

J. 2401

29 MAY 1943

35534

Registry Number } 2401/2/16

TELEGRAM FROM Lord Killearn (Cairo)

No. 160 Saving en clair

Dated 23rd May, 1943

Received in Registry 29th May, 1943

J: Egypt and Sudan

Last Paper.

J 2392.

References.

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)

(Action completed.)

(Index.)

10/19/43

Next Paper.

J 2402

Egyptian Black Book. ✓

Refers to Cairo telegram No. 914 of 5th May (J 2055/2/16). Gives comments of Legal Counsellor on further answers given in Parliament regarding (a) charges against Nahas, (b) nepotism and (c) other Ministers.

مذكرة من القاهرة رقم 914 من 5 مايو 1943
تتعلق بمذكرة من القاهرة رقم 914 من 5 مايو 1943

(Minutes.)

It wd. have been surprising if
Min. of Public Works (Duan Kishanun)
had been able to clear himself.
But Nahas hasn't done so
badly.

E. A. ...
29/5

Mr Baggett on return

J. 29/5

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

[EN CLAIR].

WAR CABINET DISTRIBUTION

FROM EGYPT

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

J. 240

Lord Killcarn
No: 100 SAVING
23rd May, 1943.

D. (By bag) 24th May, 1943.
R. 5. 10 p.m. 28th May, 1943.

2053/2/16
11111

My telegram No. 914 [of 6th May: Black Book].

Following are comments of Legal Counsellor on further answers given in Parliament.

Handwritten notes in Arabic script on the left margin, including the number '161' and other illegible characters.

2. A. Charges against Mahas. It appears from the reply that Makran's story of the appointment of Mahas as Hazir of the Badrawi Wakf is not a complete picture. There is nothing irregular in the appointment of a Minister as Hazir of a private Wakf, and Hazirs are always paid. Mahas had been appointed temporary Hazir in 1936, according to him at the request of the beneficiaries and in the place of the previous Hazir, Mansalawi Bey, against whom certain charges had been made. Mansalawi was definitely dismissed by the Court on 22nd December 1937, but Mahas was dismissed from office four days later, and in February the Court refused to confirm him as Hazir but gave the Wakf to the Ministry of Wakfs, or Public Trustee. No suggestion is made in the Black Book that Mahas in those days was enriching himself at the expense of the beneficiaries, so this decision of the Courts against him looks like a political move to punish him. As soon as Mahas came back to power in 1943 the beneficiaries again applied to have him as Hazir and were successful. Makran suggests that it was at the price of this decision that the Judge of the Court was shortly after transferred to Alexandria, a more important Court, but Mahas points out that the Judge retired on pension three months after his transfer and got no increase of pension through the change. If this is true the suggestion of bribery seems to fall flat. Also the Judge could not have acted unless requested by the beneficiaries.

3. My impression is that Mahas wished for the Hazirship of the Wakf with its attendant £1,500 a year, and that the beneficiaries know this. Whenever, therefore, he came into power they tried to give it to him, preferring him to Mansalawi or the impersonal Ministry which were probably just as expensive, and hoping to benefit generally by pleasing the Prime Minister and having his "protection" in a variety of ways. The property is at Samanud which is Mahas' home town.

4. Mahas also dealt with the charge of making a Government road at Samanud to increase the value of his property. He stated that it was part of an improvement scheme of a general character but did not explain why the Samanud section should be executed first. In reply to the further charge of giving a

contract/

contract to a certain builder for the construction of a village for refugees as a bribe to make him withdraw a lawsuit, Mahas denied Makram to show that there ever was a lawsuit, and stated that the contract had been allotted by the previous Government. A smashing reply if true.

5. The charge of letting his Alexandria house for £1,000 contrary to his lease was answered by Mahas to the effect that the rent was £500 and that the lessor had given his consent. It is noticeable that Makram in his interpellation did not seek to justify the higher figure that he had alleged. But Mahas does not deal with the further allegation that the house was used by the sub-lessee as a cabaret contrary to the lease, and that he had silenced the objections of the lessor and his lawyer by making the latter a Member of Parliament.

6. With regard to the charge of living free on the Government house-boat for several months, Mahas answered by saying that previous Prime Ministers had also so used the boat for long periods, particularly Hussein Sirry.

7. With regard to the charges in connexion with the collection made for charity under the patronage of Madame Mahas during "Goodwill Week", Mahas denied that honours were promised to big subscribers, but admitted that he had thought of soliciting honours for persons who made large donations. A distinction with a difference if these persons were not so advised in advance.

8. B. Nepotism. Very few specific answers have yet been given to the huge list of alleged exceptional promotions. The cases of the two sons of the Minister of War have however been dealt with. The promotion of the doctor's son, who has an American degree and held an important post in America before returning to Egypt, seems to me to have been justified. The appointment of the younger son to the new Audit Department was probably influenced by his parentage, but someone had to go to the new department, and he held a Cambridge degree as well as a commission in the Army as First Lieutenant. "If he is a capable youth I cannot see that his choice is scandalous at £23 a month. The other case dealt with is that of Mahas' nephew in the Coast Guards. The answer here is that the promotion was made by a special committee, which is not very convincing.

9. The bulk of the allegations have not been answered, and it seems clear that a lot of exceptional promotions have in fact been made as is alleged. The only excuse must be that the supporters of the Wafd suffered undue repression under past administrations, but it is uncertain how far this covers the charges made. The gingerly way in which this question has been approached by the Government leads me to suspect that the public is right in being convinced that Mahas and his Government have overdone this compensation. On the other hand there would have been an outcry from the Wafd, and surprise in Egypt, if no exceptional promotions had been made.

