been carried out during the night. Taxis and buses were commandeered to move people to Unit assembly points. Notices are visible on the streets directing traffic to such points. The largest local sports stadium is now a military camp. Those called up are being told it is for an indefinite period.

3. Focal point would now appear to be the South and not Syrian border. Director of Intelligence stressed in briefing last night gravity of Israel's problem in having to call up reservists to face the heavy Egyptian concentration in Sinai, to keep an eye on the Syrian frontier and to maintain normal dispositions on Jordan and Lebanese frontiers. She can only afford this waste of manpower for just so long without serious damage to her economy (my telegram No. 322 not to all).

Foreign Office pass Damascus, Cairo, UKMIS New York, Beirut, Jerusalem and Amman as my telegrams Nos. 43, 23, 42, 55, 21 and 55.

MOD pass JIG Cyprus as my telegram No. 33.

Mr. Hadow Sent 0736 20 May
Recd 0930 20 May

[Repetition to Damascus, Beirut, Jerusalem and Amman referred for departmental decision, repeated as requested to other posts]

[Sent to D.C.C.]

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CYPHER/ CAT A
IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON
TELEGRAM NO 1705

TO FOREIGN OFFICE
20 MAY 1967

SECRET

ADDRESSED TO FOREIGN OFFICE TELEGRAM NUMBER 1705 OF 20 MAY
REPEATED FOR INFORMATION TO UKMIS NEW YORK.

MIDDLE EAST SITUATION.

- GENE ROSTOW CALLED ME IN TODAY. HE SAID THAT ON THE GULF OF AKABA AND OTHER MAIN POINTS THE POSITION OF OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS WAS VERY CLOSE. THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF U.S. GOVERNMENT WAS TO GET U. THANT TO TAKE SOME EFFECTIVE STEPS OVER THE GULF OF AKABA: THIS HE SEEMED TO WISH TO DO. ROSTOW SAID THAT THERE WAS A U.S. DESTROYER IN THE AREA AND TWO ISRAELI FLAGSHIPS HAD GONE THROUGH IN THE LAST DAYS.
2. ROSTOW SAID THAT THE U.S. HAD PRESSED THE ISRAELIS VERY HARD TO INVITE U.N.E.F. ONTO THEIR SOIL, AND HAD SAID THAT IN NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD THE ISRAELIS COME OUT AGAINST THE IDEA.
 3. ROSTOW ASKED FOR YOUR VIEWS URGENTLY ON ADVISING TOURISTS NOT TO VISIT THE AREA OR IF THERE TO LEAVE. (WE HAVE SINCE HEARD THAT THE U.S. EMBASSY CAIRO ARE ADVISING TOURISTS WHO CONTACT THEM TO LEAVE THE U.A.R.). ANY PUBLIC STATEMENT COULD HEIGHTEN TENSION AND HAVE SOME IMPACT ON U THANT'S MISSION. U THANT WAS IN ANY CASE GOING WITH SOME TREPIDATION. THE U.S. EMBASSY CAIRO HAVE REPORTED THAT ANTI AMERICAN PROPAGANDA IN CAIRO HAS REACHED AN UNPRECEDENTED PITCH, AND THAT THERE ARE SIGNS OF WAR FEVER.
 4. MR ROSTOW SAID HE WOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR OUR VIEWS ON THE ISRAELI REPORTS THAT U.A.R. FORCES IN SINAI HAD ASSUMED AN OFFENSIVE POSTURE AND THAT THE SYRIANS WERE CONCENTRATING CONSIDERABLE FORCES NEAR LAKE TIBERIAS.
- /5. ROSTOW

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WASHINGTON TELEGRAM NO. 1705 TO FOREIGN OFFICE

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5. ROSTOW ASKED WHETHER THERE SHOULD BE VERY SECRET TRIPARTITE FRENCH/U.S./BRITISH CONTINGENCY PLANNING. WHAT ACTION COULD WE TAKE? IN ANY CASE HE SAID THAT HE WOULD LIKE DAILY MEETINGS HERE WITH THE FRENCH AND OURSELVES. I AGREED THIS WOULD BE USEFUL.

6. ROSTOW SAID THAT THE U.S. HAD SPOKEN TO THE RUSSIANS HERE, IN NEW YORK AND IN MOSCOW. IN NEW YORK FEDORENKO HAD TURNED DOWN THE IDEA OF QUADRIPARTITE MEETING BUT HAD ASSURED THE AMERICANS THAT THE U.S.S.R. WANTED PEACE AND WERE ADVISING RESTRAINT. MR DOBRYNIN HAD SAID THE SAME TO AMBASSADOR THOMPSON IN MOSCOW. IN ISRAEL HOWEVER THE SOVIET UNION WERE PEDDLING VERY HARD THE LINE THAT THE INFILTRATORS FROM SYRIA WERE SYRIAN AGENTS AND IN THE MIDDLE EAST GENERALLY WERE SAYING THAT THERE WAS QUOTE COLLUSION UNQUOTE BETWEEN ISRAEL, JORDON AND THE U.S.

7. ROSTOW SAID THAT THE U.S. WAS EXCHANGING INFORMATION WITH TURKEY AND IRAN. THIS SHOULD BE VERY HELPFUL POLITICALLY. THE ALGERIANS WERE VERY CONCERNED AND THE U.S. HAD ASKED THEM TO URGE RESTRAINT ON THE U.A.R. AND SYRIA.

F.O. PLEASE REPEAT FURTHER AS REQUIRED.

SIR P. DEAN

SENT 0145/21Z MAY 1967
RECD 0145/21Z MAY 1967

PRISSEC (F.O.)

SECRET

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ראש הממשלה
THE PRIME MINISTER

Jerusalem, May 18, 1967

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

The increasingly tense situation in our area impels me to supplement in this personal letter to you the detailed information given today by Foreign Minister Eban to Ambassador Hadow, and the accompanying exchange of views.

I should like to summarise my main conclusions:

FIRST: The primary link in the chain of tension is the Syrian policy of terrorist infiltration and sabotage. There have been 15 attempts at murder and sabotage in the past six weeks. We have not reacted. This in itself proves that there is no lack of temperance and responsibility on our part. On the other hand, the problem is not solved indefinitely by inaction. We cannot always rely on the stroke of fortune which has so far prevented the terrorist acts from taking the toll of life and injury intended by the perpetrators. Although many acts have been committed from Lebanon and Jordan, our present conviction is that Syria is responsible and is attempting to embroil other Arab States. We are alive to this stratagem and shall not cooperate with it.

My first conclusion, therefore, is that every effort should be made to emphasize, proclaim and condemn Syrian responsibility for these terrorist acts, in order to deter their continuation.

SECOND: The Egyptian build-up of armour and infantry in Sinai, to the extent so far of approximately four divisions including 600 tanks, is greater than ever before, and has no objective justification. Egypt knows that there is no foundation for reports of troop concentrations against Syria. Yet even after receiving information on this subject from U.N. and other sources, the UAR has increased its troop concentrations.

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ראש הממשלה
THE PRIME MINISTER

- 2 -

This naturally forces me to undertake precautionary reinforcement in the South. One of the dangers that we face is that the Egyptian troop concentration may encourage Syria to resume terroristic acts under the false impression of immunity.

The only way of avoiding the effects of an escalating reciprocal build-up is for Egypt to return to the previous posture in Sinai. This would immediately affect our own decisions and arrangements.

I urge the full application of international influence to secure the end of abnormal troop concentrations.

THIRD: It would be very unfortunate if the U.N. authorities were to give an impression of irresolution in connection with the presence of the U.N.E.F. in Sinai. It is not the function of the United Nations to move out of the way in order to facilitate warlike acts. I hope that the Secretary General will insist that he cannot affect the status quo concerning the U.N. force in Sinai without a mandate from the General Assembly. There is ample legal basis for this.

