

170

J

J 3028

96

702

27432

SEP 1941

CI

Registry Number } J 3028/18/16

TELEGRAM FROM Sir M. Lampson, (Cairo).

No. 2964 Dated 23rd Sept. 1941.

Received in Registry } 24th Sept. 1941.

J : Egypt and Sudan

Political situation.

Refers to Foreign Office telegram No. 3289 (J 2992/18/16) with the contents of which the Prime Minister was delighted. He said that he was finding King Farouk undeveloped and irresponsible and had warned him lest he share the fate of the Shah of Persia. Prime Minister claims that he still enjoys King Farouk's complete support.

Last Paper.

J3027

(Minutes.)

2992 undep - copy of ref attached

References.

The direct report to the King must, I think, mean both Nashaat's tel to Hassanini & the letter which we sent direct to Cairo via AHQ Cairo. The latter was, of course, written by the Egyptian Ambassador here.

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)

Nashaat Pasha seems to have played up well

Bobala
24/9

H. Kymour
24/9

Alb.
Sept. 24-1941.

(Action completed.)

B
29/9

(Index)

W. H. K.
29/10

Next Paper.

J3034

AE Sept-25

Dh 25/9

J 3028
SEP 1941

[CRYPTER]

GENERAL DISTRIBUTION.

FROM: EGYPT.

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE.

Sir M. Lampson
No. 2964
23rd September, 1941.

D. 11.30 a.m. 23rd September, 1941.
R. 4.10 p.m. 23rd September, 1941.

0 0 0 0

IMMEDIATE.

J2992

I gave the substance of your telegram No. 3289 to Prime Minister this morning.

2. He was delighted. He had had preliminary telegram from Egyptian Ambassador but had not yet seen the latter's direct report to King Farouk of your conversation. From this he deduced that His Majesty "must be furious". In my presence he telephoned Hassanein Pasha to come and see him at once.

5. In subsequent talk the Prime Minister volunteered that he was finding King Farouk sadly undeveloped and irresponsible. He had again warned His Majesty lest he share the fate of the Shah: "I told him that he was no safer than the Shah was".

4. I enquired if despite all this he still enjoyed King Farouk's complete support. Prime Minister claims he still does [group unde:] which seems somewhat odd in these circumstances. Prime Minister is greatly pleased with your intervention which he regards as most opportune and wholesome. We agreed that before moving further I should await developments from his talk with Hassanein Pasha.

24 SEP 1941

RECEIVED

J

102

1941

EGYPT and SUDAN

J 3040

25 SEP 1941

Registry Number } J 3040/18/16

TELEGRAM FROM Sir M. Lampson, Cairo.

No. 2973.

Dated 23rd Sept., 1941.
Received in Registry } 25th Sept., 1941.

J: Egypt and Sudan.

Audience of King Farouk. ✓

Refers to Cairo telegram 2964 (J 3028/18/16). At suggestion of the Prime Minister has asked for an audience at once of King Farouk.

Last Paper.

References.

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)

J 3028 in dept ^(Minutes.) copy. Also about

The understanding was that, following upon the let for Nakhast Pasha, the King would call for Sir M. Lampson. But Sir Miles, ~~both~~ quite rightly, is taking no chances.

Ch. Balouin

25/9

MOA. 25/9

(Action completed.)

Bo 27/9

(Index)

20/9/41

Next Paper.

J 3046

[CYPHER]

GENERAL DISTRIBUTION.

J 3040
25 SEP 1941

FROM: EGYPT.

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE.

Sir M. Lampson.
No. 2973.
23rd September, 1941.

D. 8.55 p.m. 23rd September, 1941.
R. 2.35 a.m. 24th September, 1941.

& & &

My telegram No. 2964. *2928*

At direct suggestion of the Prime Minister this morning
I have asked for an audience at once with King Farouk.

[Faint circular stamp]

173.

J

101

1941

27432

EGYPT and SUDAN

J 3046

26 SEP 1941

Registry Number } 3046/18/16.

TELEGRAM FROM Sir I. Lamson, Cairo.

No. 2988.

Dated 24th Sept. 1941.

Received in Registry 26th Sept. 1941.

J: Egypt and Sudan.

Conversation with King Farouk.

Record of a 1 1/2 hour conversation with King Farouk, in which a full account of the conversation with the Egyptian Ambassador as recorded in Foreign Office telegram 3289 (J 2949/18/16). Various questions were discussed, including the anti-British attitude of Nahas Pasha, the cotton situation, the King's faulty entourage, including the attitude of Abdel Wahab Talaat and Sheik Mataghi and the tightening up of the Security Department. His general impression was that His Majesty was trying to prove himself amenable.

Last Paper.

J3040

References.

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)

(Action completed.)

2/10

(Index.)

577 14/10/41

Next Paper.

J3047

(Minutes.)

J3017 in dept - copy attached

If the effect of the talk is to damp down Nahas's campaign, it will have done good. But no one can have much faith in Farouk's promises

S. H. Bateman
26/9

Our previous experience indicates that the effect of these interviews soon wears off. However, things may be better if the cotton agitation dies down.

W. G. ...
26/9

Ab. Sep. 26. 1941.

[Cypher]

GENERAL DISTRIBUTION

J 3046

FROM: EGYPTFROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

26 SEP 1941

Sir H. Lampson
 No. 2988
 24th September, 1941.

D. 2.55 p.m. 25th September, 1941.
 R. 6.50 p.m. 25th September, 1941.

+++++

IMMEDIATE

I had 1½ hours with King Farouk this afternoon. Result seemingly satisfactory.

2. I began with full account of your conversation with Egyptian Ambassador as recorded in your telegram No. 3289. His Majesty observed that it tallied with report sent by Nashat Pasha (Hassanein afterwards told me that Nashat's account had been much gilded).

3. I read His Majesty twice the text of paragraphs 3 and 4 of your telegram emphasising gravity of the language used.

4. His Majesty who had been well primed embarked at once on long explanation of how he had come to receive Nahas Pasha on 11th August to receive assurances of loyalty and handed me text of telegram sent to Nashat Pasha on 22nd September elaborating pure coincidence and not evil intent (copy by bag by air). I took the note but emphasised folly of date chosen coinciding as it did with cotton debate and immediately following Nahas' first anti-British speech. His Majesty must be singularly ill-served if his staff had not cautioned him. Furthermore I had later myself warned His Majesty through Hassanein on the morning of 23rd August that Nahas was making another anti-British speech that day: yet despite my insistent request, no move had been made by the pair to check him. No wonder the whole of the Egyptian nation and general public thereafter regarded this anti-British campaign as deliberately sponsored and fostered by His Majesty: it was now essential that the conviction be at once corrected. I got His Majesty to admit the necessity for this and to agree. (I subsequently rubbed in the same point with Hassanein). I made it clear that we should judge the success of your representations and value the assurances of loyalty His Majesty had just given me by concrete results.

5. I proceeded that we would not tolerate anything from any quarter liable to embarrass our military base in

Egypt/



Egypt. At the moment it was Mahas Pasha; but there were others. That was an essential general principle of our policy. His Majesty admitted that it naturally must be so and undertook to lend himself to nothing running counter to it. I made him repeat this.

6. Turning to cotton, His Majesty admitted at once that our attitude over acreage was sound. I pressed him to make that clear also to the world at large forthwith. He promised he would do his best.

7. Reverting once more to his faulty entourage (see paragraph 4) I suggested as personal but timely advice that in his own interest he should get rid of Abdel Wahab Talaat who was an evil influence in the Palace. His Majesty was not entirely unresponsive so something may come of it. He took it far better than I had expected. I made the same point later with Hassanein and told him to keep it going.

8. I next referred to the political sermons of Sheik Maraghi one of which had been delivered Friday in the presence of His Majesty, had been cited in the Court Circular and had created bad impression as tendentious and intended to encourage the present anti-British campaign. His Majesty maintained that the sermon had been innocuous and solely intended to invoke God's blessing on the new Shah. His Majesty had himself suggested it to Maraghi; he had meant no harm; and must assume any blame. I warned him that Maraghi should be cautioned against future indiscretion; politics and religion should be kept apart.

9. I then turned to the bad public influence of junior members of the Royal House who were notoriously anti-British. It was up to His Majesty to curb them as I knew he could if he wished. His Majesty at once admitted the truth of the charge and promised to put the brake on.

10. Finally I said that I should be once more pressing the Prime Minister to tighten up the Public Security Department and put an end to anti-British pamphlets still so prevalent. Clandestine printing presses must be ferreted out and suppressed. A change of personnel in that Department seemed necessary; After what His Majesty had said earlier I assumed that he would willingly back the Prime Minister in any reforms necessary. His Majesty promised without argument to do so. (I purposely mentioned no names but what we want is to have Hassan Rifaat Pasha re-instated in effective

charge/

3.

charge. We shall then get a real move on. The Prime Minister promised me some months ago that this would be done after certain cases then pending had been disposed of. I will now revert to it).

11. At one moment in the conversation, His Majesty incautiously observed, that in addition to invoking his aid to deal with the anti-British campaign we too must "help ourselves". I seized the opening I had been hoping for, and invited his attention to the events in Persia as conclusive proof of our readiness to take action if driven to it. This thrust went home and His Majesty with some embarrassment switched the conversation to the new Shah, who he hoped would make good.

