

27483
EGYPTIAN

J1289
6 MAY 1941

18
11

J 1289 1966/16
Telegram
Sir M. Lampson
(Cairo)
no. 1201
Dated May 2nd
Received May 4th

Egypt and the War. ✓
Comments on the effect present official
monouncements on the war which have
given the impression that H.M.G. no longer
regard maintenance of their position in Mediterranean
and in Egypt as of such importance as heretofore.
Requests he may be authorised to give some
assurance to Egypt which would help to maintain
stable political atmosphere.

Last Paper.

J1279/966/16

References.

(Minutes.)

The real object of this telegram is, of course, to record in an indirect sort of way a recommendation that no effort should be spared by H.M. Government to reinforce the Middle East, particularly in material. It is Sir Miles Lampson's invariable practice to make some such recommendation when the situation looks ugly. It is naturally comforting to him to feel that he has given H.M. Government a lead, and, moreover, he is always at pains to cover himself against possible enquiries in the future as to what his attitude was when the storm clouds gathered.

(Print.)

So far as I am aware, however, we are in fact doing all we can to strengthen our military position in the Middle East, since no one is blind to the importance of defeating if we can the German offensive now threatening. A serious check to the Germans in this area might have the most far-reaching consequences.

(How disposed of.)

Tel. 1417 to Cairo
6/5

I am afraid I cannot attach much importance to the reassuring action for which Sir M. Lampson seeks authority. To say that we intend to defend Egypt and that it is equally our intention to fight the Germans wherever they may appear is surely, in the light of what has occurred during the last year, merely to emphasise the obvious. The despondency and low morale which exists among Egyptian opinion - and also, apparently, among the British community - does not, I think, arise from any doubts on this score, but from the impact of the defeats which we have suffered in Libya and Greece during recent weeks. No whispered assurances from Sir M. Lampson (it will be recalled that the optimism to which he recently gave expression over the position in the Western Desert fell rather flat locally) concerning our determination to continue the fight will have any lasting effect, in the absence of British military successes, in removing this pessimism. However, there is no reason to deny the Ambassador the authority he seeks. But in giving his assurances he might, I think, take the opportunity of reminding his listeners, Egyptian and British, that in no single instance has this country avoided battle with the Germans, and that in the process the

(Action completed.)

8. 7/5

(Index.)

A

Next Paper.

J. 1284/18/16

inhabitants of these islands have displayed a morale which is altogether unprecedented. It would be well if the British community in Egypt, who up to date have suffered nothing at all, would take courage from the example of their kinsfolk and face the future with a more determined spirit than they are apparently displaying.

I submit a draft reply.

~~Ed. Leveson~~
May 5th 1941.

[Now please see the Secretary of State's minute on the advance copy of this telegram within]

AL.
May 5. 1941.

Rh 475

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

[Cypher]

SPECIAL (MIDDLE EAST).

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE.

Sir M. Lampson
No. 1201
2nd May, 1941

D. 4.35 p.m. 3rd May, 1941
R. 11.25 p.m. 3rd May, 1941

IMPORTANT.

SECRET.

*We should
not over
this full
a.a.a.a.a.a*

Before the war it was one of the functions of this Embassy to put forward, in consultation with local service commanders, recommendations concerning defence and security of Egypt. Since the war and establishment here of Middle East Command I have regarded it as my primary duty (1) to endeavour to ensure that base from which the forces under the Command of three Commanders-in-Chief must operate in this theatre of war should remain as stable as possible politically. (2) to obtain from the Egyptian Government the facilities and assistance required by Service Commanders. I have purposely refrained from recommendations to His Majesty's Government regarding matters within purview of Service Commanders unless requested by them to add my word to theirs.

2. I feel however that I should be lacking in my duty at present moment if I failed to state my views on following aspect of present situation.

3. Recent public pronouncements drawing attention to Great Britain and Atlantic as two vital theatres of war have created erroneous impression here that His Majesty's Government may no longer regard maintenance of our position in Mediterranean and in Egypt as of such importance as heretofore. This undoubtedly has created a certain despondency here particularly among many Egyptians friendly to us. I do not wish to enlarge on the grave effects on our whole position in Middle and even in Far East which failure to hold Egypt would inevitably produce, however true it may be that loss of Egypt would not affect the ultimate course of the war to the same extent as a successful invasion of Great Britain or severance of our life line to United States of America. These are matters of high policy which I have no doubt are receiving the constant and earnest consideration of His Majesty's Governments in the United Kingdom and the Dominions.

4.....