I must point out that Israel was a party to the arrangement which led in March 1957 to the stationing of the U.N.E.F. Under the influence of several Powers including the United Kingdom, we took far-reaching measures in exchange for the U.N.E.F. arrangement.

In this connection I wish to recall that in February 1966 the Secretary-General in his report to the General Assembly expressed the opinion that the removal of the Force could result in serious fighting. This appraisal would hardly be consistent with any precipitate response to requests for the withdrawal of U.N.E.F.

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ראש הממשלה
THE PRIME MINISTER

- 3 -

FOURTH: There may be an impression in Cairo and Damascus that Soviet support for Egypt and Syria is assured, and that therefore they have no need of restraint. This could be very dangerous. The only counterweight to this factor would be an emphatic clarification to the Soviet Union of British policy in support of Israel's independence and integrity. I understand your distinguished Secretary of State will very shortly be in Moscow. I can hardly exaggerate the importance and urgency of such an approach to the U.S.S.R. It is one of the central keys to the improvement of the situation.

FIFTH: It would likewise be of the greatest value in helping to restore a stable situation if the opportunity were taken to reassert your Government's declared policy in support of Israel's integrity and independence.

In view of the magnitude of the issues involved, I have felt at liberty to speak with frankness on five problems in all of which I believe that the United Kingdom is in a position to make a vital contribution to the avoidance of dangers and the reinforcement of peace.

Yours sincerely,



Levi Eshkol

The Prime Minister the Right Honourable
Harold Wilson P.C.M.P.,
10 Downing Street,
London S.W.1.

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MINISTER OF OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT
BLAND HOUSE, STAG PLACE
LONDON S.W.1
TELEPHONE: VICTORIA 2377

R.
19th May, 1967

Dear Michael,

You sent me a copy of your letter to Macle hose in the Foreign Office about the Prime Minister's enquiry, whether the Middle East Development Division should not be moved from Beirut to the Gulf.

The Head of the Division and the eight Advisers on his staff have a dual role, as Advisers to the Governments in the Middle East and as Advisers to this Ministry and to H. M. Missions on the content and execution of the British aid programmes in the area from Turkey to West Pakistan and down to Aden. In the first capacity, the advice which they have been and are giving to the still under-developed territories like Abu Dhabi and the Trucial States on the basic problems of their development is no doubt of more fundamental importance to those territories and has greater impact than the counsel which the Division can provide to the more sophisticated Governments elsewhere in the Region. The Head of the Division has lately carried out a survey for the Ruler of Abu Dhabi in association with other British Advisers and made various recommendations for the establishment of posts in the Administration for which this Ministry is now trying to recruit.

The other advisory function of the Development Division entails fairly regular and usually brief visits to all the other countries within its "jurisdiction", which covers the triangle from Turkey to West Pakistan in the North to Aden in the South. It has large activities in Jordan and important ones in Turkey and Iran. Beirut is not the geographical centre of this triangle but it is far and away the most convenient centre of communications from which it is possible to reach all the other countries by direct flight. There are, for instance, daily direct flights in each direction between Beirut and Amman; and between Bahrain and Amman there are only two direct flights a week. It seems to Mr. Bottomley therefore that while the transfer to the Gulf could well concentrate the Division's operations on that part of its area, this could only be done to the great detriment of the British aid programmes in the other Middle Eastern countries, which are on a considerable scale particularly in the CENTO countries. Mr. Bottomley is sure therefore that it would not be right to move the Division from Beirut to the Gulf.

Members of the Division have visited Saudi Arabia, though it is doubtful if its existence is known to King Faisal personally. We for our part welcome any contribution which the Saudi Government can make to the development of their poorer neighbours, for example, the £6 million which the King has promised for construction of roads in South Arabia. But recent experience has shown that the King

/prefers

A. M. Palliser, Esq., C.M.G.

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-2-

prefers to play a lone hand in his aid policies. You will know that although he agreed to finance the construction of a road between Sharjah and Ras-al-Khaimah in the Trucial States, he declined absolutely to make this contribution through the Trucial States Development Fund on the grounds that this was a British creation and his own participation would be ill-received by the Arab League. We are inclined to doubt if King Faisal would be more forthcoming in co-operating in aid matters with us unless we were able ourselves to be more forthcoming in the technical co-operation which we could offer him. The facilities of this Ministry are available to the Saudis as they are to other developing countries, but we do not consider it appropriate to make more than a token contribution in financial terms in the light of our, and indeed the King's, economic situation and of the many other calls we have upon our limited resources.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Maclehose in the Foreign Office.

Yours sincerely
George Thom.
(G. W. Thom)
Private Secretary

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CYPHER/CAT +A+.
IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON
TELEGRAM NUMBER 1673

TO FOREIGN OFFICE
18 MAY 1967.

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ADDRESSED TO FOREIGN OFFICE TELEGRAM NUMBER 1673 DATED 18 MAY REPEATED FOR INFORMATION TO UKMIS NEW YORK, TEL AVIV, DAMASCUS, BEIRUT, AMMAN AND J.I.G. CYPRUS.

UKMIS TEL: 981: U.N.E.F.

MR. EUGENE ROSTOW SPOKE TO THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR AND MYSELF ABOUT THIS THIS AFTERNOON. MR. LUCIUS BATTLE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS, WAS PRESENT FOR PART OF THE TIME.

2. MR. BATTLE SAID THAT THE TROUBLE NOW WAS THAT QUITE APART FROM THE INTENTIONS OF THE GOVERNMENTS ON EITHER SIDE, ONE MAD TERRORIST COULD START A CONFLAGRATION. MR. ROSTOW SAID THAT YESTERDAY ALL CONCERNED HAD THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD NOT BE RIGHT TO CALL A MEETING OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL. THINGS HAD BEGUN TO CHANGE. THE SECRETARY GENERAL WAS TAKING A VERY WEAK LINE. HE HAD MADE THE BASIC MISTAKE OF SAYING THAT IF THE EGYPTIANS WANTED THE TROOPS OUT THEY WOULD BE REMOVED. ROSTOW SAID THAT SINCE THE EGYPTIANS HAD MADE AN AGREEMENT FOR THE STATIONING OF THE TROOPS THEY COULD NOT UNILATERALLY ABROGATE IT. THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S VISIT TO CAIRO, WHICH WOULD APPARENTLY ALSO INCLUDE DAMASCUS AND TEL AVIV AND WHICH HAD BEEN PROPOSED IN U THANT'S MEMORANDUM TO EL KOUNI, WAS A USEFUL IDEA. ROSTOW THOUGHT THE AMERICANS MIGHT WISH TO MOVE THIS EVENING IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL TO TRY TO CALM THE SITUATION, BUT I HAVE SINCE HEARD FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT THAT WHILE THEY DO NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY IN DUE COURSE, FOR THE REASONS GIVEN IN LORD CARADON'S TEL UNDER REF. THEY DO NOT THINK A MEETING WOULD BE USEFUL AT THIS STAGE.

3. ROSTOW SAID THAT THE AMERICANS HAD JUST HEARD THAT THE EGYPTIANS HAD OCCUPIED SHARM EL SHAIKH. THIS WAS "JUGULAR" FOR THE ISRAELIS. MR. BATTLE WAS SEEING THE ISRAELI AMBASSADOR AT 5.00 P.M. TO URGE CAUTION ON HIM IN THE FACE OF GREAT PROVOCATION. HOWEVER GREAT THE PROVOCATION WAS IT WAS NOT A REASON FOR WAR. IT WAS AFTER ALL A QUESTION OF EGYPTIAN SOLDIERS ON EGYPTIAN TERRITORY. THE AMERICANS HAD A DESTROYER WHICH HAD JUST LEFT AQABA. THEY DID NOT KNOW WHAT ROLE, IF ANY, IT MIGHT HAVE TO PLAY.