J3017

12. I repeated [grp. undec.] that what I had said to the Prime Minister and Hassanein a few days ago (see my telegram No. 2961). His Majesty who had heard of that said he had little or no communication with his brother-in-law (of whom he spoke slightly) and never discussed politics with his sister: but (at my suggestion) he might tell the Egyptian Ambassador at Tehran to speak to the new Shah. He believed, however, the latter was so far behaving reasonably well. I replied yes, as far as I knew to date: but it was still early days.

13. The general impression of the audience was not too bad. I surmise that His Majesty had had a fright and he most definitely was out to prove himself amenable. Our conversation was most friendly throughout, even when I made your points with utmost bluntness His Majesty expressed particular regret that you should have doubted his complete loyalty and begged me several times to reassure you in regard to it. He always remembered your talk with him here with pleasure and hoped not to forfeit your official or personal regard.

160

J

83

(10/11)

27432

J 3005

19

EGYPT and SUDAN

22 SEP 1941

Registry Number } 3005/18/16.

TELEGRAM FROM Sir M. Lampson (Cairo)

No. 2942 Decypher.

Dated 20th Sept. 1941.

Received in Registry } 21st Sept. 1941.

J: Egypt and Sudan.

Situation in Egypt. ✓

The Chamber has approved the Cotton Acreage Bill, with modification. Sirry has begun to restrain the Wafd. Relations between the King and Sirry and between the King and Nahas Pasha remain ambiguous. The populace behaved well during first real air raid. Increase in the cost of living is provoking labour trouble. Sheik Al Maraghi, after Friday's prayers, referred to accession of new Shah and insinuated that Moslem nations were becoming involved in war.

27432 of 3005/18/16

Last Paper.

(Minutes.)

References.

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)

The meaning of the first paragraph of this tel is not clear. Are we to take it that the Chamber (the Senate has not yet decided so far as we know) has ~~decided~~ amended the area under cotton so that produce more than 5 million?

Paragraph 5. Shows that Egypt is well on the road to inflation. This is another argument for making the Egyptian Gov grow as much food as they can from their own soil. The Egyptian Gov are quite incapable of looking ahead or preventing Egyptians from profiteering. They only move when foreign companies are suspected of doing so (e.g. the oil corp)

(Action completed.)

(Index.)

POD 25/9

POD 25/9

Next Paper.

J 30114

Para 6: Sheikh el Maraghi is still, apparently

a King's man. He will have to be
convinced by our propaganda, before he
will come out boldly in the 'Holy City'
lack

C. Coburn

22/9

MS. 22/9

J 3005

[Cypher]

GENERAL DISTRIBUTION.

FROM EGYPT.

22 SEP 1941

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE.

Sir H. Lampson
No. 2942
20th September, 1941

D. 9.58 p.m. 20th September, 1941
R. 8.15 a.m. 21st September, 1941

a. a. a. a. a. a

The Chamber has approved Cotton Acreage Bill with modification regarding distribution of cotton areas between Upper and Lower Egypt, but is opposing increase of National Defence Tax to 10 per cent.

2. Sirry has begun to take measures to restrain the Wafd by forbidding publicity regarding the visits to Nahas Pasha and the meeting at Alexandria at which Nahas was expected to make another anti-British speech.

3. Relations between the King and Sirry as well as between the King and Nahas Pasha remain ambiguous, to the detriment of the Prime Minister's authority which remains shaken in the country.

When k?

4. The populace behaved well on the occasion of the first real air raid on Cairo, which, however, has caused very general alarm and some exodus from Cairo. The public is mildly expectant of retaliation on Rome in view of His Majesty's Government's threat in that sense.

5. The increase in the cost of living is provoking labour trouble which resulted in short strike of the tramways and [?grp. omd.] employees who only returned to work on the understanding that their claims would be sympathetically considered by the Government within the next fortnight. The move for increases of pay may become more general. The Government is faced with the difficulty that increases of pay may lead to increase in prices, and that in the event of increases of pay to employees of private firms the Government will be compelled to increase the wages of its own employees. The present budgetary resources might be inadequate to meet such extra expenditure. The more honest and efficient control of prices, which would partially ease the situation, seem so far to have been beyond the capacity of the Government. Increase in wages seems inevitable, as well as new taxation to provide the corresponding increased Government expenditure.

6. Sheik Al Maraghi, after Friday's prayers at the Mosque, attended by King Farouk, made, with reference to the accession of the new Shah, remarks to the effect that the suffering Moslem nations were being involved in the dangers of warlike events which did not concern them.

22 SEP 1941
F. O. SECRETARY

J3014

29 SEP 1941

25

J3014/18/16
649/9

War Cabinet
Conclusions 9x(4)
Section 4
Dated: 18/9

Received: 20 SEP 1941

Political situation in Egypt

Situation rather disquieting but it was hoped we should not depart from our general policy of abstaining from direct interference in internal affairs of Egypt.

Last Paper.

(Minutes.)

2994/2/18/16

References.

Seen by Mr. Baldwin and Sir H. Seymour.

Jd. L.
24/9

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)

(Action completed.)

(Index.)

SC 24/9

11

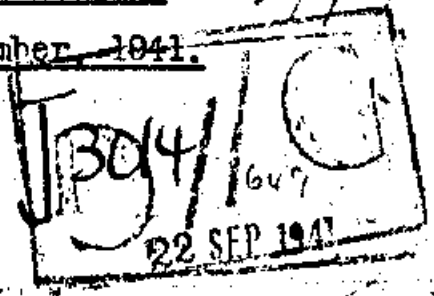
Next Paper.

*Green Report
are these outlined?*

*C/102
22/9*

EXTRACT FROM WAR CABINET CONCLUSIONS 94(41).

18th September 1941.



FOREIGN
AFFAIRS.

4.....

Egypt.

(Previous
Reference:
W.M. (41)
Conclusions,
Minute

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY said that the political situation in Egypt was rather disquieting. Nevertheless he hoped that we should not depart from our general policy of abstaining from direct interference in the internal affairs of Egypt.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

See Hleympf. 4/11

*C/102
19/11*

168

1941

J

J 3017
23 SEP 1941

87

EGYPT and SUDAN

29432

Registry Number } J 3017/18/16
TELEGRAM FROM Sir M. Lampson (Cairo)
No. 2961.
Dated 22nd Sept. 1941.
Received in Registry } 23rd Sept. 1941.
J: Egypt and Sudan.

Political situation. ✓
Refers to Foreign Office telegram No. 3277 (J 2949/18/16).
Sir M. Lampson has had an encouraging talk with the Prime Minister who understood that His Majesty's Government could not promise unconditional support without more information concerning his intentions. P
Prime Minister gave details of steps taken to put a curb on Nahas Pasha.

Last Paper.
J 3014

(Minutes.)
g 2949 in dept - copy also of ...
Sirry Pasha's attitude towards Nahas is the same as our own:- viz, that the restraints put upon his activities must not go beyond protecting him from his own extravagances. In his own interests and that of his followers, he must not be allowed to close the door against all compromise.

References.

This admittedly is a negative policy and one on which H.M. Government might conceivably be attacked in this country by people who are unaware that the Wafd have refused to sink their political differences and enter a National Government. But I have no doubt that our policy is the right one, *even though it is unsatisfactory*

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)
Tel to Cairo 36/8/41
Oct 24
20/11 *16*

In Egypt, as elsewhere, everything must be subordinated to our war effort and, as shown in my memorandum at Flag A, we cannot afford to indulge in political experiments at the expense of stability and military necessity in Egypt. It was agreed in April last that no action should be taken vis-à-vis Nahas Pasha without the full consent of Sir Miles Lampson and the military authorities in Egypt. While we have countered the excesses of the Wafd, however, we have been equally resolute in withstanding the suggestions of arbitrary rule in the absence of Parliament. (See our telegram No. 1342 - Flag B). The only alternative to Parliamentary Government in Egypt is British military rule. But this will run counter to all our efforts to carry Egypt with us during the period of hostilities.

(Action completed.)
J 28/10

(Index.)
W. 2/11

In March last (see Flag C) we suggested that a cautious approach might be made to Nahas by conveying to him a hint in the following sense: (a) H.M. Government still regarded him as the political leader with the greatest popular following, and as the Egyptian primarily responsible for the Treaty; (b) he will not be ignored in the settlement of post-war problems concerning Egypt and the United Kingdom except if he goes so far in making friends with those who are fundamentally opposed to us (e.g. the King) as to make it impossible for him to retract. Last week we reiterated the gist of (b) because it is essential for us to avoid

Next Paper.

a combination in which the Palace and the people become opposed to us. In March last Sir M. Lampson turned our suggestion down on the ground that the time was not yet ripe for such a démarche, but it may well be that when the present cotton agitation has died down an opportunity may present itself for approaching Nahas in some such way.