4. I cannot but believe it is still the purpose of His Majesty's Government to supply us here with all possible aid in men and material particularly in tanks aircraft and anti-aircraft weapons to enable us to hold so vital a position, the loss of which if by no means fatal, could hardly fail greatly to prolong the war. I should like to add it is our firm intention to fight the Germans wherever they may appear. It is my hope that I may be authorised to give some such assurance to our Egyptian friends, which would help to maintain that stable political base of which I have spoken above and also to leaders of the British community here which has so large a stake in this country. Like other loyal subjects of the King they are, I am convinced, prepared to make the greatest sacrifices in the interests of victory but I feel some such assurance at the present moment would inspire fresh courage to face whatever the future may have in store.

5. I make this request in no alarmist spirit but solely with the dual object of removing any impression here that the defence of Egypt is no longer of high importance in our war effort and of heartening all those who strive or wish, whether openly or in secret, for our success.

J 30

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

SPECIAL (MIDDLE EAST).

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE.

Sir M. Lampson
No. 1201
2nd May, 1941

D. 4.35 p.m. 3rd May, 1941
R. 11.25 p.m. 3rd May, 1941

a.a.a.a.a.a.a

IMPORTANT.

SECRET.

J 1289
24 MAY 1941

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NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

Registry
No. J. 1289/G.

G.H.T.

Draft. TELEGRAM.

Sir M. Lampson,
CAIRO.

2. You may emphasize this to all alike.

No.....

Cypher.

Special (Middle East.)

Has inevitable watering down!

MS 5/4

IMPORTANT.

For mailing
15 PM
46
1/5

Your telegram No. 1201.

1. We will, of course, do our utmost to defeat the threatened German attack upon Egypt and ~~if you think it will give me encouragement to emphasize this obvious~~ *are doing, and will continue to do, an* ~~encouragement to emphasize this obvious~~ *can to achieve this. Myself,* ~~fact you are authorized to do so.~~ *fully informed as we are with the primary importance of this*

3. As regards fighting the enemy wherever they may appear, the events of the last twelve months can surely leave no doubts on this score? So far as the British community in Egypt are concerned, you may consider it desirable, in reassuring them on this point, to remind them ~~of the~~ *by reference to* ~~events in this country, of the role which the~~ *events in this country, of the role which the* ~~unprecedented manner in which the civilian~~ *unprecedented manner in which the civilian* ~~population of this country have stood up~~ *population of this country have stood up* ~~brave and facing all dangers & difficulties~~ *brave and facing all dangers & difficulties* ~~against long continued and vicious air~~ *against long continued and vicious air* ~~attacks. The morale of their fellow~~ *attacks. The morale of their fellow* ~~countrymen and women should inspire the~~ *countrymen and women should inspire the* ~~British community to face with courage and~~ *British community to face with courage and* ~~determination the trials that may be in~~ *determination the trials that may be in* ~~store. It is up to them to set the~~ *store. It is up to them to set the* ~~Egyptians an example in this respect.~~ *Egyptians an example in this respect.*

RB. hys *ab. 12/5/41*

Registry
No. J. 1289/G.

G.H.T.

Draft. TELEGRAM.

Sir H. Lampson,
CAIRO.

No. 1417 ✓
Cypher. May 6
Special (Middle
East.)

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

IMPORTANT.

Your telegram No. 1201.

1. We will, of course, do our utmost to defeat the threatened German attack upon Egypt and are doing, and will continue to do, all we can to achieve this object, fully impressed as we are with the primary importance of holding Egypt.
2. You may emphasise this to all alike.
3. As regards fighting the enemy wherever they may appear, the events of the last twelve months can surely leave no doubts on this score? So far as the British community in Egypt are concerned, you may consider it desirable, in reassuring them on this point, to remind them, by reference to events in this country, of the role which the civilian population has to play in keeping up morale and facing all dangers and difficulties. It is up to them to set the Egyptians an example in this respect.

7-10/1-6/11
May 1941.

5.30 pm

[Fair draft: original approved by the Secretary of State. 6/5]

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

(J.1289/G.)

[Cypher]

SPECIAL (MIDDLE EAST.)

FROM FOREIGN OFFICE TO CAIRO.

No. 1417.
6th May, 1941.

D. 7.10 p.m. 6th May, 1941.

uuuuuuuu

IMPORTANT.

Your telegram No. 1201.

