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EGYPT and SUDAN

NOV 1941

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Registry Number } J 3459/18/16

TELEGRAM FROM Sir M. Lampson, Cairo.

No. 3418.

Dated 31st Oct., 1941.

Received in Registry } 2nd Nov., 1941.

: Egypt and Sudan.

Internal and political situation in Egypt.

Refers to Foreign Office telegram No. 3684/(J 3459/18/16). Sir M. Lampson is of opinion that as and when practicable the Wafd should in some way be brought back into position of some responsibility for the Government of Egypt. Outlines practical difficulties in way of implementations and proposes that he should continue his present consistent line of encouraging anything which shows any prospect of uniting the parties to form a constitutional national front including the Wafd. Expresses view that best solution may be in general election.

Last Paper.

J 3458 (fr).

References.

(Minutes.)

This telegram clears the air considerably. In the main, it is a plea not to give way to violence, not to let down our friends (especially the Saadists under Ahmed Maher) and, in general, to await the outcome of impending events in the West Nile Desert before even considering political experiments.

It has long since been agreed that nothing should be done about the Wafd without the concurrence of the Ambassador. He gives, in this telegram, a pretty complete answer.

We are all agreed that, some day, the Wafd must come back to power. The eternal questions are when? and how?

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)

(Action completed.)

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JHL

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Next Paper.

J3461

There can be no doubt whatever that Sir M Lampson's answer to "when" is the right one so far as it goes we NOT before the West Nile Desert

if successful, produce a rapid volte face
in our favour. and Nakas's vapouring will
cease automatically.

As to how? There's the rub. All that
can be said is that the longer Nakas
mucichs against us, the longer he will
be out of office and the best advice
which his friends in this country could do
would be to tell him so plainly. We
suggested six months ago that Sir Stamford
should tell Nakas (or convey to him somehow)
something on these lines and I cannot help
feeling that he was wrong to have turned
the suggestion down on the ground that the
need was not apparent.

There is not much force in the
argument in para 2 of this let so far as it
concerns King Jernak. If elections bring
Nakas back, Jernak will have to toe
the line or quit.

This question might well be reopened
in say four months' time.

S. H. B. B. B.

2/11

Si M. Kampson's arguments appear to be
convincing. We might however to keep this
matter under constant review, & if some
opportunity of getting a broader based
court

Govt., which can be trusted to work with us, should occur, we ought to seize it. There is nothing in Nakes' recent behaviour to suggest that he could be trusted in his present mood.

W. J. M. M.

2/11

The situation might be considerably changed by military developments. We can only watch it and wait for an opportunity.

Ab. Nov. 3. 1946

Yes; a good telegram

Ab. Nov 3

Ab. 3/11

Ab.

Nothing to be Written in this Margin.

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[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. 3459

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE.

Sir M. Lampson.
No. 3118.
30th October, 1941.

D. 2.54 p.m. 31st October, 1941
R. 4.53 p.m. 31st October, 1941.

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SECRET.

Your telegram No. 3684. 30/7/18/16

My reports, telegraphic and otherwise, over some considerable time back, will have shown that I am in complete agreement that as and when practicable Wafd should in some shape or form be brought back into position of some responsibility for the government of Egypt. That general principle is beyond dispute.

2. But there are practical difficulties in the way of implementations. As for instance:

(a) it will most certainly involve taking a high hand with King Farouk and forcing him to accept Nahas Pasha. Once before we were on the point of doing that but (1) British military authorities at the last moment were against it; (2) Wafd themselves drew back at the eleventh hour and would not guarantee that they would assume office if King Farouk were dealt with summarily and refused to acquiesce. I was not prepared to dive into an empty tank; and our whole action was suspended, Hassan Sabri Pasha filling the breach.

(b) Wafd are convinced that only method of getting anything out of us is violence. Are we prepared to show the world that they are right in that assumption? If so, I can only say that my spirit revolts.

(c) We must be loyal to our friends: and Hussein Sirry with all his faults is supremely loyal to us. I know of nothing he has not given to us and willingly given us which has been wanted by our military authorities; and some of their requirements have been pretty farreaching. It would be lamentable and have a deplorable effect if we dropped Sirry who is 100% loyal and took up the Wafd who at the moment seem determined to show themselves 100% disloyal.

3. Nonetheless, I repeat, sooner or later I hope to see Wafd either back in office themselves or at least associated with the government of the country. And I do not think the prospect of election should necessarily deter us. But in no case should election be held until the situation in the/

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the Western Desert has been cleared up. Whilst events there are pending the last thing we want is the political turmoil which in greater or less degree a general election always entails in Egypt.

4. There is another aspect which should not be overlooked. Nahas Pasha has on at least two occasions since the war presented totally unacceptable demands to us for treaty revision and other untimely desiderata. Are we prepared now to face such conditions? In my view not. Yet, if they returned as a majority Government, we should be prepared for the prospect of that screw being turned on us. Furthermore (a point made on an earlier occasion by the Foreign Office) if we had trouble with a Wafd Government an alternative would be difficult to find. Neither of these are insuperable obstacles, but we cannot afford to leave them out of account.

5. There is the further question of Ahmed Maher who leads a big party and counts for a lot in Egypt. He is strongly pro-war more so than any other Egyptian statesman of the day. Yet he remains at daggers drawn with Nahas Pasha. Are we ready to estrange him? He is one of our best assets in the country.

6. I do not recapitulate these points in order to be obstructive: but because they are all very material and we cannot ignore them.

7. To sum up, I would propose to continue my present consistent line of encouraging anything which shows any prospect of bringing the parties together to form a constitutional national front including the Wafd. I could even in due season put it to the Prime Minister (who frequently expresses readiness to leave the ungrateful task of office) that the best solution and the most normal would be to hold untrammelled general election when the moment is appropriate (it falls due in any case next year) so as to clear the air, and get mandate of the people as to who they wish to handle their destinies at this time of crisis. But, I would not propose to encourage Wafd agitation (they would merely believe quite rightly that their medicine was working) by making indirect overtures to them at present or so long as their agitation continues. They already know (for I have let them know it) that their present methods are entirely inadmissible and that if they jeopardise the safety of our military base here, repression is the only possible course.

INDIV.