In a recent despatch just received Sir Miles Lampson recorded an interview with Amin Osman, who appeared to have been delegated by Nahas to sound Sir Miles Lampson on Wafd prospects, etc. Sir Miles Lampson made it plain that (a) it would be futile at the present time to throw over a Foreign Minister such as Hussein Sirry who is doing his best for the attainment of our major end (i.e. winning the war) in favour of an unstable and unknown quantity; and (b) there was nothing yet to show that the King would be willing to accept a Wafd Government, though he might be ready to use the Wafd in order to embarrass us.

It may well be asked why, in all the circumstances, is it not advisable to have free elections in Egypt to enable the Wafd to come back to power. One answer to this, though it is not by any means a complete one, is that elections in Egypt are invariably accompanied by violence and the complete stoppage of all governmental activity over a prolonged period. Violence in Egypt always entails shooting by the police, for which we get the blame. But in present circumstances it might also entail shooting by the British military. This would be disastrous. Equally, the stoppage of governmental activity could not be contemplated at the present time without some foreboding.

To clear the air, however, it might be well to ask Sir Miles Lampson to give his views on the question whether it will be possible at any stage during the war to hold elections in Egypt, and in the event of their being held to ensure that they are free. This latter point is one on which Nahas will insist, because he was thrown out of office in 1937 by elections which were patently rigged against him.

C. Bateman

-23rd September, 1941-

I agree we should again consult Sir M. Lampson. It is very unfortunate that Nahas should remain permanently in the position of exercising popular influence without responsibility. It is easy to see this, but far more difficult to see a satisfactory way out.

M. Keynes

24/9

Alb.

Sept. 24. 1941.

Lampson. C. Bateman

problem to Sir Miles Lampson
as he has done.

Fr. Sep 25

I have not been able to get down to this
until now.

I have drafted a telegram on broad
lines so as to make the case for a
return of the draft as strong as possible.

The point is that it will be useless to
work for a draft Galt unless we can be
pretty certain that Nathan, Makram & Co
will work in a statesmanlike way. They
never have before. All their time was
spent finding jobs for their friends. They
simply did no departmental work at all
after the Treaty was signed. That is the reason
why they ~~lost~~ ^{lost} everything (including the election) in

Nothing to be Written in this Margin.

Minutes.

1937.

We can only hope they have learned their
lesson. Their recent behaviour leaves
me very doubtful.

C. Hobart
17/10

Ab.
- Oct. 23. 1944.

Nothing to be Written in this Margin.

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

[Cypher]

WAR CABINET DISTRIBUTION

J 3017

FROM: EGYPT

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

23 SEP 1941

Sir M. Lampson
No. 2961

22nd September, 1941.

D. 8.05 p.m. 22nd September, 1941.

R. 10.50 p.m. 23rd September, 1941.

dddddd

IMMEDIATE

Your telegram No. 3277. } 2949 / 18 / 46

I had a very open and encouraging talk with the Prime Minister this morning. I explained why we could not give him a blank cheque in advance. He agreed that was only natural. I know that while putting a stop to further extravagances he was just as anxious as we are not to martyrise Nahas. Furthermore, there were others who wanted curbing, such as Wahib Doss [grp. undec.] was clear: everything must be stopped which jeopardised or impeded our war effort regardless of from whom it came. He agreed and said he was already acting on those lines.

Handwritten notes in Arabic script on the left margin.

2. The Prime Minister was very sensible and receptive. Nahas might one day become Prime Minister again. But he must be stopped making a fool of himself and the Prime Minister was taking steps to that end. He has already forbidden future meetings and speeches: he had put a censorship stop on all press notices regarding the movements of all public men, including himself, thereby depriving Nahas of the advertisement on which he normally traded.

Handwritten notes and stamps at the bottom of the page.

Registry
No. J3017/18/16

24 October, 1941

Despatched *L* *L*

Draft.

SECRET

Sir M. Lampson,
Cairo

Telegram.

No: 3684

Your telegram No. 2961 ~~of September 22nd~~
^{and 923}
and your despatch No. 900 ~~of September 23rd.~~
^{Economic}
[Political situation in Egypt].

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

War Cabinet
distribution

Cypher

Indiv.

H.B. 22/x

*has no doubt
produced good
results of value.*

I am anxious to do all possible to improve
the situation in Egypt ^{and to check} ~~with a view to arresting~~
the ~~progressive~~ political and economic deteriora-
tion which seems to have set in.

The necessity for securing our military
base in Egypt is and must continue to be the
foundation of our policy there. We were entitled
to think, at the outbreak of war, that Egypt
would continue to be in general sympathy with
the principles for which we are fighting, and
that it would only be necessary for us to deaden
the impact of war on her financial and economic
system to keep her in step with us. This policy
~~which entailed combating demagoguery as well as~~
~~autocracy has so far yielded to terms which are~~
~~not commensurate with our financial outlay.~~ It
is true ^{for instance} that the position would have been
chaotic without our financial support. But in
present circumstances that does not appear to be
~~sufficient.~~ ^{answer.} Endemic defeatism has been
succeeded by anti-British agitation, and now
civil commotion, largely due to the ^{Economic} shortsighted-
ness of successive governments, threatens
increasing trouble in the future.

It/

It is unfortunate that for the past four years we have had to deal with makeshift and unrepresentative governments, one of which was definitely hostile to us. One result of this has been that the Wafd have been and are able to influence public opinion according to the caprice of Nahas Pasha without incurring the slightest responsibility.

It may well be, therefore, that the method by which we have sought to put our policy into practice has been misdirected ^{in so far} ~~inasmuch~~ as it has ~~been~~ aimed at prevention rather than cure.

I am of course aware that the ^{early} return of the Wafd to power, ~~if this were possible in the near future,~~ would not necessarily effect an improvement in the situation unless prior agreement on essentials had been reached with Nahas Pasha. On the other hand the weakness of the present Government (for all the personal goodwill of Sirry Pasha, which is not in question) and its blindness to the best interests of Egypt, have been only too ^{obviously} apparent over the past few months. Indeed, Sirry made use of this weakness more than once to extract unjustified concessions from us in regard to cotton when ordinary foresight should have counselled urgent attention to other and more pressing problems.

I am prepared to believe that we shall not be faced with serious trouble in Egypt during the war unless things go very badly against us; but this will not necessarily be true in the period immediately following upon the cessation of hostilities.

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

It may in these circumstances

~~I feel, therefore, that it would~~ be well to begin preparations at once for the return, before the end of the war, of a predominantly Wafd government, so that the Wafd shall not be indefinitely in a position to claim non-responsibility for what is happening in Egypt.

~~It is most unlikely that Nahas will consent~~ to take part in any government in the absence of elections, either free or managed.

Please telegraph your considered views ~~with~~ ⁱⁿ ~~special reference to~~ the possibility of holding elections in the not too distant future in such a way as to prevent the uproar and governmental paralysis that usually accompany elections in Egypt.

The time for watchful waiting appears to have passed. In present circumstances ^{hard to reach} ~~emergency~~ ~~is an insufficient~~ ^{to reach} ~~test of~~ our fundamental ~~requirements in Egypt.~~

I assume that Nahas will not consent to take part in any govt. unless elections are held, & that he will probably require them to be reasonably free. I should be glad of your considered view on desirability of looking for a govt. of the kind indicated above, & in particular should like your opinion on possibility of holding elections in the not too distant future, & on whether elections could be held without confusion & paralysis of govt. which often accompany elections in Egypt. A.B.D. 23

J 3017/18/16.

[THIS TELEGRAM IS OF PARTICULAR SECURITY AND SHOULD BE RETAINED BY THE AUTHORISED RECIPIENT AND NOT PASSED ON].

[CYPHER].

WAR CABINET DISTRIBUTION.

To: EGYPT.

FROM FOREIGN OFFICE TO CAIRO.

No. 3684.
October 24th, 1941.

D. 4.40 p.m. October 24th, 1941.

YVYVY

SECRET.

Your telegram No. 2961 and your despatches No. 900 and No. 923 [political and economic situation in Egypt].

I am anxious to do all possible to improve the situation in Egypt and to check the political and economic deterioration which seems to have set in.

The necessity for securing our military base in Egypt is and must continue to be the foundation of our policy there. We were entitled to think, at the outbreak of war, that Egypt would continue to be in general sympathy with the principles for which we are fighting, and that it would only be necessary for us to deaden the impact of war on her financial and economic system to keep her in step with us. This policy has no doubt produced results of value. It is true for instance that the position would have been chaotic without our financial support. But in present circumstances that does not appear to be sufficient. Endemic defeatism has been succeeded by anti-British agitation, and now civil commotion, largely due to the economic shortsightedness of successive governments, threatens increasing trouble in the future.

It is unfortunate that for the past four years we have had to deal with makeshift and unrepresentative governments, one of which was definitely hostile to us. One result of this has been that the Wafd have been and are able to influence public opinion according to the caprice of Nahas Pasha without incurring the slightest responsibility.

It may well be, therefore, that the method by which we have sought to put our policy into practice has been misdirected in so far as it has aimed at prevention rather than cure.

I am of course aware that the early return of the Wafd to power, would not necessarily effect an improvement in the situation unless prior agreement on essentials had been reached with Nahas Pasha. On the other hand the weakness of the present Government (for all the personal goodwill of Sirry Pasha, which is not in question) and its blindness to the best interests of Egypt, have been only too embarrassingly apparent over the past few months. Indeed, Sirry made use of this weakness more than once to extract unjustified concessions from us in regard to cotton when ordinary foresight should have counselled urgent attention to other and more pressing problems.