1. We will, of course, do our utmost to defeat the threatened German attack upon Egypt and are doing, and will continue to do, all we can to achieve this object, fully impressed as we are with the primary importance of holding Egypt.
2. You may emphasise this to all alike.
3. As regards fighting the enemy wherever they may appear, the events of the last twelve months can surely leave no doubts on this score? So far as the British community in Egypt are concerned, you may consider it desirable, in reassuring them on this point, to remind them by reference to events in this country, of the role which the civilian population has to play in keeping up morale and facing all dangers and difficulties. It is up to them to set the Egyptians an example in this respect.

F-O 371/27483

EGYPTIAN

J966 / G
T # 000

J966/966/9.966/16

Sir M. Lampson
Cairo

Tel: 952

Dated: 14/4

Received: 15/4.

Egypt and The War. ✓

Full report of military situation has been given to The P.M. by C. in C. Records of ^{subsequent} interview between Sir M. Lampson + P.M., regarding Egypt's role.

23 20 000 1966

Last Paper.

(Minutes.)

References.

Hussien Sirry has been given sound

advice. If Egypt declared war now, it might

diminish a lot many difficulties (eg spying)

with which we have to contend at present. But

we are not doing along with things as they are.

Once, Egypt takes an active part (or if

war was declared) Cairo should be laid flat

within a day or two. ~~Do not say so to the P.M.~~

~~Copy sent to ...~~

[Signature]
14/4

(Action completed.)

(Index.)

ES. 17/4

A

Next Paper.

Ta 91 R 966/16

27483

FO 371/27483

J966

J

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

[CYPHER]

SPECIAL (MIDDLE EAST).

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE.

Sir M. Lampson
No. 952.
14th April, 1941.

D. 4.55 p.m. 14th April, 1941.
R. 10.10 a.m. 14th April, 1941.

JJJJJJJ

Prime Minister saw Commander-in-Chief Middle East this morning who gave him full and frank expose of the military situation. General Wavell is telegraphing account of his interview direct to War Office.

2. Prime Minister asked me to call half an hour later. Before that I had discussion with Commander-in-Chief Middle East, Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean, and Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief so as to know their joint views on any question arising from General Wavell's interview with Prime Minister or others that might be put to me by the Prime Minister, especially Egypt's role in the war.

3. Prime Minister left his Cabinet sitting next door to see me. He explained that he had understood from Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean that Egypt had best continue in her present role: e.g., defend Canal and Delta, look after internal security, e.g., bridges, etc., deal with sporadic raids on the Delta (if any) and defend Siwa: that as regards Western Desert, it was General Wavell's view that it was better not to mix our forces but leave defence to us. Prime Minister said that he had to make declaration in Parliament this evening and proposed to say something on the above lines: or did we think Egypt's role should change? He was prepared that Egyptian troops should resist if attacked, e.g., at Siwa: or if attacked in overwhelming force it would be a purely military matter whether they held out or were withdrawn.

4. I said that if he was asking me formally whether Egyptian Government should declare war, I obviously could not answer offhand. But I did know - for I had just come from them - that the 3 Service Commanders were unanimous, seeing no present advantage in Egypt altering the role she is following now. I shared that view.

5. As regards his declaration, I strongly advised His Excellency to stick as much as possible to broad generalities so as to give nothing away to the enemy of the precise role assigned to the Egyptian forces. For instance some such formula as that all measures by the Egyptian Government in the disposition of their forces had been and were being taken in fullest harmony and closest consultation with the British High Command. His Excellency wrote that down and I gathered that he would follow that line. Apparently there are to be two sessions, a secret one followed by an open one.

6. Prime Minister continues confident and had evidently been much encouraged by his talk with General Wavell.

2
Fo 371/27 + 83

J991

4

J991/966/9.966/16
Sir M. Lampson
Cairo
Tel: No: 969 + 970
Dated: 15/4
Received: 16/4

Egypt and the War.
Reprs to Cairo 952 (J966/9).
Reports resolution of Chamber regarding
military situation in Libya & Western
Desert & agreement with H.H.G. on measures
to be taken.

Last Paper.

(Minutes.)

(J966/9) 966/16

References.

We can only hope that the P.M. did not
overdo the "no-need-to-worry" stuff in the
Chamber. A tel was sent off yesterday
inquiring whether it was wise to be too complacent
in official announcements suggesting that the
soft pedal might usefully be applied.

B.S.H.
17/4

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)

(Action completed.)

(Index.)

EE. 19/4

A

Next Paper.

J. 1016/9 966/16

8

FO 371/27483

T991

10 APR 1941

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

[En clair & Cypher].

SPECIAL (MIDDLE EAST).

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE.

Sir M. Lampson.
No: 969 & 970.