/4. MR. ROSTOW

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*Teleprinted to Chequer
18.5.67*

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CYPHER/CAT A

FLASH U.K. MISSION NEW YORK TO FOREIGN OFFICE

TELEGRAM NO. 980.

18 MAY 1967

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ADDRESSED TO FOREIGN OFFICE TELEGRAM NO. 980 OF 18 MAY
REPEATED FOR INFORMATION TO WASHINGTON CAIRO TEL AVIV DAMASCUS
BEIRUT AMMAN AND JIG CYPRUS.
MY TELEGRAM NO. 974 : UNEF

THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENTS HAVE TAKEN PLACE SINCE LAST
NIGHT.

1. IN THE EVENT THE SECRETARY-GENERAL DECIDED LAST EVENING NOT TO SEND A PERSONAL APPEAL TO PRESIDENT NASSER, INSTEAD HE DELIVERED AN EIGHT PAGE MEMORANDUM TO THE EGYPTIAN PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, THE DETAILS OF WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN DIVULGED.
2. THE AMERICANS HAVE HAD A FULLER ACCOUNT OF THE CANADIAN AMBASSADOR'S CONVERSATION WITH THE EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER IN CAIRO (MY TELEGRAM NO. 975). THIS SHOWS THAT THE EGYPTIANS MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEIR DECISION WAS NOT FOR DISCUSSION EITHER IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OR THE SECURITY COUNCIL. I HAVE ASKED THE U.S. MISSION TO ARRANGE FOR THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN LONDON TO MAKE THIS TELEGRAM AVAILABLE TO YOU.
3. ACCORDING TO THE U.S. MISSION THE MOOD IN TEL AVIV IN MILITARY CIRCLES CONTINUED YESTERDAY TO BE RELAXED. THE AMERICANS NOTED HOWEVER CERTAIN DEFENSIVE MOVES. SOME 30 TANKS WERE OBSERVED IN THE BEERSHEBA AREA AND SOME RESERVISTS HAVE BEEN CALLED UP. ISRAELI GENERALS HAVE BEEN TELLING THE AMERICANS THAT THE U.A.R. ARE INTENT ON PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE RATHER THAN REAL WAR, BUT THE AMERICANS COMMENT THAT ANY MILITARY THREAT BY THE U.A.R. IN THE GULF OF AKABA COULD QUICKLY CHANGE THIS ISRAELI REACTION.
4. DR. BUNCHE SAID LAST NIGHT THAT ALTHOUGH AN OFFICIAL REQUEST FROM THE EGYPTIANS FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF UNEF HAD NOT /ARRIVED

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UKMIS NEW YORK TELEGRAM NO. 980 TO FOREIGN OFFICE

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ARRIVED THE SECRETARY-GENERAL WOULD NOT COMPLY WITH IT WHEN IT CAME. (IN FACT THE SECRETARIAT HAVE NOW RECEIVED AN OFFICIAL LETTER FROM THE U.A.R. PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE --SEE MY TEL NO. 979.) U THANT HAS ALSO TOLD THE ISRAELI PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE THAT HE HAS SO FAR NOT CONSULTED THE SOVIET DELEGATION.

5. PLEASE SEE M.I.F.T.

F.O. PASS IMMEDIATE CAIRO 34, TEL AVIV 41, DAMASCUS 43, BEIRUT 32, AMMAN 41 AND JIG CYPRUS UNNUMBERED.

LORD CARADON

SENT 18/1938Z
RECD 18/1942Z

[REPEATED AS REQUESTED]
[PASSED TO D.C.C.]

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Cypher/Cat.A

IMMEDIATE DAMASCUS TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Telno. 285

17 May 1967

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Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 285 of 17 May. Repeated for information to Tel Aviv, UKMIS New York, Washington, Cairo, Jerusalem, Amman, Beirut and JIG Cyprus.

Your telegram No. 4801 to Washington: Syria/Israel.

In the absence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who is unexpectedly visiting Cairo, I called on the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

2. I told Dr. Daudi that Mr. Thomson had yesterday seen the Israel Ambassador in London and had urged the need for the Israel Government to show restraint. I added that according to information available to us, Israel had not as of yesterday made any concentration of her military forces - see Tel Aviv telegram No. 294. I pointed out however that experience had shown that Israel forces could be concentrated very quickly and that if a serious incident involving loss of life were traced to Arab infiltrators, retaliation could be expected - see paragraph 4 Tel Aviv telegram No. 294. I reminded Dr. Daudi of Syria's obligations under the Armistice Agreement, i.e. that no warlike or hostile act should be conducted from the territory controlled by one of the parties against the other.

3. Dr. Daudi, who expressed satisfaction at the action taken with the Israel Ambassador in London, admitted that Syria found herself in a dilemma. On the one hand there were her obligations under the Armistice Agreement and on the other her inability to disapprove of efforts by Palestinians to return to their homeland. It was up to the Israelis to deal with infiltrators by increasing their guards, etc. He also suggested that there was a difference between the acts by individuals and any action organized by the Syrian Government and there had been none. (I said that not many people would believe that Syria had had no hand in the training of infiltrators.)

4. Daudi went on to say that Israel for her own reasons, possibly e.g. to prepare for further aggression, had been exaggerating the importance of acts of sabotage. She was in any case convinced that she had the backing of the United States - He referred to the assurance allegedly given by Mr. McNamara to Mr. Eshkol that the Sixth Fleet would protect Israel. In the circumstances Syria had had no alternative but to invoke the Syrian/Egyptian Defence Agreement. As announced today, Egypt had already requested the withdrawal of United Nations forces from the frontier area, i.e. in the Gaza Strip to Gaza itself, and would thus be free in the event of aggression to help Syria. If aggression took place, there would inevitably be popular reaction and Western interests would be exposed, as they had been at the

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/time of Suez.

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Damascus telegram No. 285 to Foreign Office

- 2 -

time of Suez. Furthermore there was a risk of Soviet intervention. It was essential that Israel be restrained and only the West could do it.

4.[sic] I reverted to the point that the key to the present situation was the avoidance of any incident involving serious loss of life within Israel. There was no evidence that Israel was following an expansionist policy. If such an incident occurred those who were most anxious to restrain Israel would find it difficult to do so.

5. Please see my immediately following telegram.

Foreign Office pass Immediate to Tel Aviv, Routine to UKMIS New York, Washington, Cairo, Jerusalem, Amman, Beirut and JIG Cyprus as my telegrams Nos. 38, 27, 34, 5, 14, 53, 97 and 28 respectively.

Mr. Evans

Sent 1550Z/17 May 1967

Recd. 1800Z/17 May 1967

[Repeated as requested]

[Sent to D.C.C.]

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SUBJECT FILED ON ^{CHINA} OCTOBER, 1964

प्रधान मंत्री भवन
PRIME MINISTER'S HOUSE
NEW DELHI

PERMANENT TELEGRAM

April 1, 1967.

SERIAL No. 1854/67

My dear Prime Minister,

I am sending this letter through my Secretary, Mr. L.K.Jha. You may remember meeting him first with Mr. Shastri and later with me. He is visiting London and some other countries to discuss the problem with which you are already familiar since both Mr. Shastri and I have discussed it with you. It is a threat posed to us by China's growing nuclear strength.

2. As China has been gaining in strength as a nuclear power, domestic pressure has been mounting upon us to abandon our policy of using nuclear energy only for peaceful purposes. We know that there are the strongest arguments, strategic no less than economic and moral, against our embarking upon the development of nuclear weapons. But they carry no conviction to the people who know how irresponsible and unpredictable is our Northern neighbour. Nor are our people ready to compromise their policy of non-alignment and seek protection of any one country or group.