2.

I am prepared to believe that we shall not be faced with serious trouble in Egypt during the war unless things go very badly against us; but this will not necessarily be true in the period immediately following upon the cessation of hostilities.

It may in these circumstances be well to begin preparations at once for the return, before the end of the war, of a predominantly Wafd government, so that the Wafd shall not be indefinitely in a position to claim non-responsibility for what is happening in Egypt.

I assume that Nahas will not consent to take part in any government unless elections are held, and that he will probably require them to be reasonably free. I should be glad of your considered view on desirability of working for a government of the kind indicated above, and in particular should like your opinion on possibility of holding elections in the not too distant future, and on whether elections could be held without confusion and paralysis of government which often accompany elections in Egypt.

(INDIV)

Index

X

164

J

65

1941

J 2992
20 SEP 1941

EGYPT and SUDAN
27432

Registry Number } J 2992/18/16.

FROM Egyptian Ambassador. (conversation).

Dated 19th Sept. 1941.

Received in Registry } 20th Sept. 1941.

J: Egypt and Sudan.

Situation in Egypt. ✓

Mr. Eden spoke to Egyptian Ambassador about the situation now developing in Egypt and asked him to report the conversation with seriousness to his Government and The King. Mr. Eden explained that the situation was due to agitation arising out of cotton legislation, that even more serious was the fact that King Farouk had encouraged the Wafd to join in this agitation. The King could make it plain that he did not countenance Nahas' campaign against the British and could also let it be known that he disapproved of the cotton situation. His Excellency undertook to telegraph to his government. He asked for information about the food situation.

Last Paper.

J 2979

References.

See within (Minutes)
See within letter from Egyptian Amb. to Mr Bateman 19 Sept.
Despatch to King

Cabinet
Dominions.

Am. 21.11.

See within ack. from G/C Poynter to Mr. Bateman of 30th Sept. and initials thereon.

(Print.)

Egypt Sept. 19th - Sect 1.

(How disposed of.)

Dft. Cairo
no 295 Sep. 19

Tel. Cairo
no 3289 Sep 19

Dft Egyptian Amb.
from Mr Bateman
19 Sept.

Dft. G/C Poynter
R.A.F. ME HQ Cairo
from Mr Bateman
19 Sept.

(Action completed.)

Bo
2/10

(Index.)

19/10
24/10

Next Paper.

J 2994

THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF HIS BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

EGYPT.

September 19, 1941.

CONFIDENTIAL

RECEIVED

SECTION 1.

[AMENDED COPY.]

[J 2992/18/16]

Copy No. 8

Mr. Eden to Sir M. Lampson (Cairo).

(No. 295.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 19, 1941.

I ASKED the Egyptian Ambassador to come to see me this afternoon, when I told him that I wished to speak to him most seriously about the situation which was developing in Egypt. I asked him to report what I said with equal seriousness to his Government and to the King. You had reported to me that the internal political situation in Egypt showed signs of grave deterioration. This was due in part to the agitation arising out of the cotton legislation. Our aim had been to give the Egyptian Government an interest in cutting down cotton production so that land now under cotton could be devoted to the production of food. This was absolutely necessary if Egypt was not to face starvation in the near future. There was already a shortage of 75,000 tons of wheat and 200,000 tons of maize. Egyptians apparently failed to realise that this war differed from the last, among other things, in that no profits were being made out of commodities. The Egyptian Parliament had used the occasion to fasten the blame on us for rising prices, whereas we had done everything we could, by way of costly concessions to the Egyptian Government, to make the cotton legislation attractive. The agitation was due to Egyptian politicians who had been bidding against each other for higher prices at our expense in order to gain votes.

2. Even more serious was the fact that I had every reason to think that King Farouk had encouraged the Wafd to join in this agitation and work up national feeling against us. In countenancing this agitation the King was embarrassing us at the expense of the welfare of his own people. To take such action was to play with fire. We were not prepared to tolerate the risk of embarrassment to our military base in Egypt. The Ambassador knew well that I had done everything in my power to work with the King and the Egyptian Government, but if this was made impossible for us the consequent responsibility would not be ours.

3. The Ambassador said that he agreed with me in the description I had given of the behaviour of Egyptian politicians in respect of cotton. All this was only too true, but he could not believe that King Farouk had really given any encouragement to Nahas Pasha in his agitation. The King knew well where his interests lay. I was surely aware that Nahas Pasha had close relations with Makram Ebeid and the Copts, and that this agitation was probably carried out in collusion with them and was intended to force us to grant financial concessions in respect of cotton. I replied that it was generally believed in Egypt that the King was encouraging Nahas in his activities, and this was not surprising since he had given Nahas an audience between two of his violently anti-British speeches. In any event the remedy was easy. The King could make it plain that he did not countenance Nahas's campaign against us, and he could also let it be known that he disapproved of this cotton agitation and take the lead in explaining to his people the need to grow more food supplies if Egypt was not to starve. This was the proper course for a monarch to take in such conditions. The Ambassador reiterated his conviction that we were mistaken in the view we took of the King's attitude. None the less, he undertook to telegraph at once to the King, reporting what I had said and urging him to take the action I had suggested. He would also suggest that His Majesty should send for you at once and explain his attitude to you. In addition, the Ambassador said that he wished to send, by the most rapid means possible to the King, a memorandum explaining the food situation. I undertook to furnish him with material and to send his communication to Hassanein Pasha. I think the Ambassador, who showed every desire to be helpful, was fully impressed with the seriousness of the position.

I am, &c.

ANTHONY EDEN.

J 2992 / 18 / 16
 23 JUN 1944

3.15 Xiday

The Secretary of State.

The Present Agitation in Egypt.

1. The present agitation in Egypt arises mainly out of the cotton legislation now before the Egyptian parliament. Our ~~main~~ aim has been to give the Egyptian Government an interest in cutting down cotton production so that land now under cotton can be devoted to the production of food. This is absolutely necessary if Egypt is not to face starvation in the near future. There is already a shortage of 75,000 tons of wheat and 200,000 tons of maize.

2. At the bottom of the agitation is the inability of Egyptians to realise that this war is totally different from the last one in that no profits are being made out of commodities. The Egyptians look forward to being a tertius gaudens in this particular and are disappointed that their anticipations have not been translated into fact.

3. Consequently parliament has seen an admirable opportunity to fasten the blame for rising prices etc. on to us whereas we have done everything possible in the way of concessions to the Egyptian Government (see the attached memorandum) to make the cotton legislation attractive. We have only failed because Egyptian politicians have been bidding against each other for higher prices at our expense and in order to gain votes.

4. There is every reason to think that King Farouk has encouraged the Wafd to join in this agitation and work up national feeling against the British. The Wafd's appeal to the populace is enormous and King Farouk must be well aware in supporting Nahas he is doing nothing more than embarrassing us at the expense of the welfare of the Egyptian people.

5. It should be pointed out plainly to Nashat Pasha that the Egyptian King is playing with fire. We will not tolerate the risk of embarrassment to our military rear in Egypt. Hitherto we have attempted to carry Egypt with us but if the present agitation does not die down we shall have only one course to pursue, namely to impose British military law in Egypt. This will mean imprisonments etc. clamping down of public speeches and possible closure of parliament.

6. We are quite aware of the grievances of the Wafd in that, controlling 80% of the votes of the country, they have no representation in the government but the present agitation shows that they are too irresponsible to trust in an emergency and King Farouk himself, unless he changes his ways, must be placed in the same category.

7. Sir Miles Lampson wishes a warning to be conveyed to King Farouk through Nashat Pasha. The time for mincing words has passed, and it might be well to tell Nashat Pasha that if, in spite of our wishes, British military law is imposed as a result of the present agitation, the Wafd will not be the only sufferers. What has happened in Persia could happen in Egypt.

8. The agitation for the declaration of Cairo as an open city is in a different category, but is equally futile. It should have been long since apparent to all Egyptians that such declarations are merely invitations to Germany to exercise her indiscriminate brutality. But there is another point of which Nashat could be reminded. It is that our troops in Egypt were reinforced in 1939 at the urgent request of King Farouk himself. Cairo is the headquarters of the Egyptian Army and is the only centre from which a large body of troops can be controlled. King Farouk and the Egyptian Government were well aware of this when the request was made in 1939, and the position has not altered since. The inconsistency of the Egyptians becomes the more apparent. They cannot have it both ways.

C/106
17/9

*We are ready to do it,
if it works half.*

J 2992 / 18 / 16
23 SEP 1941

See H. Seymour

Pl see our ltr to Cairo 3289. (attached)
This, of course, was the outcome of the
Sj's talk to Nasheet yesterday (Sept 19th)
At the end of the talk, the Sj's asked
me to give the S. Antanaschko details
General photos etc

I wrote him the attached letter.
Nasheet telegraphed to the King
at the same time wrote a letter to
Harranian which he wanted sent ^{off}
by air as soon as possible but not
via Embassy Cairo

I made arrangements with Air 17
of the letter to be addressed to A.H.Q. Cairo
sent off this morning. It should see them
Monday. H.H. 19/9 C. 10/5 20/9

Nothing to be Written in this Margin.