D: 12.47 p.m. 16th April, 1941.
R: 12.25 p.m. 16th April, 1941.

15th April, 1941.

.....

IMMEDIATE.

-J966k

My telegram No: 952.

Following the secret session of the Chamber last night, the following resolution was carried also unanimously:

[En clair begins]:

After hearing Government's statement about military situation in Libya and Western Desert and the agreement of Government with British authorities on measures to be taken to face situation, Chamber of Deputies is pleased with what it has heard from Government that conditions do not call for anxiety and also that complete understanding between Government and Ally exists in this matter. [En clair ends].

2. This has had somewhat calming effect but public opinion apparently extremely strained and every sort of alarmist rumour is current.

3. Prince Mohammed Ali called again last night and I have never known him so jumpy. He even spoke of leaving the country "for a holiday" in South Africa. (He would of course have a rough time if the enemy penetrated here). His advice was the same as usual - show only a little firmness with your internal enemies who are extremely active and there will be not the slightest resistance or serious reaction. I explained once more to His Royal Highness that although there have always been arguments in favour of a strong line there has, on the other hand, been over-riding consideration now as cogent as ever of what commitments we are prepared to take on.

16/4

FO 371/27483

J1066

6

3

J1016/966/16
F.O minute
16/4
Rec: 17/4

Egypt and The War.

Dft tel. to Cairo advising a soft
pedal on official pronouncements
which appear to be showing
more optimism.

Last Paper. 966/16

J 991/4

(Minutes.)

Continuation

19/4

References.

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)

Tel. 1140 to Cairo
16/4

(Action completed.)

EC 19/4

(Index.)

N

Next Paper.

Registry
No. J1016/966/G
C.H.B.

755 J1016/101/41
J1016

April 1941.

Important

Draft. TELEGRAM.

Following from Sir A. Cadogan.
I think you should know that there has been a good deal of adverse comment here, in the press and elsewhere, on the undue optimism of official pronouncements in Egypt.

I assume that these statements have been made primarily to prevent defeatism in Egypt, but you may think it advisable to soft pedal until the tide turns.

Even from the local point of view, is it wise to give out statements which are almost immediately belied by events?

MA 16/4

Sir M. Lampson,
CAIRO.

INDIV

No. 1140

Cypher. 16/4/41 ✓

Departmental

SECRET.

6.30p.

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

FO 371/27483

(J1016/1016)G.

[Cypher].

DEPARTMENTAL (SECRET)

FROM FOREIGN OFFICE TO CAIRO.

No. 1140

16th April, 1941.

D. 7.55 p.m. 16th April, 1941.

vvvvvvvv

IMPORTANT.

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I think you should know that there has been a good deal of adverse comment here, in the press and elsewhere, on the undue optimism of official pronouncements in Egypt.

I assume that these statements have been made primarily to prevent defeatism in Egypt, but you may think it advisable to soft pedal until the tide turns.

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b

FO. 371/27483

J1056

21 APR 1941

EGYPTIAN

J1056/966/R/16

Sir M. Lampson,
Cairo

Tel. No: 996

Dated: 16/4

Received: 21/4

Egypt: Military situation

Reports on questions put to P. M. by Sidki regarding Mr. Churchill's statement on the military situation in Egypt; and Egypt's attitude towards M.G.

Last Paper.

J1023/9418/16

References.

J 966/966/R/16
J 991/966/R/16

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)

(Minutes.)

This tel, although, it is not headed by a reference, is really connected with Sir M Lampson's tel No 971.

The S of S has minuted a copy of this tel "I agree that Sidley is qualifying us in last para"
But, Sidley has done nothing else, for the past three years at least, than play up the Germans. (His son-in-law, the present head of the City Municipality, was Krupp's agent!) It was he who, at German & Italian instance, in 1938 propounded in the Senate the doctrine that Egypt could and should remain neutral even though her ally, G^t Britain, was at war. His thesis was adopted by the City Market Post, even though Sidley was not a member of the S. The reason for

(Action completed.)

E.C. 25/4

(Index.)

J

Next Paper.

J. 1224/966/16

This is that Sidky's is. Still recognized as being the best brain in Egypt (in spite of those sides and adorning eye). No Sutt dares to antagonize him. He is too clever for them & am, by his enormous influence, & his unlimited "grafting" capacities, occurs their overthrows when he pleases. And what he lacks in other direction, he makes up by his personal charm. It was he who "dished" the human electric scheme: & it was he who netted a ^{cool} £150,000 when we fixed cotton prices in Nov 1939. True & again, ministers asked me "Have you opened Sidky's? if not, it is hopeless" and there were ugly rumours in 1939 that he was receiving a subsidy from the Germans.