3. The question which confronts us and which acquires special urgency against the background of the proposed Treaty on Non-Proliferation is whether we can find some answer to the Chinese threat which does not entail departure from our policy of non-alignment or our decision not to make nuclear weapons.

4. By the time Mr. Jha comes to London, he will have discussed this matter in the Soviet Union and in the U.S.A. I hope you will be able to spare some time to receive him and to give him your ideas on the subject.

5. Mr. Jha will also be able to tell you of the recent developments and the present situation in India.

contd...

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प्रधान मंत्री भवन
PRIME MINISTER'S HOUSE
NEW DELHI

(2)

6. May I take this opportunity to remind you of our standing invitation for you to visit India?

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,

Indira Gandhi
(Indira Gandhi)

His Excellency
Mr. Harold Wilson,
Prime Minister of the United Kingdom,
London.

Israel

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(ER 3/3)

RECORD OF MEETING BETWEEN THE FOREIGN SECRETARY AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF ISRAEL, MR. ABBA EBAN, AT THE FOREIGN OFFICE ON TUESDAY, 21 FEBRUARY, 1967

Present:

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| The Right Honourable
George Brown, M.P. | Mr. Abba Eban
H.E. Mr. H. Remez |
| The Right Honourable
George Thompson, M.P. | Mr. Y. Anug
Mr. M. Raviv |
| Sir Denis Allen | |
| Mr. T.F. Brenchley | |
| Mr. C.M. MacLehose | |
| Mr. W. Morris | |
| Mr. J.C. Moberly | |

9/13

After Mr. Brown's welcome to Mr. Eban on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, Mr. Eban thanked him for the opportunity for an exchange of views. He said that both Israel and Britain shared a common aim in the Middle East, the peace and stability of the area, and he thought there was not very much difference between the two governments about the means to be adopted to achieve this.

The events of the last three months on Israel's borders

2. Mr. Eban thought that the final result of the last three months was better than might have been feared. The situation in Jordan had been stabilised. Perhaps the dangers were less than had been anticipated by some and perhaps good luck had played a part. Whatever the reason, the Jordan Government were now taking strong measures to check the activities of would be infiltrators into Israel, which was a positive gain. The Israel Government believed that the Jordanian Government's efforts in this direction were sincere and whole-hearted. In considering the situation in Jordan the Israel Government had exhaustively analysed all the possible alterations in the status of the West Bank. Their conclusion was that every possible change would be harmful from Israel's point of view. The Israel Government certainly did not want to take over the West Bank. Even if they did so, they could not digest it; and in any case there were forces in the world which would not allow it. Israel therefore considered that the stabilisation of the Hashemite Regime was very much in their interests because by this means the status quo of the West Bank could be maintained while the centre of gravity of the state would remain in the East. The Israelis were concerned lest the Jordanian Government should not realise Israel's commitment to the stability and integrity of Jordan; the Samu raid might have given them the wrong impression. Mr. Eban hoped, therefore, that Her Majesty's Government could explain Israel's community of interest with Jordan to the leaders of the regime there.

3. Mr. Brown pointed out that we had had very anxious moments after the Samu raid when it looked as though the Israel attack was going to have the very result which the Israel Government wished to avoid. In our view the raid meant taking a very big risk whether or not it was a calculated one. Mr. Eban admitted that even in Israel they had had some doubts immediately after the raid. He stressed that although his Government's calculation was that in the final analysis the result

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had been good, this did not mean that they intended to do the same thing again. He went on to suggest that there had been too much talk of the instability of the Regime in Jordan. It was more stable than was thought perhaps because no-one, including the Egyptians, knew what to put in its place. The United Arab Republic certainly did not wish to take over responsibility for the turbulent situation which would follow the collapse of the Hashemite Regime. Mr. Eban and Mr. Brown agreed that President Nasser had too much on his mind at home willingly to contemplate assuming responsibility for Jordan but Mr. Eban was nevertheless concerned about the danger arising from U.A.R. support for Shuqairy and the Palestine Liberation Organisation. As an indication of Israel's solicitude for the Jordanian Regime, Mr. Eban mentioned that the Israel Government had told the United States Government that they would not object to a carefully regulated gesture from the United States on the supply of arms to Jordan. Knowing that the U.S. Government might have internal problems about this, they had used their influence to explain it favourably to their friends in the Near East.

4. Mr. Eban then turned to Israel's other frontiers: with Lebanon there was no problem as Lebanon had no interest in stirring things up. With the U.A.R. there was also a measure of disengagement even if it might be only temporary. A recent air incursion from the U.A.R. had given the Egyptians no comfort as they had lost two MIG aircraft. Only with Syria there remained a big question mark. Mr. Eban did not think that Syrians really knew where they were going. Israel could not live with a guerilla war situation owing to the small size of the country and the fact that every attack inevitably threatened something vital either in the way of lives or property. The Syrians had at first agreed to the Extraordinary Meetings of the Israel/Syria Mixed Armistice Commission, and then they had withdrawn from them. The central question now was whether the Syrians were determined to go ahead with the so-called popular war or not; at the moment they seemed hesitant. Mr. Eban wondered what could be done to make the Syrians come down on the side of reason. He realised the Western countries had only limited influence in Syria, but he thought it would be useful to make it quite clear to the Syrian Government that if they embarked on a rash policy of violence they would receive no support from abroad. What had been said by the U.K. Delegate in the Security Council on this point last October was very satisfactory; they would not expect us to say any more than that. Though there had been a number of recent incidents, fortunately none of them had been fatal. In any case Israel's Government's policy would be one of being slow to anger. Mr. Brown said that while we sympathised with Israel's difficulties he must stress Her Majesty's Government's view that any resort to retaliation by the Israel Regular Army would have very grave consequences for us all. He added that if the Israel Government reached the point where they saw no alternative to responding to Syrian actions by force he hoped they would inform H.M. Government before taking action, though of course he could not undertake in advance to say what H.M.G.'s attitude would be.

Soviet policy in the Middle East

5. Mr. Eban pointed out that the degree of Soviet penetration of and support for the Syrian Government was a new experience in the Middle East. The Americans had had nothing very comforting to say or suggest about this. They had said that it was not like Cuba, and they had left the clear impression that they did not propose to do anything about it, on the grounds that Western interests in and ties with other parts of the area were strong. It was understandable that the

/Americans

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Americans should take this line, but it was not very encouraging for the Israelis, who had to bear with the Syrian regime on their borders. Mr. Eban went on to suggest that if the East-West dialogue continued there were good grounds for asking the Soviet Government to declare their respect for the status quo as far as the maintenance of existing frontiers was concerned. The Soviet Government would certainly continue to work to bring down regimes which they regarded as reactionary, but they might be brought to agree that frontiers in the Middle East should not be changed by violence, as this was only an extension of a principle to which they attached importance in Europe.

6. Mr. Brown said that the Middle East had not come up in the talks with Mr. Kosygin as so much time had been spent on the question of Vietnam. However, he agreed that within the framework of our continuing talks with the Soviet Government, we would seek a suitable opportunity to urge Soviet co-operation in the maintenance of the territorial integrity of Middle Eastern states. Mr. Thomson pointed out that it was precisely on the question of the status quo on the frontiers that the Arabs expected Soviet support for their point of view.