Registry No. J 2992 / 18 / 16

J. 2992
September 19th, 1941.
20 SEP 1941

A.E.

Sir,

Draft.

Sir M. Lampson,
Cairo.

No. 295

K.C.D

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

I asked the Egyptian Ambassador to come to see me this afternoon, when I told him that I wished to speak to him most seriously about the situation which was developing in Egypt. I asked him to report what I said with equal seriousness to his Government. You had reported to me that the internal political situation in Egypt showed signs of grave deterioration. This was due in part to the agitation arising out of the cotton legislation. Our aim had been to give the Egyptian Government an interest in cutting down cotton production so that land now under cotton could be devoted to the production of food. This was absolutely necessary if Egypt was not to face starvation in the near future. There was already a shortage of 75,000 tons of wheat and 200,000 tons of maize. Egyptians apparently failed to realise that this war differed from the last among other things in that no profits were being made out of commodities. The Egyptian Parliament had used the occasion to fasten the blame on us for rising prices, whereas we had done everything we could by way of costly concessions to the Egyptian Government to make the cotton legislation attractive. The agitation was due to Egyptian politicians who had been bidding against each other for higher prices at our expense in order to gain votes.

2. Even more serious was the fact that I had every reason to think that King Farouk

had encouraged the Wafd to join in this agitation and work up national feeling against us. In countenancing this agitation the King was embarrassing us at the expense of the welfare of his own people. To take such action was to play with fire. We were not prepared to ~~support~~ tolerate the risk of embarrassment to our military base in Egypt. The Ambassador knew well that I had done everything in my power to work with the King and the Egyptian Government but if this was made impossible for us the consequent responsibility would not be ours. ~~The~~ ^{NP} Ambassador said that he agreed with me in the description I had given of the behaviour of Egyptian politicians in respect of cotton. ^{All this} ~~The account I had given~~ was only too true, but he could not believe that King Farouk had really given any encouragement to Nahas Pasha in his agitation. The King knew well where his interests lay. I was surely aware that Nahas Pasha had close relations with Makram Ebeid and the Copts and that this agitation was probably carried out in collusion with them and was intended to force us to grant financial concessions in respect of cotton. I replied that it was generally believed in Egypt that the King was encouraging Nahas in his activities and this was not surprising since he had given Nahas an audience between two of his violently anti-British speeches. In any event the remedy was easy. The King could make it plain that he did not countenance Nahas' campaign against

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

us and he could also let it be known that he disapproved of this cotton agitation and take the lead in explaining to his people the need to grow more food supplies if Egypt was not to starve. This was the proper course for a monarch to take in such conditions. The Ambassador reiterated his conviction that we were mistaken in the view we took of the King's attitude. Nonetheless he undertook to telegraph at once to the King, reporting what I had said and urging him to take the action I had suggested. He would also suggest that His Majesty should send for you at once and explain his attitude to you. In addition the Ambassador said that he wished to send by the most rapid means possible ^{to the King} a memorandum explaining the food situation. I undertook to furnish him with material and to ^{send} ~~give~~ the communication to the ^{Prime Minister} ~~Prime Minister~~. I think the Ambassador, who showed every desire to be helpful, was fully impressed with the seriousness of the position.

Handwritten signature

S. L. S.

Handwritten initials

20/11

11-351-19/9/41

Registry No:

OUT FILE

September, 1941.

H.B.

Immédiale

Despatched

M.

Draft.
Sir M. Lampson,
Cairo.

My telegram No. 3277 [of September 18th; political situation in Egypt].

Telegram.

No. . 3289

Cypher. INDN

General Distribution.

I spoke seriously to the Egyptian Ambassador to-day about the grave deterioration in the situation in Egypt caused by the agitation arising from cotton legislation and "open city" campaign. I said that, in view of the growing shortage of cereals in Egypt (of which details were given to the Ambassador) and the increasing strain on our shipping, it was clearly in the interests of Egypt to cut down cotton production and to grow as much food as possible in its place. Our cotton proposals had been designed to that end, and we had made costly concessions to make them attractive. But Egyptians apparently failed to realise that this war differed from the last in that, inter alia, profit had been taken out of it.

2. A position had now been reached where we were being blamed for rising prices and Egyptian politicians were bidding against each other for higher prices in order to get votes.

3. I had reason to believe that King Farouk was countenancing this agitation and was embarrassing us at the expense of his own people. This was playing with fire and I warned the Ambassador that we would not tolerate the risk of embarrassment to our military base in Egypt. I had done all possible to work with the Egyptian King and Government, but if this was

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

Sept 19

850 pm

4. The Ambassador agreed with my description of the irresponsible behaviour of Egyptian politicians, but said that he could not believe that King had encouraged Nahas. He suggested that culprits were Makram and the Copts and that they were endeavouring to force us to grant further financial concessions. I replied that King Farouk had given Nahas an audience in the interval between his two violent anti-British speeches.

The remedy was for the King to make it clear that he did not countenance Nahas's campaign and that he disapproved of the cotton agitation. It was for the King to take the lead in explaining the need for growing more food if Egypt was not to be faced with starvation.

5. As regards "open city" campaign, I said that everyone must know by now that the Germans respected no representations such as that recently made by the Egyptian Government. Declarations would not affect them one way or the other. Ambassador argued in favour of the declaration of Cairo as an "open city" and maintained that it would be well for us to tell the Egyptian Government that if Cairo were to be seriously bombed, we were prepared to undertake to bomb Rome on condition that the Egyptian Government requested us to do so and assumed responsibility for any further bombing of Cairo that might result. I said that you had already explained our position in respect of retaliation to the Prime Minister.

6. The Ambassador undertook to ~~report~~ ^{Telegraph} telegraph to the King and urge him to take the action I had suggested regarding present agitation. He would also suggest that King should send for you

at/

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

at once that explain his attitude to you.

7. Ambassador, who showed every desire to be helpful, was fully impressed with the seriousness of the position.

SAB

1919

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

[Cypher].

GENERAL DISTRIBUTION.

To: EGYPT.

FROM FOREIGN OFFICE TO CAIRO.

No: 3289.
19th September, 1941.

D: 11.55 p.m. 19th September, 1941

.....

IMMEDIATE.

My telegram No: 3277 [of September 18th; political situation in Egypt].

I spoke seriously to the Egyptian Ambassador to-day about the grave deterioration in the situation in Egypt caused by the agitation arising from cotton legislation and "open city" campaign. I said that, in view of the growing shortage of cereals in Egypt (of which details were given to the Ambassador) and the increasing strain on our shipping, it was clearly in the interests of Egypt to cut down cotton production and to grow as much food as possible in its place. Our cotton proposals had been designed to that end and we had made costly concessions to make them attractive. But Egyptians apparently failed to realise that this war differed from the last in that, inter alia, profit had been taken out of it.

2. A position had now been reached where we were being blamed for rising prices and Egyptian politicians were bidding against each other for higher prices in order to get votes.

3. I had reason to believe that King Farouk was countenancing this agitation and was embarrassing us at the expense of his own people. This was playing with fire and I warned the Ambassador that we would not tolerate the risk of embarrassment to our military base in Egypt. I had done all possible to work with the Egyptian King and Government, but if this was made impossible, the responsibility would not be ours.

4. The Ambassador agreed with my description of the irresponsible behaviour of Egyptian politicians, but said that he could not believe that King had encouraged Nahas. He suggested that culprits were Makram and the Copts and that they were endeavouring to force us to grant further financial concessions. I replied that King Farouk had given Nahas an audience in the interval between his two violent anti-British speeches. The remedy was for the King to make it clear that he did not countenance Nahas's campaign and that he disapproved of the cotton agitation. It was for the King to take the lead in explaining the need for growing more food if Egypt was not to be faced with starvation.

5.....

2.

5. As regards "open city" campaign, I said that everyone must know by now that the Germans respected no representations such as that recently made by the Egyptian Government. Declarations would not affect them one way or the other. Ambassador argued in favour of the declaration of Cairo as an "open city" and maintained that it would be well for us to tell the Egyptian Government that if Cairo were to be seriously bombed, we were prepared to undertake to bomb Rome on condition that the Egyptian Government requested us to do so and assumed responsibility for any further bombing of Cairo that might result. I said that you had already explained our position in respect of retaliation to the Prime Minister.

6. The Ambassador undertook to telegraph to the King and urge him to take the action I had suggested regarding present agitation. He would also suggest that King should send for you at once and explain his attitude to you.

7. Ambassador, who showed every desire to be helpful, was fully impressed with the seriousness of the position.

OUT FILE

19th September, 1941

My dear Ambassador,

In accordance with your request I attach a note on the present cereal shortages in Egypt.

In order to make up these deficiencies the Egyptian Ministries of Finance and Agriculture have requested that arrangements should be made for the importation of 75,000 tons of wheat and 200,000 tons of maize. We are also endeavouring to make up the millet shortage from Iraq.

These shortages are already being felt, and importation is a matter of urgency during the next three months in order to avoid, if possible, the necessity for rationing of cereals in Egypt.