Logically, he should be the first to be 'jugged' under the new "avis" against defection - before Aly Maher even before Ahmed Hussain; because he is far & away more dangerous than either.

But I'll bet that no Egypt Sutt would ever do it. The drastic action foreshadowed by Sir M. Hampson will only be possible under British Military Law by the C in C's authority and should British Mil. Law be declared, we shall be back in the 1914-18 atmosphere with the whole of Egypt up against us!!

I wonder if Sir M. Hampson has thought this

F.O 371/27483

Minutes.

P.S.

The order in which our enemies in Egypt should, in my opinion be put out of the way is

- (1) Sidky
- (2) Aziz el Misri
- (3) Ahmed Hussein
- (4) Ali Maher
- (5) Saleh Hamdi.

Chatman
2/4

Genl. Darnley has always been fully conscious of the dangers of pushing them to the point where we could only act under British military law in the face of a hostile Egypt. This dilemma has long been one of our main troubles & there seems no way round it.

W. Darnley
2/4

R. E. April 22 1914
A. B. April 21, 1914.

Nothing to be written in this margin.

F.O 371/27483

499/11
12/4

[Cypher].

*1 copy Sidki
The Secretary
to the
Minister*

DISTRIBUTION B.

From: EGYPT.

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE.

Sir M. Lampson.
No. 996.
16th April, 1941.

D. 8.56 p.m., 17th April, 1941.
R. 4.35 p.m., 19th April, 1941.

hhh

Sidki recently gave notice of a question to the Prime Minister with reference to a statement in the recent speech of Mr. Churchill regarding the military situation in Egypt. The question contained amongst other things an enquiry as to whether, in view, of this new situation, a declaration was not required by the Egyptian Government, to the new aggressor that independent and non-belligerent Egypt strongly objects to any aggression on her territory. Sidki suggested that declaration should add that Egypt has been careful that her attitude in this war should be solely in accordance with the provisions of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty.

2. After the Prime Minister had in the secret session of April 14th made the declaration on war policy (see my telegram No. 952) Sidki enquired whether this declaration could be considered as a reply to his question. The Prime Minister replied in the affirmative. According to a secret report of the proceedings at the secret session Sidki then spoke as follows:-

"My question includes two points, the first concerning our relations and our duties towards our ally, and to that the Government has replied. The second point concerns our relations with the other side. The matter must be handled with prudence. We are in a country which is not at war and which in no way wishes to be at war. We are executing the Treaty and it is our interest that the other side should know that we are only executing the Treaty. It is necessary therefore that the Government should acquaint the other side with the attitude of the Egyptian Government and there are means of doing so. Unfortunately it is also necessary that the Government should see to it that in the newspapers and in the Government broadcasts there should be no British propaganda and so insults to the Germans or Italians; for instance the Government must not, as I have just heard in the Senate, reply to a question of a senator regarding the presence of General de Gaulle in Egypt that the Egyptian Government

does.....

2.

does not propose to play the game of the Vichy Government by preventing General de Gaulle from completing his mission".

3. I would call special attention to the passages I have underlined above. Sidki is qualifying for deportation if events drive us to drastic action.

F.O 371/27483

J1056 / G
21 APR 1941

[Cypher].

DISTRIBUTION B.

From: EGYPT.

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE.

Sir M. Lampson.

No. 996.

16th April, 1941.

D. 8.56 p.m., 17th April, 1941.

R. 4.35 p.m., 19th April, 1941.

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C.O 371/27483

13

2.

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27483

EGYPTIAN

J1574

22 NOV 1947

15

J1574/966/9

Sir M. Lampson
Cairo

Tel. No: 1368

Dated: 17/5

Received:

Contemplated Removal of Egyptian
Government to Khartoum

Records a general conversation
with Prime Minister when this
matter was discussed.

Last Paper. 2/16

J1477/16

References.

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)

Tel. 1724 to Cairo
26/5

(Minutes.)

This makes most distasteful reading.
Caution, though it may be, it nevertheless
looks rather like defeatism and will not
be welcome in high places here.

So far as the National Bank is concerned
the more Egyptian paper in the hands of the Egypt^e
Govt that is destroyed, the better. It will be
the first step in the direction of cancelling
the Egypt^e Govt's indebtedness to itself will
induce a ^{sound} ~~sound~~ financial system. At present,
most of the Govt's reserve consists of its own
paper. The indebtedness is looked upon as
wealth!