Relations with other East European countries

7. Mr. Eban said that the Israel Government were trying to extend their relations with East European countries and had achieved some success with all the Communist countries, apart from the Soviet Union. They had a particular community of feeling with the Poles, who had themselves suffered so much as a nation in the past and whose country had also been the scene of many Jewish sacrifices. The Jewish communities in the Eastern European countries were relatively much better off than the community in the Soviet Union. They were allowed to practise their religion and to develop their culture freely, and there was freedom for Jews to emigrate to Israel if they wished. For reasons of presentation, particularly to the Arabs, this was often represented as simply a question of allowing the reunion of split families, but in fact any Jew was able to emigrate freely. This greater freedom in East European countries outside the Soviet Union had existed since the war.

Relations with the U.A.R.

8. Mr. Eban said that the Israel Government had no objection in principle to a resumption of diplomatic relations between Britain and the U.A.R. as they accepted H.M. Government's assurances that essential Israel interests would not be sacrificed. However, they would be sorry to see the resumption of relations take place in such a way that the Egyptians were given a "sense of victory". This was more important in the Middle East than it would be elsewhere, because in the Middle East how things seemed was much more important than what they really were. Although Israel would like good relations with the U.A.R., Israel's sympathies were with the countries which today were struggling to resist Egyptian domination. In the Israel Government's view, it would not be possible for them to establish good relations with the U.A.R. without the U.A.R. being "taken down a peg" first. The urge to resist Egyptian domination had never been so strong among the Arab countries - in the Arabian Peninsula, in Jordan, in N. Africa and even in Iraq. It was best for everyone that Egypt should be confined to her Egyptian destiny.

9. Mr. Brown stressed that whatever happened about relations with the U.A.R., there would certainly be no change in the special ties between Britain and Israel. He did not accept that British contracts

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with the Egyptians had taken place in such a way as to give them a "sense of victory". He explained that the message to President Nasser had been firm about what the U.A.R. would have to do if relations were to be normalised. At the moment it was for the U.A.R. to make the next move. But he could not agree that Egypt had to be taken down a peg or two; and he had not minded taking an initiative - when Amer's presence in Leningrad had made it easy to do so - to get things started. Mr. Brown went on to explain again H.M. Government's view that there would be positive gain in the context of the situation in South Arabia and in other respects in having diplomatic relations with the U.A.R. This would be a gain not only for Britain, but also for other countries in the area, including Israel. As for the Egyptians staying home, he had pointed out to Amer that whilst some dictators had made a reputation by what they did at home, few had gained by adventures abroad. Mr. Eban referred to the fashion of dividing the Arab world into revolutionaries and reactionaries, a division in which the reactionaries were the one which were making progress. Israel had profited by the collapse of the Arab Summit which had preceded this conflict; but thought the acceptance of this division as misleading and harmful. Mr. Brown commented that he did not think there was much momentum in the attempt to build up a revolutionary bloc.

South Arabia

10. Mr. Eban expressed concern that the situation in South Arabia after Britain's departure might be exploited by the U.A.R. in such a way as to enable President Nasser to regain his dynamism, and consequently restore his flagging influence in the Arab world. Mr. Eban was discouraged by the lack of world reaction to Egyptian aggression and use of gas warfare in the Yemen and was concerned also that South Arabia might be a jumping off ground for further U.A.R. disruptive activities in the Persian Gulf. All this was of concern, not only to Israel, but also to Iran, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia and Jordan. The Israel Government asked themselves, therefore, what could be done to maintain the independence of South Arabia after Britain's departure. They had in mind economic and military aid from Britain and the possibility of some sort of guarantee which would not necessarily mean a military presence. Could H.M. Government for example say that they were committed to the maintenance of the security and integrity of the new South Arabian state? Could other countries e.g. Iran, Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia be persuaded to express an interest in maintaining its security and integrity, in which they had a legitimate interest? Lastly, Mr. Eban thought it important to secure the entry of the new state into the United Nations as soon as possible, so that there should be international recognition of its independent status.

11. Mr. Brown explained H.M. Government's concern to leave South Arabia in good order and with a stable Government. He told Mr. Eban that the United Kingdom was in fact giving considerably more economic and military aid than was perhaps realised; this would include some aircraft. But H.M. Government could not go back on their decision not to undertake on their own to guarantee the state of South Arabia. Firstly reasons of economy dictated that Britain must cut down overseas commitments, and secondly a defence agreement with the United Kingdom might turn out to be a handicap for the new government by making its independent status more questionable. Mr. Brown agreed, however, that early steps would have to be taken to secure the admission of South Arabia to the United Nations. He told Mr. Eban in confidence that consideration was being given to ways and means of

/supporting

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supporting South Arabia during the interval between independence and admission to the United Nations. Mr. Eban said that he had detected an evolution in the United States' attitude to the problem of South Arabia. When the Israelis had first raised the question with the Americans, the latter had been too preoccupied with events in Viet Nam to give it much thought. More recently they had appeared to be concerned about the vacuum which would be left by British departure though they had not made any particular suggestions about filling it. Mr. Brown said that where the Americans could help most would be by doing more to get a stop put to terrorism before independence. Mr. Thomson pointed out that the Americans had all along been very reluctant to do this probably owing to deep-seated inhibitions stemming from their colonial past about appearing to be involved in supporting a colonial power.

Relations between Israel and Iran

12. Mr. Eban said that while one must recognise that there was no early chance of a peace treaty with the Arab states, it was particularly important that the Arabs should begin to see Israel being accepted by the Governments of other Middle Eastern Moslem states. In this connection the strange but nonetheless substantial Israel position in Iran was of importance. Though Israel had less than full formal relations with the Iranian Government, there was considerable contact especially through the presence of technical experts from Israel. There was also the important though unpublicised oil traffic from Iran to Israel. Mr. Eban went on to say that a recent report suggesting that the British Ambassador had advised the Shah in a sense unfavourable to Israel's interests had happily turned out to be inaccurate. Nevertheless the Israel Government would like it to be made clear to the Shah that Britain and other Western friends viewed the growing relationship between Israel and Iran with favour. Mr. Brown said that H.M. Government certainly viewed this relationship with favour. Their only reservation was that it needed to be handled with a certain reticence to avoid putting the Shah in a difficult, if not impossible position. Mr. Eban said that in the Israel view the Iranians were sensitive enough about their relationship with Israel and certainly did not need to be encouraged in that direction. They seemed happy enough about the reality of their relationship with Israel provided that the image of that reality could be obscured. Sir Denis Allen pointed out that in Ankara he had learned a good deal of the practical assistance which Israel was giving to Iran. He also referred to relations between Turkey and Israel and to the Turkish Foreign Minister's recent statement indicating that any improvement in relations with the Arab states should not be to the detriment of Turkish relations with Israel.

Trade Problems

14. Mr. Eban suggested that Anglo/Israel trade questions could be discussed during the forthcoming visit of the Israel Minister of Trade and Commerce in April.

Relations with the E.E.C.

15. Mr. Eban mentioned that Israel was also interested in developing her relations with the E.E.C. He explained that Israel had applied for associate membership similar to that of Greece and Turkey. He did not anticipate any particular difficulties about achieving this but he pointed out that it would create problems for

/Israel,

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Israel, in view of her trading links with Britain, if British membership of the E.E.C. were to be effective before Israel's associate membership of the Community. Mr. Brown said that it was impossible to say whether Britain would succeed in her current attempt to join the E.E.C. He explained, however, that the results of present exploratory talks had been more encouraging than the press had indicated. Mr. Eban asked about Britain's next step after these present talks. Mr. Brown said that it was impossible to forecast what this would be as it would depend on many circumstances; it was quite certain, however, that there would be a further move so that the present momentum would not be lost.

*Copies in Israel, Jan. 1966
and Middle East (Policy), Nov. 1964.*

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Jerusalem
20. 11. 1966

Dear Prime Minister,

When we met eighteen months ago you kindly consented to our maintaining direct contact in matters of major importance affecting the Middle East. With this in mind, I take the liberty of approaching you regarding the situation at the Security Council in connection with the Jordanian complaint now being discussed. As you know, our action in the Hebron area on November 13th came after a series of murderous attacks and acts of sabotage within Israeli territory, perpetrated from across the border, culminating on November 12th in the laying of a mine by terrorists operating from the Hebron area on Israeli soil which caused the death of three Israeli soldiers and the wounding of another six.