It is expected that the maize crop coming on the market in December next will be even smaller than the last one owing to the lack of nitrate in the recent past. The position is rendered the more serious owing to the fact that, in order to satisfy

Egyptian/

His Excellency
The Egyptian Ambassador.

Egyptian needs the whole programme for shipping goods to the United Kingdom has had to be revised. We are in fact, sacrificing our own priority imports for the benefit of Egypt.

Your Excellency will realise that, in addition to Egypt, we have to satisfy the needs of Syria, Turkey and other countries in the Near East, and the strain on our shipping is very great indeed. No-one can say what the shipping position will be next year.

Believe me, my dear Ambassador,

Yours very sincerely,

(Sd) C.H. BATEMAN

Shortages of cereals in Egypt for the agricultural year 1940-41.

WHEAT.

Normal local consumption	1,250,000 tons
Crop now on market	1,130,000 "
Shortage	120,000 tons
Add seed for next year	30,000 "
Total shortage	150,000 tons

MAIZE.

Normal local consumption	1,700,000 tons
Crop now on market	1,550,000 "
Shortage	150,000 tons.
Add seed for next year	18,000 "
Total shortage	168,000 tons.

MILLET.

Normal local consumption	490,000 tons.
Crop now on market	455,000 "
Total Shortage	35,000 tons.



L'AMBASSADEUR DE S.M. LE ROI D'EGYPTE
LONDRES


U 2992/18/16

19th Sep. 1941

My dear Mr. Bateman,

Many thanks for your
interesting letter of today.
I send you here with the letter
you kindly accepted to forward
to Hassanin Pasha. Thank you
in advance.

Yours very sincerely,

H. K. 

OUT FILE

FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W. 1.

19th September, 1941.

Dear Group-Captain Paynter,

Mr. Eden is very anxious that the enclosed letter, addressed to Ahmed Mohammed Hassanein Pasha at the Royal Palace, should be delivered personally, as soon as possible after receipt by you.

May I ask you to arrange for this to be done as discreetly as you can.

Yours very sincerely,

(Signed). C.H. BATEMAN.

Group-Captain N.S. Paynter,
Royal Air Force,
Middle East Headquarters,
Cairo.

EGYPT.

September 19, 1941.

CONFIDENTIAL.

SECTION 1.

[AMENDED COPY.]

[J 2992/18/16]

Copy No. 99

Mr. Eden to Sir M. Lampson (Cairo).

(No. 295.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 19, 1941.

I ASKED the Egyptian Ambassador to come to see me this afternoon, when I told him that I wished to speak to him most seriously about the situation which was developing in Egypt. I asked him to report what I said with equal seriousness to his Government and to the King. You had reported to me that the internal political situation in Egypt showed signs of grave deterioration. This was due in part to the agitation arising out of the cotton legislation. Our aim had been to give the Egyptian Government an interest in cutting down cotton production so that land now under cotton could be devoted to the production of food. This was absolutely necessary if Egypt was not to face starvation in the near future. There was already a shortage of 75,000 tons of wheat and 200,000 tons of maize. Egyptians apparently failed to realise that this war differed from the last, among other things, in that no profits were being made out of commodities. The Egyptian Parliament had used the occasion to fasten the blame on us for rising prices, whereas we had done everything we could, by way of costly concessions to the Egyptian Government, to make the cotton legislation attractive. The agitation was due to Egyptian politicians who had been bidding against each other for higher prices at our expense in order to gain votes.

2. Even more serious was the fact that I had every reason to think that King Farouk had encouraged the Wafd to join in this agitation and work up national feeling against us. In countenancing this agitation the King was embarrassing us at the expense of the welfare of his own people. To take such action was to play with fire. We were not prepared to tolerate the risk of embarrassment to our military base in Egypt. The Ambassador knew well that I had done everything in my power to work with the King and the Egyptian Government, but if this was made impossible for us the consequent responsibility would not be ours.

3. The Ambassador said that he agreed with me in the description I had given of the behaviour of Egyptian politicians in respect of cotton. All this was only too true, but he could not believe that King Farouk had really given any encouragement to Nahas Pasha in his agitation. The King knew well where his interests lay. I was surely aware that Nahas Pasha had close relations with Makram Ebeid and the Copts, and that this agitation was probably carried out in collusion with them and was intended to force us to grant financial concessions in respect of cotton. I replied that it was generally believed in Egypt that the King was encouraging Nahas in his activities, and this was not surprising since he had given Nahas an audience between two of his violently anti-British speeches. In any event the remedy was easy. The King could make it plain that he did not countenance Nahas's campaign against us, and he could also let it be known that he disapproved of this cotton agitation and take the lead in explaining to his people the need to grow more food supplies if Egypt was not to starve. This was the proper course for a monarch to take in such conditions. The Ambassador reiterated his conviction that we were mistaken in the view we took of the King's attitude. None the less, he undertook to telegraph at once to the King, reporting what I had said and urging him to take the action I had suggested. He would also suggest that His Majesty should send for you at once and explain his attitude to you. In addition, the Ambassador said that he wished to send, by the most rapid means possible to the King, a memorandum explaining the food situation. I undertook to furnish him with material and to send his communication to Hassanein Pasha. I think the Ambassador, who showed every desire to be helpful, was fully impressed with the seriousness of the position.

I am, &c.

ANTHONY EDEN.

SECRET.

80

Headquarters,
Royal Air Force,
Middle East,
CAIRO, 30th September, 1941.

8.48134/INT.

J 2992 / 18 / 16

Dear Mr. Bateman

The letter addressed to Ahmed Mohammed Hassanein Pasha enclosed with your's of 19th September, 1941, was delivered on 26th September, in the way which you requested.

Yours sincerely

M.S. Poynter

Snd

Keep with Mr

C.H.B.
19/10

C.H. Bateman Esq., C.M.G., M.C.,
Foreign Office,
LONDON, S.W.1.

160

J

54

1941

37127432

J 2949
17 SEP 1941

17

Registry Number } J 2949/18/16

TELEGRAM FROM Sir M. LAMPSON, Cairo.

No. 2884.

Dated 16th Sept., 1941.

Received 17th Sept., in Registry } 1941.

Internal political situation.

Internal political situation shows signs of serious deterioration as a result of mishandling of cotton question. Nahas Pasha's anti-British campaign, increased cost of living and "open city" agitation. Is making representations to the Prime Minister and will bring matter before Middle-East War Council on 17th September.

J: Egypt and Sudan.

Last Paper.

J.2940.

References.

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)

Tel Cairo No 327 }
18 Sept.

See within ^(Minutes) Cairo tel No 2889 16 Sept

A memorandum has been drafted for the Sec of State's talk with the Ambassador.

That paper indicates solely the line to be taken in warning the King, through Nushaat Pasha against encouraging Nahas in his anti-British campaign

Now, we have to consider the PM's direct question (see Cairo tels 2884 para 8 and 2889 para 5) viz "will HM Govt support Sirry Pasha to the end, in combating this agitation?" (see J1831)

The question is not so simple as it looks. Attached. Sirry Pasha has, admittedly, made a hash of the cotton question in Parliament. He has, by threatening to resign, made us give away many points which, in ordinary circumstances, we should stand on. Even so, he has been beaten in Parliament and the present agitation is the result.

(Action completed.)
6/11/41

(Index.)
27/11

Next Paper.

T 9019

What his question really means is "Will you back
me if the King prorogues Parliament sine die?"
Put that way, the answer must, I think, be NO
We cannot afford to place ourselves so wholly
in his hands or to stultify ourselves in the
eyes of America to that extent. If Parliament
is to go, the proper thing to replace it is
British Military Law - not Sirry Pasha.

In any case, as Sir Thompson has pointed out,
Sirry Pasha has not yet made the censorship
effective so far as our interests are concerned.
He certainly has a long way to go before
he expects a direct reply to his
over-simplified question. Moreover, Nabas
has not gone beyond the talking stage
yet. It will be time to apply the heavy hand
to him when he oversteps the traces. He wants to be
made a martyr.

The proper line to take is:-

- (a) Get the thing out of the arena first
- (b) If this does not cause Nabas's
collapse, tighten up the censorship &
prevent speakers & the publication of matter
that obstructs our war effort

We cannot commit ourselves beyond this
without the consent of the Cabinet & perhaps
the Minister of State

C. H. B. B.
12/9

J2949/18/16 55
In dep^h

Return to A
[Signature]

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

AMENDED COPY

[Cypher] WAR CABINET DISTRIBUTION.

FROM: EGYPT.

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE.

Sir M. Lampson.
No. 2884.

D. 2.20 p.m. 16th September, 1941.
R. 5.15 p.m. 16th September, 1941.

15th September, 1941.

uuuuuu

IMPORTANT.

Internal political situation shows signs of serious deterioration. Through mishandling of cotton question, Prime Minister has landed us with much odium for what is in fact a most generous contribution on our part. Despite active publicity, large section of the public still firmly believe that we are out to profiteer by purchasing cotton at an unreasonably low price.