As regards a move by the Egypt^e Govt,
I imagine there is no other place where they
could go to, but Khartoum. But such a move

(Action completed.)

(Index.)

9c 27/5

Next Paper.

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1341
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[CYPHER]

WAR CABINET DISTRIBUTION.
FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE.

Lord Killearn.
No. 746.
15th April, 1944.

D. 12.55 p.m. GMT 15th April, 1944.
R. 11.40 a.m. DBST 15th April, 1944.

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IMMEDIATE.

J 1318/314/G. 31

My telegram No. 731.

Fact that there is a crisis on has now become a matter of general knowledge. Amin Osman informed the Oriental Counsellor that Nahas had received a report to the effect that at my audience King Farouk had announced that he wished to dismiss the Government and that the Ambassador had telegraphed to London on the subject. Nahas had told Amin Osman to ask for the facts from us.

2. On my instructions Sir Walter Smart told Amin that at the audience certain matters of high policy were discussed and that I had had to refer to London. It had been agreed between King Farouk and the Ambassador that meanwhile nothing should be said by either side.

3. Oriental Counsellor added as a private message that I hoped the Government would not lose its head and would refrain from anything imprudent which might play into the hands of the other side.

4. Oriental Counsellor on my instructions drew Hassanein's attention to the fact that a more or less correct version of the audience had reached the public, and that the leakage could only have been from Palace quarters as we had divulged nothing. Hassanein denied that there had been any Palace indiscretion and argued that the public had been expecting trouble after Nahas' tour in Upper Egypt and had drawn their own conclusions from the fact that I had been received in audience at a moment of tension in relations between the Palace and the Government.

5. At the same time the Oriental Counsellor on my instructions reminded Hassanein of His Majesty's undertaking not to do anything pending receipt of reply from London. Hassanein said that the assurance held good provided the Government did not do anything serious in which case action might have to be taken. Oriental Counsellor expressed the

hope/

hope that by action Hassanein was not meaning dismissal of Government. Hassanein's reply was not very clear but he emphasised that if the Government began to create serious disorders it would be impossible in the interest of both the King and the British to allow them to continue. Oriental Counsellor suggested that there was little likelihood of this provided the Palace did nothing.

6. Above illustrates the need of the extreme urgency of instructions as to lines I am to take with King Farouk.

should be allowed to drop or whether further efforts should be made to find those responsible for the leakage. In view of General Wilson's evidence it seems certain that Ali Maher, Saleh Herb and Aziz el Masri are concealing something and that one of them must be responsible for the treason. They have not been able to prove their innocence but on the other hand no conclusive evidence has been discovered against them, and unfortunately there is no documentary support for General Wilson's statement among the papers at British Headquarters. Further cross-examination might lead to some result, and a pretext for it is provided by a recent assertion of Aziz el Masri that the defence plan was altered to conform with certain suggestions of his own. This can be proved to be false and el Masri might be asked how he came to be misinformed on a matter of such importance to himself as Chief of Staff.

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in floor board
to cover

Further cross-examination would, however, almost certainly be fruitless if conducted by the Egyptian Tribunal. It was suggested in January that an Anglo-Egyptian enquiry rather than a purely Egyptian one should be set up, and if it is decided to pursue the matter further it might be best to revert to this suggestion. An objection made at that time was that such a request would embarrass the Prime Minister and might bring about the fall of the Ministry. Now that the Egyptian Enquiry has met and produced no results this objection is no longer valid. There was, however, a further consideration: if an Anglo-Egyptian enquiry failed to find conclusive evidence of guilt the three prominent men most under suspicion might claim that they had been whitewashed not only by the Egyptians but also by the British. Whatever the verdict of a purely Egyptian enquiry discredit would still attach to them since the public would suspect that they had been shielded.

This consideration still seems valid and the conclusion is that it would only be worth pressing for an Anglo-Egyptian enquiry if there seemed a reasonable prospect of its leading to definite results. The evidence so far produced does not make this very probable. Even if Aziz el Masri, Saleh Herb and Ali Maher could be shaken in their account of the events of October 1939 it is not easy to see whence conclusive proof of the guilt of one or all could come. The only new line of approach seems to be through the examination of General Pascatori. General O'Connor gave it as his opinion that it would be unwise to invite him to give evidence at the Enquiry as he is weak and unreliable, but if an Anglo-Egyptian Enquiry were instituted this decision might be revised.

J. S. Lasky

5/7.

of the lapse of time, ^{arises} at a
positive result or success in
^{breaking} breaking the conspiracy of silence
between ^{any} ^{maker} any maker; Pasha and his
his ministerial colleagues.