I feel certain that you will understand when I say that it is most difficult to discharge my Governmental responsibilities when the laying of mines renders travel by road and rail unsafe and when not even the residential districts of the capital of Israel are secure from infiltrators.

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Our Ambassador in London has conveyed to me the critical attitude taken by your Government in respect of our action. These views, as those of other friendly Governments, are receiving full attention.

The United Nations Security Council is now on the threshold of adopting a resolution on this subject. While in no way underestimating the seriousness of the situation I feel I must bring to your attention my grave apprehension at the consequences of an exaggerated and disproportionate resolution. A text is now being sponsored by the Nigerian representative which in its extremity and intemperance would go beyond all precedents of what has ever been adopted or even proposed in United Nations history in relation to the Middle East. The extremism of this proposal is reflected in three points:

1. It employs the term "condemnation" against Israel. In over 18 years of Arab aggression against Israel, the Security Council has never employed the term "condemn" in relation to any Arab state.
2. There is a warning of further drastic action to be taken under the Charter.
3. There is no reference whatsoever to the duty of neighbouring governments to prevent such actions as those

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which have been incessantly undertaken over the past months by Arab terrorist groups against Israeli citizens and property. It is well to remember that the latest terrorist act of November 12th was perpetrated after the appeal by the majority of the Security Council members against further terrorism. This would be the first time that the Security Council is asked to deliberately ignore provocation and completely disregard the death of citizens of a member state through aggression directed against it from across an international border.

I am informed that the United States Government, which shares H.M.G.'s basic views on this issue, is attempting to correct these distortions of justice and precedent. May I express my hope that your Delegation will act in a similar spirit towards this end.

The dangers arising from pushing criticism too far are twofold. On the Arab side extremism would be encouraged and the guerilla raids renewed and in Israel a mood of frustration and disillusionment with international justice would create a climate in which it would be difficult for steadfast prudent councils to prevail.

In light of these considerations I venture to appeal to you to instruct your Delegation to help in producing a text which, while effectively dealing with the question now before the Security

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Council, will not carry injustice to an extreme which may lead to undesirable developments.

Levi Eshkol



EMBASSY OF ISRAEL
2 PALACE GREEN
LONDON, W 8
WESTERN 8001

שגרירות ישראל
11114

STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY TO THE CABINET
AT HER WEEKLY PRESS CONFERENCE ON
SUNDAY 20TH NOVEMBER 1966

At the cabinet meeting the Foreign Minister surveyed the deliberations at the Security Council and reactions in various capitals. The Prime Minister gave details of the various steps taken to strengthen defensive measures against infiltrators. With reference to the imbalance in the criticisms voiced in various quarters with regard to Israel's fervent desire for peace and her advocacy of mutuality in relationships in contrast to the Arab governments' evident contention that it is permissible for murder gangs to infiltrate Israeli territory while the Israel Government is to be deprived of its right of self-defence and of action to put an end to violence. Israel is dedicated in her desire for peace and derives no pleasure out of fighting. The purpose of the specific operation had been to clarify to the population of the area that it is essential for it to desist from co-operation with the saboteurs and from affording them encouragement and shelter. The whole aim of the raid by the Israel Defence Forces was this limited objective and definite instructions had been issued to the participating forces to avoid inflicting loss of life, and to return to base on accomplishing the operation as defined. The Israel Defence Forces meticulously carried out the order to evacuate the houses in the village prior to their demolition. The Prime Minister pointed out that because of developments, the scale of

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שגרירות ישראל
לונדון

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the operation was extended and by the need for self-defence loss of life and injured were caused to both sides. The Government of Israel expresses its deep sorrow for the loss of life on both sides. In refuting the exaggerated accounts about the size of the Israel Defence Forces involved and particularly about the losses to life and property, the Prime Minister stated that in fact the forces were composed only of a small percentage of the numbers that are alleged to have taken part. No Israeli aircraft bombed ground targets. The allegation that artillery was involved is a complete fabrication.

The Prime Minister reiterated his hope that there would be an end to the blood-letting. He repeated his call to the Arab leaders to let Israel live in peace within her borders, just as Israel wishes to let them and in fact does let them live in peace and quiet within their territories. He expressed the hope that peace-loving nations would work for the cessation of hostile acts and for the reduction of the tension.

hh

Israel

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FROM TEL AVIV TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Cypher/OTP

FO(S)CO(S)WH(S) DISTRIBUTION

Mr. Hadow
No. 431
18 October, 1966

D. 17.10 18 October, 1966
R. 17.30 18 October, 1966

IMMEDIATE
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Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 431 of
18 October,

Repeated for information to : Damascus Washington
UKMIS New York MOD (Army)
Jerusalem JIG Cyprus
Amman Beirut.

My telegram No. 429.

This could not have come at a worse time.

2. At a farewell lunch for Air Marshal Sir Thomas Prickett on 16 October, attended by Israel Chief of Staff, Head of the Air Force Chief of Intelligence, General Weizmann and other senior Israel officers, Israelis expressed confidence that Israel appeal to Security Council had been the right course in that, if terrorist activities continued from Syria, Israel counter action would have more understanding from the West than if Israel had not first sought recourse to the world body.

Officers concerned did not appear belligerent, although they showed confidence that if ordered to do so they could quickly and successfully teach Syria a lesson.

3. It is perhaps indicative of the form which this lesson might take that the Israelis reiterated the theme that previous reprisals had not had desired results, and it was now necessary to lower the prestige of the Syrian armed forces in a striking manner. My service attachés interpret this as meaning action taken would therefore be something more than localized retaliatory raid or air strike, but would be something less than a full scale attack on e.g., Damascus. It might well be a large scale operation to occupy the Syrian border areas, including all the high ground which dominates the Hula Valley, with maximum destruction of Syrian military personnel and equipment. This area would then be held as a bargaining factor pending some United Nations solution. Such a step would of course also serve as a major setback to any Jordan Waters diversion plans of the Syrians.

4. My American colleague agrees with me, however, that it is unlikely that the Israelis will take any immediate action while their complaint is still in the Security Council. Moreover, General Bull is due to inspect the defence zones on each side of the frontier tomorrow, and is reporting to Israelis this afternoon on the outcome of his talks in Damascus. But once the debate is over, if there are any
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Tel Aviv telegram No.431 to Foreign Office.

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more incidents I fear the Israeli Government are certain to react and would have widespread Parliamentary support (see my immediately following telegram).

5. Considerations advanced in Damascus telegram No.500 would cut little ice with the Israelis whose reply would be that nobody wishes to lay a hand on Syria, provided she behaves herself, but if the Western Powers, the United Nations or indeed the world as a whole cannot prevent the Syrians from conducting or abetting terrorism against Israel, then Israel will have to look after herself.

6. Foreign Office please pass Immediate Damascus 60, New York 57, MOD Army and routine to Jerusalem 79, Washington 46, Beirut 73 and JIG Cyprus 45.

[Transmitted to D.C.C. Repeated as requested to remaining posts].

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*Prime Minister
A good class statement of
policy. free with reading*

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EASTERN (GENERAL)
29 March, 1966

Section 1

BRITISH POLICY TOWARDS THE ARAB/ISRAEL DISPUTE

Mr. Stewart to Mr. Hadow (Tel Aviv)

*What in all this
does the
normalisation
just - perhaps
declare content
stand!*

(No. 53. Secret)
Sir,

Foreign Office,
29 March, 1966.