2. On top of this, Nahas, furious at continued exclusion from office, has launched a violently anti-British campaign as a stick to stir "labour troubles" accusing present Prime Minister of being nothing better than the servant of the British. This is, of course, completely untrue, but Nahas' campaign is having considerable effect. All the more so, owing to a general belief that he has the support of King Farouk who most improperly received him between two of his anti-British speeches.

5. Meantime, the cost of living has increased enormously, and, despite our exposure of the falsity of the charge, Nahas is alleging that it is largely due to local purchases by the British forces. There is talk of strikes, and a general atmosphere of unrest. I have already impressed on the Prime Minister urgent need to deal with the increased cost of living and he has professed the intention to do so; but even if he does, these things take time and more efficient handling than Egyptian Governments usually display.

4. Nahas and the Wafd are also largely behind "open city" agitation and are busily asserting that, but for the presence of the British troops, Egypt would be spared air attacks which now occur nightly.

5. Students are still away on holiday, but they will soon re-unite, and Nahas and the Wafd are reported to be preparing campaign amongst them.

SEP 1941
M. A. A. A.
EQ. 11/10/41

2.

6. So far the Prime Minister has preferred not to adopt drastic measures against Nahas as he has not wished to martyrise him. And has allowed publication of texts of the latter's anti-British speeches. Nahas is shortly booked to make another one.

7. I shall be taking this up with the Prime Minister to-morrow and shall put it to him that publicising anti-Ally speeches and propoganda must stop, including quotations in Parliament where normally censorship does not apply. I will report his reaction.

8. The situation is not easy, for Wafd undoubtedly remains by far the major party in the country and I have hitherto felt clear that we should, if possible, not antagonise them. I suspect, however, that we are approaching the point where, in the interests of the war effort, we shall have to press the Prime Minister to take a firmer stand and to suppress anything written or spoken, no matter by whom, which threatens to jeopardise the security and stability of our base in Egypt. This means we shall have to support the Prime Minister in any action he may take to that end, including possibly, dissolution of Parliament.

9. I will report results of my representations to the Prime Minister; and possibly shall ask for audience with King Farouk for the same purpose. [grp. undec.] results, it may be for consideration whether you should not summon Egyptian Ambassador and bid him bring potential gravity of the situation forcibly to His Majesty's notice.

10. I shall bring this matter before the Middle East War Council on September 17th.

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

[Cypher]

WAR CABINET DISTRIBUTION.

From: EGYPT.

J. 2949
17 SEP 1941

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE.

Sir M. Lampson.
No. 2884.

D. 2.20 p.m. 16th September 1941.
R. 5.15 p.m. 16th September 1941.

15th September 1941.

SSSSS

IMPORTANT.

Internal political situation shows signs of serious deterioration. Through mishandling of cotton question, Prime Minister has landed us with much odium for what is in fact a most generous contribution on our part. Despite active publicity, large section of the public still firmly believe that we are out to profiteer by purchasing cotton at an unreasonably low price.

2. On top of this, Nahas, furious at continued exclusion from office, has launched a violently anti-British campaign as a stick to stir the Labour Government, accusing present Prime Minister of being nothing better than the servant of the British. This is, of course, completely untrue, but Nahas' campaign is having considerable effect. All the more so, owing to a general belief that he has the support of King Farouk who most improperly received him between two of his anti-British speeches.

3. Meantime, the cost of living has increased enormously, and, despite our exposure of the falsity of the charge, Nahas is alleging that it is largely due to local purchases by the British forces. There is talk of strikes, and a general atmosphere of unrest. I have already impressed on the Prime Minister urgent need to deal with the increased cost of living and he has professed the intention to do so; but even if he does, these things take time and more efficient handling than-Egyptian Governments usually display.

4. Nahas and the Wafd are also largely behind "open city" agitation and are busily asserting that, but for the presence of the British troops, Egypt would be spared air attacks which now occur nightly.

5. Students are still away on holiday, but they will soon re-unite, and Nahas and the Wafd are reported to be preparing campaign amongst them.

6./ SEP

17 SEP 1941

522

2.

6. So far the Prime Minister has preferred not to adopt drastic measures against Nahas as he has not wished to martyrise him. And has allowed publication of texts of the latter's anti-British speeches. Nahas is shortly booked to make another one.

7. I shall be taking this up with the Prime Minister to-morrow and shall put it to him that publicising anti-Ally speeches and propaganda must stop, including quotations in Parliament where normally censorship does not apply. I will report his re-action.

8. The situation is not easy, for Wafā undoubtedly remains by far the major party in the country and I have hitherto felt clear that we should, if possible, not antagonise them. I suspect, however, that we are approaching the point where, in the interests of the war effort, we shall have to press the Prime Minister to take a firmer stand and to suppress anything written or spoken, no matter by whom, which threatens to jeopardise the security and stability of our base in Egypt. This means we shall have to support the Prime Minister in any action he may take to that end, including possibly, dissolution of Parliament.

9. I will report results of my representations to the Prime Minister; and possibly shall ask for audience with King Farouk for the same purpose. [grp. undec.] results, it may be for consideration whether you should not summon Egyptian Ambassador and bid him bring potential gravity of the situation forcibly to His Majesty's notice.

10. I shall bring this matter before the Middle East War Council on September 17th.

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

WAR CABINET DISTRIBUTION.

From EGYPT.

[Cypher]

From CAIRO to FOREIGN OFFICE.

Sir M. Lampson.

No. 2889.

D. 6.35 p.m. 16th September, 1941.

16th September, 1941. R. 9.05 p.m. 16th September, 1941.

IMMEDIATE.

My telegram No. 2884.

I had a field day with the Prime Minister this morning.

2. I began by referring to the problem of effective censorship and reminding him of the terms of the declaration made before the Senate on the Martial Law of 1940 which laid down that nothing would be passed by the censorship which was contrary to the interests of Egypt and her Allies. The moment had come when that principle should be vigorously enforced, both in Parliament and out, no matter who the offender: Nahas Pasha, may be with a wish to pose as a victim, was now transgressing it flagrantly. I appreciated the reasons why the Prime Minister had hitherto held his hand, but Nahas Pasha was exceeding legitimate limits against us.

3. The Prime Minister agreed: he had already forbidden Nahas Pasha's proposed meeting to make another speech: and he had bidden the Presidents of both Houses of Parliament to elaborate, within the next few days, an effective scheme for Parliamentary censorship. As regards Nahas Pasha, the time had come for firm and, if necessary, drastic action.

4. I reminded the Prime Minister of the unfortunate rôle attributed to King Farouk by the Egyptian public. Wittingly or unwittingly (I could hardly believe the latter) King Farouk had allowed the general conviction to pass uncorrected, that he was behind Nahas Pasha in his anti-British drive. My relations with King Farouk which had recently improved so markedly, would have to stand the strain of an immediate and strong remonstrance against irresponsibility in playing with such anti-British incitement. I could either see King Farouk at once myself or suggest a straight admonition through the Egyptian Ambassador in London. The Prime Minister was strongly in favour of the latter and at once: he urged me to hold my fire until I heard the result of your talk with Nashat when, acting on your explicit instructions, I could seek immediate audience, with the better reinforcement of your representations. His Excellency added that I knew how difficult he was finding King Farouk to handle he would welcome strong representations from you to Nashat.

5. Finally His Excellency put to me this specific question "are the British Government prepared to back my Government if I act firmly to deal with all this growing unrest? That is would you not interfere and let my Government act? I said that my personal reply would be yes: but that I must seek urgent instructions. May I have them?"

Registry No.

~~J2962/18/16~~
J2949/18/16

Draft.

Sir M Lampson
Cairo ✓

Telegram.

No: 3279
18/9/41

Cypher INDIV
HFI

to an Cabinet Distribution

WA. 18/9

OSP
C.M.C.

72012

11201

18/9/41

59

OUT FILE

F.O.

September 1941

Immediate

Despatched

M.

Your telegram No. 2889 [of September 16th: political situation in Egypt.]

(1) Your paragraphs 2 and 3.

I agree that the time has come to take effective measures (including stricter application of the censorship) to prevent Nahas from going so far in his present anti-British campaign as to make future relations with him impossible. His exclusion from office is largely the result of his own obduracy, but I do not wish his present folly to be used as an excuse for restricting his activities more than is necessary for the protection of our military interests.

(2) Your paragraph 4.

I agree that an urgent warning should be conveyed to King Farouk against encouraging Nahas in his irresponsible behaviour, and I will speak seriously to the Ambassador on September 19th. I will telegraph later whether it will be necessary for you to seek an Audience with the King.

(3) Your paragraph 5.

The Prime Minister's question carries all the dangers of over-simplification, and I should need more information as to his intentions before replying.

(If he has in mind)

he should read very strong arguments before Committee ~~Group~~ Contemplating

mind the prorogation of Parliament sine die and semi-autocratic rule (see para.8 of your telegram No. 2884) [it would be well to tell him at once that H.M.Govt. will not be prepared to give him a blank cheque]

BB Sep 18.

OUT FILE

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

J2949/18/16.

[Cypher]

WAR CABINET DISTRIBUTION.

To: EGYPT.

FROM FOREIGN OFFICE TO CAIRO.

No. 5277.

18th September 1941.

D. 11.20 p.m. 18th September 1941.

SSSSS

IMMEDIATE.