3. I therefore reluctantly
agree with the recommendation
contained in para. 3 of T.E.'s
despatch ⁱⁿ that the matter
should be allowed to drop but
that nothing ^{should} ^{be} said
to the Right Hon. Secy.

H/S. 4/16/7

(Sd.) L. H. Bateman

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

No. 213.

FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

55'

(J 2128/90/G)

17th July, 1941.

SECRET.

Sir,

I have received Your Excellency's despatch No. 390 of the 30th April last (135/61/41/G) relative the leakage of military information to the enemy and have noted your suggestion that cross examination of Aziz el Masri Pasha might get nearer to the truth than did the abortive enquiry conducted by the Egyptian Procurator General.

2. I am advised that it is most unlikely that any further enquiry - even a joint Anglo-Egyptian one if that were possible - would, in view of the lapse of time, arrive at a positive result or succeed in breaking the conspiracy of silence between Aly Maher Pasha and certain of his ministerial colleagues.

3. I therefore reluctantly agree with the recommendation contained in paragraph 8 of Your Excellency's despatch viz. that the matter should be allowed to drop but that nothing should be said to the Egyptian Government.

I am, with great truth and respect,

Sir,

Your Excellency's obedient Servant,
(For the Secretary of State)

(Sd.) L. H. Paterman

His Excellency
Sir Miles Lampson, G.C.M.G., C.B.,
etc., etc., etc.,
Cairo.

Egyptian politics.

It is exceedingly difficult at the present moment to produce a confident appreciation of the political situation in Egypt, and this is the more perplexing in that the situation undoubtedly contains elements of danger.

2 We are still maintaining Nahas Pasha in office in pursuance of the objective which we have followed consistently since the beginning of the war, namely to ensure the safety and tranquillity of the army's base in Egypt. The success of this policy requires a government which (a) is prepared to carry out the treaty in the letter and the spirit and (b) can rely on a sufficient volume of public support to enable it to do so effectively in a constitutional manner.

3 Nahas Pasha's Government has now been in power for over two years - a very long time in Egypt. It was installed in office as the result of an act of direct and forcible intervention by H.M.G., but nevertheless it satisfied requirement (b) and there are many who claim that it still satisfies it. It has satisfied requirement (a) and undoubtedly still satisfies it.

4 The first test of our policy came over the "black-book" crisis last year, when a formidable array of charges of corruption were launched against the Government. The calculation of the Palace and of the opposition was that H.M.G. could not face the accusation of "condoning corruption" and would have to drop the Ward. H.M.G. were unimpressed either by the charges or their implications so far as they themselves were concerned, and the King had to keep Nahas in power.

5 Unfortunately Nahas and his Government (and more than anyone his wife) did little or nothing to put their house in order after this crisis. They have made a terrible mess of the supply situation - notably as regards distribution - and thus so reduced the vitality of the Upper Egyptian population that they have succumbed to a malaria epidemic in great numbers. They appear to have converted the whole administration into a machine to perpetuate their stay in office by installing their own men in key jobs and letting them line their pockets. (It is terribly easy to exaggerate this corruption, but I do not think the above is too unfair). And Madame Nahas and her family have so behaved themselves as to create an open scandal. The Prime Minister, by all accounts, is completely "exalté" and addresses all and sundry as if they were public meetings

whose/

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

Conf.

Enter

J 1208

4 APR 1944

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

[CYPHER]

WAR CABINET DISTRIBUTION

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

J 794

Lord Killearn
No. 593

D. 1.55 p.m. 2nd March, 1944

1st March, 1944

R. 4.30 p.m. 2nd March, 1944

X X X X

IMPORTANT

SECRET

My telegram No. 590. J 793/31/16

I was on the point of submitting to you an appreciation of the internal situation when I received summons to this interview with Nahas.

2. There can be little doubt that the Government handling of conditions in Upper Egypt has been deplorably bad: and that King Farouk on the other hand has been astute enough to profit fully and quite legitimately from it.

3. There can equally be no doubt that our published statement (which had to be issued with some promptitude to kill the dangerous lie that we had used up the peoples' supplies of food) has adversely affected their position.

4. It is also true that we having installed the Wafd in office are labelled as responsible for this and all and any of their shortcomings.

5. Nevertheless I cannot see for the present that we should modify our policy of supporting their tenure of office. Firstly because I still see no workable alternative other than perhaps a Palace regime. Secondly because without any doubt they have given and continue to give us whatever we want in furtherance of the war effort. There is a third reason that they stood by us in the black days of 1942 and that we should stand as long as reasonably possible by those who have proved themselves our friends in the foulest of foul weather.