I have recently been considering some aspects of our policy towards the Arab/Israel dispute, and in particular the rationale of our interventions with the Israel and Arab Governments on various problems arising out of the dispute. Under our present practice, we find ourselves from time to time giving unpalatable advice to the Governments concerned, more often perhaps to the Israel Government than to the Arab Governments. We have now been doing this for a long time; and it is for consideration whether we achieve anything useful by it; whether what we achieve offsets the irritation we arouse; and whether, if the dispute has ceased to be our concern, we cannot disengage. Your Excellency suggested to me before your departure for Israel that we might at times be inclined to speak to Middle Eastern Governments as though we still had the substantial physical power in the area which we once possessed. Following the Defence Review, our military presence will diminish further, and the time is therefore appropriate for a fresh look at this question.

2. There is an apparent paradox in our existing policy and practice. Our declared policy is to be impartial, to avoid taking sides in the dispute; but no amount of assertion that we are being impartial can entirely disguise the fact that, because our policy favours the maintenance of the *status quo*, its operation is more favourable to Israel than to the Arabs. In spite of this, it appears that—especially in higher level contacts—we find ourselves more often being negative towards Israel, and critical of her actions and policies, than we are towards the Arab Governments.

3. On closer inspection, it can be seen that there is no paradox or inconsistency in this. That our general policy is more unpalatable to the Arabs than to the Israelis can best be seen if we set out what we have to say to both sides, stripped of diplomatic politeness. What we (and the Americans) have to say to the Israelis is this:

"We see no prospect that the Arabs will be willing to make peace on terms which you can accept in the foreseeable future, or any means of compelling them to. You must be realistic about the strength of Arab feeling on this. You must also recognise that it is important to Western interests—which are extremely important to your own survival—for us to maintain tolerable relations and some influence with the Arabs. You must not, therefore, expect us to take sides, or to appear to take sides, with you against the Arabs. For our part, we will see that you are able to acquire weapons for your defence; and, as you know, the Arabs are well aware that they cannot attempt to destroy Israel without taking on the United States Sixth Fleet. In return, we expect you to co-operate in preventing the dispute coming to the boil, by acting with restraint, and by maintaining a reasonable relationship with the United Nations, so that, if you have to be helped, it can be done under United Nations cover. We understand the difficulties of your position, but, by the law of possession, the preservation of the *status quo* works markedly in your favour."

For the Arabs we have this grimmer message:

"You lost a diplomatic war, took to arms, lost a military war, and have been

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losing a cold war ever since. Some day you will have to come to terms with reality and face the consequences of this, instead of wasting your substance and energies in the fruitless pursuit of what you might have got 20 years ago. There is no prospect that Israel will make any substantial concessions now or in the future, and there is no prospect of your being able to force them to; sooner or later you must swallow your pride and settle for the *status quo* with (American) compensation for the refugees. Meanwhile, you are your own masters. We shall not try to compel you to make peace and we shall not take sides, but we shall oppose any attempt by either side to upset the *status quo* by the use of force."

4. This contrast itself is perhaps sufficient explanation of why we are more reluctant to press our views on the Arabs than on the Israelis. But there is another and more significant explanation of why we find ourselves speaking more often and more plainly about these matters to the Israelis. Though the Arabs deeply resent our attitude, they most of the time accept that we are unlikely to change, and are resigned to it. A dialogue with them on the general subject generates heat and resentment, but seldom any profit. It is important that our attitude should be made clear often enough to avoid any danger of it being misunderstood (as Mr. George Thomson, the Minister of State, made a point of doing on his visits to Arab capitals last autumn), but beyond what is necessary for this reason, we avoid such discussion as much as possible in official or high level exchanges or public statements.

5. By contrast, there is nothing of passivity or resignation about Israel diplomacy. There is much more contact at all levels with us and this activity is directed, understandably enough, towards getting our policies amended to serve Israel's interests as the Israel Government sees them. This is, of course, the object of all diplomacy, and if the Israelis sometimes push too hard and are sometimes over-astute, they have no monopoly of these faults, and their diplomacy is less effective on account of them. But the consequence of this active diplomacy is that if we are to protect our own interests and retain control of our own policies, we need to be far more wide-awake in dealing with them,

and have to say "no" far more often, than in dealing with the Arabs. A temporising or evasive reply, which to the Arabs is a preferred form of negative, is an invitation to the Israelis to probe further or to put a favourable interpretation on any ambiguity; no negative reply, however firm, will discourage the Israelis from reopening a subject at a later date. Thus it is easy to see why, though our policy is basically more negative towards the Arabs than towards Israel, we may appear to be disagreeing with the Israelis more often.

6. This contrast does not apply to our interventions with the two sides over border incidents, and here our claim to be even-handed in our treatment of the two sides can be sustained, even quantitatively. We take care to follow the United Nations version of events wherever we possibly can, and an essential ingredient of an approach enjoining restraint on one side is that we should be able to say we are giving the same advice to the other. Both sides argue that we are unfair, and both have something of a case: the Israelis, that we should not equate their defensive retaliatory raids with provocative action against them; the Arabs, that it is unfair to equate the irruptions of terrorists into Israel, in spite of efforts to prevent them, with attacks by regular Israel forces ordered by the Israel Government. But the fact that both sides complain is evidence of our impartiality.

7. The justification for these interventions is the following. The danger of serious hostilities between Israel and the Arabs lies almost entirely in the accidental escalation of frontier incidents. (The other dangers are a second pre-emptive attack by Israel or one by Egypt, perhaps caused by the belief that Israel is about to acquire nuclear weapons. Neither is likely.) Since this would endanger important interests of ours (including general peace), there is a *prima facie* case for our using such influence as we have, in conjunction with the Americans, to prevent this happening. Our influence is not based at all (or only very remotely) on any physical power we are believed to have but on the survival in some quarters of respect for our views, and a concern to maintain friendly relations with us, for a variety of mostly material reasons—such as our readiness to provide economic assistance or sell arms or give diplomatic support. The Americans are in a different position because the Sixth Fleet

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is a very present physical force and known to be the ultimate deterrent. But the Americans expect us to support them in their diplomatic activities; and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation—whose role we seek to emphasise—also counts on our support.

8. I think we can claim that our interventions—in conjunction with the actions of others—are reasonably effective. The advice about the diversion of the Jordan headwaters which was offered to the Lebanese last summer by ourselves, the Americans and the French was followed by a cessation of work in Lebanon, and almost certainly prevented Israel military action. Our advice and American advice to King Hussein and his Prime Minister may have prevented the Jordanians reacting militarily to two Israel retaliatory raids last year; it undoubtedly made them more aware of the need for Jordan to prevent terrorist raids into Israel. In Israel there is a continual argument between those who favour frequent and drastic military retaliation, and those who advocate more moderate policies; there is also an articulate public conscience which attaches importance to Western opinion. It is in our interest that the more moderate views should be encouraged.

9. There is room for doubt about the soundness of our advice to the Israelis on the use of force in two respects:

(i) The Israelis' readiness to retaliate acts as a deterrent to neighbouring Governments and populations and therefore helps to keep the border quiet. Is it therefore honest of us to deplore it?

(ii) The Israelis argue with some cogency that by taking very limited military action against Syrian works to divert the River Jordan on three occasions last year they prevented a worse crisis later.