Your telegram No. 2889 [of September 16th : political situation in Egypt].

(1) Your paragraphs 2 and 3.

I agree that the time has come to take effective measures (including stricter application of the censorship) to prevent Nahas from going so far in his present anti-British campaign as to make future relations with him impossible. His exclusion from office is largely the result of his own obduracy, but I do not wish his present folly to be used as an excuse for restricting his activities more than is necessary for the protection of our military interests.

(2) Your paragraph 4.

I agree that an urgent warning should be conveyed to King Farouk against encouraging Nahas in his irresponsible behaviour, and I will speak seriously to the Ambassador on September 19th. I will telegraph later whether it will be necessary for you to seek an Audience with the King.

(3) Your paragraph 5.

The Prime Minister's question carries all the dangers of over-simplification, and I should need more information as to his intentions before replying. We should need very strong arguments before contemplating the prorogation of Parliament sine die and semi-autocratic rule (see paragraph 8 of your telegram No. 2884).

61

J

61

J 2962

EGYPT AND SUDAN

Registry Number } J 2962/18/16

TELEGRAM FROM Sir M. Lampson, Cairo.

No. 2901.

Dated 17th Sept., 1941.

Received in Registry } 18th Sept., 1941.

J: Egypt and Sudan.

Internal political situation.

Refers to Cairo telegram No. 2889 (J 2949/18/16). Middle East War Council endorsed line taken by Sir M. Lampson.

Last Paper.

J2949

(Minutes.)

References.

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)

This means, I suppose, that the War Council agreed that the S. Govt should ~~stop~~ be used to apply the censorship more strictly.

J. H. B. [Signature]
18/9

It also means that we should undertake to back the P. A. if he decides to "act firmly" & govern without Parl.

I attach a dft. interim reply to Cairo tele 2889 which will incidentally answer this as well

(Action completed.)

17/20/9

(Index.)

J.H.B. 29/6

Next Paper.

See J2949 + act

thereon

J.H. B. [Signature]
18/9

See act tel on J2949

62

8

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

[Cypher]

SEP 1941

WAR CABINET DISTRIBUTION.

From: EGYPT.

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE.

Sir M. Lampson.
No. 2901.
17th September 1941.

D. 8.54 p.m. 17th September 1941.
R. 11.25 p.m. 17th September 1941.

sssss

IMMEDIATE.

Internal situation. *f 2949*

Middle East War Council to-day endorsed the line
taken in my telegrams Nos. 2884 and 2889, including the
last paragraph of the latter.

159.

J

50

J 2940

294 32

External Affairs

16 SEP. 1941

Registry } J 2940/18/16
 Number }
 FROM Sir H. Lumsden,
 (Cairo).
 No. 807
 (1/34/41)
 Dated 28th August,
 1941.
 Received } 16th Sept.
 in Registry } 1941
 J : Egypt and Sudan

Internal political situation. ✓
 Refers to Cairo telegram No. 2642 of
 22nd August, (J 2717 Green). Transmits
 record of conversation with Amin Osman Pasha
 on internal politics.

Last Paper.

J2939

References.

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)

(Action completed.)

Boo
1/10

(Index.)

Boo
1/10

Next Paper.

J2940

(Minutes.)

In this despatch, Sir H Lumsden has
 attempted to answer the question "Why not
 a trafed Govt?" It is not a complete answer
 but it is a good one.
 It is curious to find Amin Osman
 opposing Ali Maher. It was Ali Maher who
 kicked him out of office in 1939. Scophim
 are incalculable folk. - but Amin Osman
 is one of the best of them.

[Signature]

H/Kymore 22/9

Ab. Sep. 24. 1941.

AB Sep 25

Oh 25/9

No. 807.
(1/84/41);

J 2940
19 SEP 1941

BRITISH EMBASSY,
CAIRO.
28th August, 1941.

Sir,

82717/9

With reference to paragraph 5 of my telegram No. 2642 of 22nd August last, I have the honour to transmit herewith a record of my conversation with Amin Osman Pasha on internal politics.

2. Amin Osman Pasha has once before made the suggestion of bringing Ali Maher Pasha back into the political arena, and it is clear that he is being used by Ahmed Maher Pasha who naturally would like his brother rehabilitated.

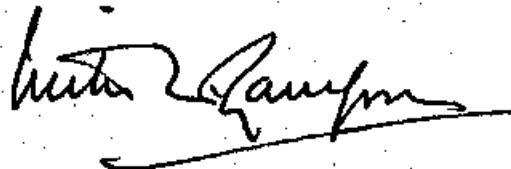
3. The latter part of the enclosed record deals with Amin Pasha's specific overtures for my support of a move for a Nationalist Government under Nahas Pasha.

I have the honour to be,

With the highest respect,

Sir,

Your most obedient, humble Servant,



The Right Honourable

Anthony Eden, M.C., M.P.,
etc., etc., etc.,

Amin Osman called at his request this evening. He raised three questions:

(1) He found that he was growing rusty having no serious work to keep his mind occupied and was accordingly very anxious to offer us his services in connection with any war work we might think suitable - of course gratuitously. The only work he would not like to undertake would be publicity. He suggested there might be some vacancy in connection with one of our purchasing organisations or something of the kind. I thanked him for this generous offer and said that I would most gladly see if there was anything going at all suitable: at the moment I knew of nothing.

(2) He then said he had been sounded as to whether I should not be prepared to bury the hatchet with Ali Maher; for instance agree to go to a meal with Ahmed Maher where Ali Maher would be present with a view to a reconciliation. I replied I must speak very frankly. There was nothing I abhorred so much as personal or official estrangement from anyone. It had been most painful to me that there had been a break with Ali Maher, but looking back over the whole course of my relationship with him during the many years that I had been here I felt I could claim without a shadow of doubt that any reason for official estrangement that had arisen had never in any single instance come from my side. I recapitulated briefly my experiences with Ali Maher from the outset of my arrival in Egypt and I must regretfully record that I had been so completely let down by him and British national interests had been so fundamentally prejudiced by the man that I was afraid, and I said this reluctantly, - that it would be difficult for me to work with him again. So much said, whenever I met Ali Maher since his fall from office, - and I must admit that the occasions had been few - I had been at pains to behave towards him in a perfectly normal way. The last occasion had been when he and I, with Hussein Sirry, walked behind Mohamed Mahmoud's coffin at the latter's funeral. On that occasion Ali Maher and I had conversed openly and without any personal restraint. Nonetheless, I felt it would be difficult now to pretend that what was past was forgotten. Furthermore I felt sure that if the news got round that there had been a reconciliation I should again be told that it was one more classic example of how the British made friends with their enemies and neglected their own friends. All in all therefore I should prefer that the matter should not be pursued further, at any rate for the moment.

(3) Amin then turned to internal politics and said that he was very gravely perturbed at the ugly mood that had developed in Egypt towards the British of late. This he ascribed almost entirely to the mishandling of the situation by the present Prime Minister. He urged (to summarise a long discussion) that the present Prime Minister should leave office and that a truly National Government should be formed under Nahas. I pointed out in reply that

/whilst

Whilst we one and all greatly regretted that the Wafd were not behind the Government of the day, what he was suggesting had certain obvious obstacles in the way of its achievement. In the first place I must be loyal to the Prime Minister of the day with whom I was in constant contact and who was playing his part nobly in the prosecution of the war; I knew that the British Military, Air, and Naval Authorities regarded the Prime Minister as a true friend of the Alliance and as giving them what they wanted for the successful prosecution of the war. I was confident that our Service Authorities would be as opposed as I should be to any intrigue to unseat Hussein Sirry. There was a further and perhaps even greater obstacle in the way. I had yet to learn that King Farouk would ever willingly accept a Wafdist or even Nationalist Government under Nahas. And when, as he recently did, Nahas let fly at us because he was out of office, I was minded to reply that he overlooked these two very obvious obstacles. None of this, however, was to say that I did not ardently wish that somehow the Wafd could be brought into the Government of the country. Hussein Sirry had the great asset of having the support of the King but he admittedly had the great defect of having no special political backing in the country. I admitted that very often my mind reverted to the idea which had been mooted prior to the assumption of office by Hassan Sabry, namely, a Government of independents, presided over by Hussein Sirry but with the backing of all political parties, including the Wafd. But the difficulty there was the constitutional one though I was not sure that that could not somehow be overcome. Amin at one moment seemed to think that some revival of that idea was feasible but he harked back to the root and branch solution of a Government, preferably of a national character, under Nahas. I admitted that this might be the ideal solution but one had to face practical facts and the two very cogent objections which I had outlined above. I could not in all honesty see my way to get mixed up at present in any move to oust Hussein Sirry. Amin was inclined to argue that if Hussein Sirry went to the Palace as Chef de Cabinet, that would adequately provide for him and meet my objection but I did not follow him on that ground.

Before he left I impressed on Amin that what had passed between us must be treated in the strictest confidence. I was determined that nothing should be said, or no rumour started, that I was lending myself to any intrigue against the Prime Minister. Amin agreed that that was entirely understood. He repeated, however, that he was seriously perturbed at the situation developing in Egypt where we were fast losing all our best friends.

(Int'l'd.) M. W. L.

21.8.41