6. At the same time I fully admit the situation has its serious embarrassments in that we are inevitably blamed for all their real or supposed stupidities. The indictment carries with it the corollary that from time to time I should have to pull them up or alternatively (as ever Upper

/Egypt).....

Registry
No. J 794/31/16

Date 8.3.44
Despatched 10 p.m.

B

Your ~~Out~~ ^{FILE} telegram No 393 [of the 1st March :
interview with ~~Nahas Egyptian~~ Prime Minister
on general situation]

Draft. telegram

H.M. Ambassador
Cairo

No

345 ✓

Date

Mar. 8th

Cypher

War Cabinet Dist

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

Flagged A.

I approve your language to Nahas Pasha
set out in your telegram No 390 [of the 1st
March] and agree with your statement of the
position as set out in paragraph 6 of your
telegram under reference.

2. The principal question at the moment may be
whether, without abolishing them, the time has
not come to admit a relaxation of the internment
and press-censorship measures taken by the
Egyptian Government, or at least a ^{review} ~~cleaning-up~~
of ~~their application~~. the application of
these measures, which ~~reasonable minded Egyptians~~
~~must know are necessary in present circumstances.~~

3. In connexion with internment I am glad to
learn that you are to receive a list of
internees with reasons for their internment.
Could these lists not be ~~considered~~ examined
~~at~~ in private conference between Egyptian
authorities, representatives of Embassy and
military authorities and some impartial
judicial ~~authority~~ ^{personality}? as a start
you might consider following up action
suggested in my telegram No 107.

4. As regards press-censorship, we know
of its wide unpopularity and generally that
it is used to manipulate the political scene,
but we have no details. If it ^{is} ~~is~~ merely used to
thwart opposition moves, why is the Prime
Minister saying that he is ready to abolish
it? I shall be glad if you will examine the
application

remain in his house as indisposed and that new vice Rector should run the Azhar administratively. Nahas Pasha now explained that he regarded resignation of Sheik of Azhar as already accepted by himself but that agreement was that he should not publish the fact (nor had he in fact accepted it in writing or openly otherwise). This is of course a considerable embarrassment particularly as King Ferouk is unlikely to accept Nahas Pasha's thesis that the latter is at liberty to accept resignation of Sheik of Azhar without consent of the King. Nahas Pasha said that Hassanein thinking that there was a disagreement between the Embassy and the Government over malarial situation in Upper Egypt, and other things, had judged the moment opportune for making fresh trouble over Azhar. He maintained that the Palace was encouraging pro-Maraghi elements in the Azhar (Palace on the other hand accused Nahas Pasha of encouraging his instruments in Azhar to make trouble. It is pretty certain that Wafd is throwing its weight about considerably in the Azhar and no doubt Palace are reacting). I once more explained to Nahas Pasha that I could not interfere in the Azhar question and that I still hoped that a clash between the Government and the Palace would be avoided over this issue. He knew my line of policy was to avoid any major row in Egypt at this phase in the War. Nahas Pasha agreed but said that Hassanein was pressing for an announcement by the Government that Sheik El Maraghi's resignation had not been accepted and that he would eventually return to Azhar. But provided that Hassanein refrained from asking for or making such a declaration he (Nahas Pasha) would be ready to let the Azhar question sleep; but if there were actual disorders he as Prime Minister would of course have to act.

6. I emphasised fully that our policy was based as much as ever on the necessity of having tranquility in Egypt at this vital stage of the War and of having in power a Government which was both desirous of and able, thanks to the support of a majority in the country, to carry out effectively their treaty obligations. I still saw no other Government which could fulfil these two conditions. We might have differences of opinion but these should always be capable of solution.

7. I explained that with our liberal traditions we were naturally anxious that Article 7 of the Treaty should not be abused to suppress free opinion unnecessarily, or for non-treaty, i.e. internal political reasons.

8. It was agreed Amin Osman should produce a full list of all internees and reasons for which they were interned. When we had actual facts or figures we could judge better whether there had been such abuse or not. Nahas Pasha maintained that some of them were only interned temporarily to prevent disorders on particular occasions. We left censorship question unsettled. But Nahas Pasha reiterated that I had only to say the word for him to take off both censorship of the press and internment. He asked me to think it over. He was also ready to leave office forthwith if we could not pull reasonably well together. But he must know where he stood with us.

9. I took the opportunity to point out without any restraint

/that...