This is a difficult problem, but it is hard to see how we could take a different attitude. The Israelis insist on justifying their actions to us, and silence would be taken for approval. We can hardly tell the Arabs that they will not be allowed to right their alleged injustices by the use of force and must work through the United Nations machinery, without being able to say that we express the same views to the Israelis. It is true that the Israel attacks across the frontier in 1965 did not provoke

any counter-attacks by Arab forces, and are partly responsible for the present Arab political disarray; but this does not invalidate our argument about the risks of escalation. We cannot assume that the Jordan Government will follow advice not to respond to the next retaliatory raid, and the Jordan Waters problem has not been settled by shelling Syrian diversion works. Even if we were prepared to admit that some Israel use of force were justified, it would be difficult to defend any blanket approval, and just as difficult for us to claim the right to draw distinctions between justifiable and unjustifiable retaliatory raids. With all its disadvantages therefore, it seems best that we should continue to tell the Israelis that we cannot approve their use of force. Even if we know that this will not cause the Israelis to abandon the use of force, our attitude will have some restraining effect on the frequency and scale of its use. (There is a marked contrast between the scale, and the care taken to avoid loss of life, in recent Israel retaliatory raids, and the punitive raids with heavy loss of life of the 1954-55 period.)

10. So far this argument seems to have established reasonable justification for our interventions, as being fair and effective. It remains to consider whether they are expedient or necessary. What is the case for our disengaging from them, and—equally important—what are the practical possibilities of our doing so?

11. We have since 1958 tried to pursue a policy of disengagement from political involvement in the Middle East wherever this was compatible with the protection of our interests or the discharge of our responsibilities. The main areas where this limitation has applied to make disengagement impossible have been the Aden/Persian Gulf complex, the Arab/Israel conflict and Libya. The purpose of the recent Defence Review was to seek means of limiting our overseas expenditure by reducing our commitments wherever it was possible. The Arab/Israel dispute does not involve us in any military commitments. Nevertheless it is a financial burden (Jordan: £2,100,000; UNRWA: £1,800,000; UNEF: £550,000; total £4.5 million per annum) and a political burden. Our involvement is a hangover of history, but in this case our historical connection is so charged with emotions and

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bad memories that it is as much a disqualification as a qualification for our playing a special role. Nor is our role unique, or predominant; during the past 10 years, the United States Government has come to be the principal Western influence: the dependence of Egypt, Israel and Jordan on United States aid, and the deterrent power of the United States Sixth Fleet, make the United States Government's voice far more effective than ours. Furthermore, our economic interests, and the political role we play elsewhere in the Middle East, make us more vulnerable to Arab pressures than the United States—or any other Western country. Our involvement in the Aden/Persian Gulf complex generates inevitable frictions with Arab nationalism which we wish to minimise: since the Arab/Israel dispute is the most sensitive of all Arab nationalist issues, our involvement in it can only be detrimental to the pursuit of our policies elsewhere.

12. All this adds up to a powerful argument for the thesis that, since the Americans' role in preserving the peace is already so predominant, the general Western interest, and our own national interests, would be served by a further reduction of our involvement in the Arab/Israel dispute. But the practical limitations on the possibility of radical disengagement are severe. However fervently we may wish to be rid of the surviving traces of our mandatory responsibilities, the Arabs continue to hold us primarily responsible for the establishment of Israel. Other events since 1948 have confirmed them in this view, and the emotional complex which has been built up over the years is not one of which we could disembarrass ourselves in the foreseeable future. It might be easier to rid ourselves of this historical albatross if we did not have our Middle East economic interests. But these interests do put the Arabs in a position to bring pressure upon us; so long as we have them, we cannot disengage from all political involvement in the Middle East, and inevitably this includes involvement in the Arab/Israel question. In this way, our economic interests are at one and the same time a reason for our wanting to disengage, and a reason for our being unable to do so.

13. Another most important inhibiting factor is our need to work with the

Americans in our Middle East policies. Our attitude towards the Arab/Israel problem is an element in our relations with them which we cannot disregard. They carry the main financial burden of supporting UNRWA and UNEF, and also of aid to Jordan (about 8 to 1 against ours), the purpose of which is to preserve the political *status quo* on which peace depends. They would object strongly to our seeking to reduce our proportionate share. They also attach importance to our joining with them in diplomatic action where we are in a position to, and would resent our refusal to do so.

14. Our room for manoeuvre is thus, as usual, very narrow. Whilst recognising these limitations, I think there is nevertheless some scope for cautiously feeling our way towards the exit; for emphasising more and more to the Arabs and Israelis that we are not parties to their dispute, and that any views we express or action we take is as a member of the United Nations in support of its actions, and not in the assertion of any "special role". (We shall, however, always have a role more special than ordinary members of the United Nations on account of our permanent seat on the Security Council.) This would be no more than the continuation of a process that has been going on for some time. In the Jordan Waters problem, for example, we have managed to avoid being drawn in to anything like the extent that the Americans have. We have begun to reduce our grant aid to Jordan and to UNRWA, though there is no likelihood that we can entirely get rid of these financial obligations, or that to UNEF, in the foreseeable future. (UNEF may indeed cost us more.) On frontier incidents, we have increasingly emphasised that we regard UNTSO as the proper authority to keep the peace. In the restatement in May 1963 of our basic attitude to the dispute the then Prime Minister endorsed President Kennedy's statement, but did not follow it in the explicit reference to the possibility of action outside the United Nations. Since then, although the Americans have, in discussion with the Arabs and Israelis, talked about the possible use of the Sixth Fleet in the event of aggression by either side, we have eschewed any reference to a possible military role for ourselves. We cannot, and should not, take any startling new initiatives, but we must continue to proffer advice when we think this desirable,

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even though it may be unpalatable to one side or the other. We cannot prevent the parties arming themselves; but we can try to ensure that some kind of balance is kept. We shall never please either side; but so long as there is a measure of dissatisfaction on both sides our policies are probably more or less all right.

15. With both Arabs and Israelis a gradual abandonment of "governessy" interventions would eliminate the friction in bilateral relations which these occasion. But neither will quickly adjust to the changed situation, and there is an important distinction in this between Israelis and Arabs. Even more than for the Arabs, the Arab/Israel dispute is a King Charles head for the Israelis—and for good reasons: all their policies—bilateral or multilateral, commercial, cultural or political—are geared to it. If they have to choose between putting up with lectures from us and our total withdrawal from involvement, they will choose our lectures without hesitation; and we should expect them to fight a strong and skilful rearguard action against our disengagement.

Conclusions

16. To sum up:

(i) Although our policy is basically more negative towards the Arabs than towards Israel, the contrasting diplomatic methods and characters of the Arabs and Israelis make it inevitable that we should find ourselves expressing disagreement more often to the Israelis than to the Arabs.

(ii) The exercise of influence by the Americans and ourselves does help to keep the peace.

(iii) Nevertheless, our interests would be best served by our withdrawal from involvement in the Arab/Israel dispute.

(iv) Such an evolution can only be gradual and incomplete, and we must be careful not to cause trouble with the Americans by trying to rush it.

(v) Meanwhile, there is no feasible alternative to our present policy of impartiality between the two sides, which involves disapproving the use of force by either side, even though we are aware that our advice will not always be heeded.

(vi) The working rules for our handling of our contacts with the two sides should include:

(a) increasing emphasis on the fact that we have no special role to play;

(b) avoiding initiatives of our own. When the UNTSO or the Americans ask for our support, we should not refuse it. When the two sides seek our intervention, it is not always easy to refuse at least to act as a channel of communication, but we should try to avoid putting our judgments or any suggestion of "authority" into such communications.

17. Your Excellency and the Heads of Her Majesty's Missions in the Middle East to whom I am copying this despatch may find it a useful basis for discussion of this subject at the forthcoming conference of Heads of Missions in London, which you and they are to attend.

18. I am copying this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives at Paris, Washington, United Kingdom Mission, New York, Amman, Beirut, Damascus, Cairo, Baghdad, Jedda, Bahrain, Kuwait, Tehran, Ankara, Jerusalem and to the Political Office, Middle East Command.

I have, &c.

MICHAEL STEWART.

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