(8)

10. C. Other Ministers. The Minister of Public Works answered the charge of having used the material from the old (dismantled) Benha bridge to join up two of his estates. He admitted that this had been done, but alleged that it was done for war purposes in order to facilitate the evacuation of civil refugees. In view of the opposition to his scheme at the time by certain members of the Committee studying the evacuation problem, I doubt whether this is a really good answer. The answer of the same Minister about favouritism in the distribution of permits for cement, which was under his control, is very sketchy, only three names being given. If however it is true, as he states, that the 5,913 tons so far issued were distributed among 1155 applicants, there is not much scope for large abuses. The same Minister admitted having carried out irrigation works on a friend's estate, but stated that they were part of a long planned scheme of Sir William Willcocks. Again one is tempted to ask why this scheme should be started on his friend's estate. But it may have been in the normal course. I cannot help remarking again that the replies of the Minister of Public Works tend not to appear conclusive.

203

J

137

J. 2360
MAY 1943

EGYPT AND SUDAN

Registry Number J 2360/2/16.

TELEGRAM FROM Lord Aillearn, Cairo.

No. 1062

Dated 25th May, 1943.

Received in Registry 25th May, 1943.

J: Egypt and Sudan.

Question regarding Hassanain's debts.
Refers to Cairo telegram 1042 (J 2327/2/16).
Hassanain has expressed his thanks for action in prevention of publication. He has received letter from Nahas giving information regarding happenings in parliament in connexion with "Black book" and is satisfied. Crisis is over unless anything unexpected occurs.

Last Paper.

J 2339

References.

(Minutes)
We must try to see to it that the right moral is pointed also lesson well rubbed in.
C. A. Chapman, Andrew
26/5
J. J. J.

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)

(Action completed.)

(Index.)

19/8/43

Next Paper.

J 2369

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

[CYPHER]

WAR CABINET DISTRIBUTION

FROM: EGYPT

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

J 2360

Lord Killearn
No. 1062
25th May, 1943.

D. 9.00 p.m. 25th May, 1943.
R. 11.20 p.m. 25th May, 1943.

0 0 0 0

IMPORTANT

My telegram No. 1062 (sic ?1042). J-2337/2/16

Hassanein has thanked me for my action in preventing publication of the question and answer regarding his debt.

2. He has received a long letter from Nahas Pasha communicating what happened in Parliament regarding the "Black Book". From a hasty perusal in the presence of the Oriental Counsellor Hassanein thought this communication all right.

3. Unless therefore anything unexpected again occurs, we may hope the immediate crisis is over.

4. I shall be seeing Nahas Pasha at an early date to rub in the lessons of this incident and point the moral thereof.

O.T.P.

207

J

J 2402
23 MAY 1943

35534

Registry Number } J 2402/2/16

TELEGRAM FROM
Lord Killearn (Cairo)

No. 1077 Decypher

Dated 26th May, 1943

Received in Registry }
29th May, 1943

J: Egypt and Sudan

Political situation in Egypt.

Refers to Foreign Office telegram No. 901 of 25th May (J 2319/2/16). Has impressed upon Nahas Pasha the necessity of correct relations with King Farouk and of cleaning up his own Ministry; also urged the removal of Abdél Hakk and Kamel Sidki, and protested against the dissolution of the International Commission of Alexandria. It was agreed that Nahas Pasha should see the King and assure him that he had no intention of saying anything derogatory to His Majesty. The Prime Minister raised the question of the right of the King to appoint Azhar functionaries and the King's interference in the administration of the Army.

Last Paper.

J 2401

References.

(Print.)
Expt vol.

(How disposed of.)

(Action completed.) 67- 30/6	(Index.) 19/8/43 19/8/43
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Next Paper.

J 2402

(Minutes) 15/5/43

This is excellent. Let us hope the results will be equally satisfactory.

Q. B. in 1/2 month.

E. A. [unclear] 29/5

J. 29/5

L. O. 30/6

J 2402

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[COPYIER]

WAR CABINET DISTRIBUTION

From: EGYPT

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Lord Killearn
No. 1077

D. 1.55 p.m. 27th May, 1943.
H. 6.30 p.m. 27th May, 1943.

26th May, 1943.

sssss

MEMORANDUM

I acquainted the Prime Minister this evening with the text of your telegram No. 901 and impressed strongly upon him the necessity of correct relations with King Farouk and of his cleaning up his own Ministry stables. I also mentioned this golden opportunity of a new and more national programme for the betterment of the common people.

2. I referred to the danger of favouring his own relations and to the necessity of avoiding disarrangement of officialdom by exceptional treatment of officials.

3. I also referred to the xenophobic tendencies of which the present Ministry was being accused by the British and foreign colonies. I urged the removal of Abdel Hakk, the chief sinner, from the Ministry of Social Affairs. I also urged the advisability of immediate removal of Kamel Sidki from the Ministry of Finance where his presence was a nightmare for all who had to deal with that Ministry, particularly foreigners.

4. I also alluded to the dissolution of the International Commission of Alexandria about which I had already written to His Excellency and advising severely on Government action in this matter.

5. The Prime Minister, who seemed rather subdued, took my version well. He said that as regards officials the difficulty was that the Ministers had to have with them officials who would carry out their policy loyally and this necessitated special appointments. I remarked that such appointments should be kept low.

6. We agreed that it was desirable that as soon as possible Imine Pasha should have an audience with King Farouk and re-establish contact in a general way. I suggested the desirability of his saying something to soothe His Majesty over the incident of the Parliament that whether there was anyone prepared to ensure that Parliament that anything also had to be the slightest intention of saying anything derogatory to His Majesty and that if anything to the contrary

/s/

had been reported to His Majesty this must be due to a misunderstanding. He would leave the matter at that if the King did not go into details. In the latter event, however, he would be compelled to explain to the King that it had been generally put about that Palace officials would not have contacts with him because his hands were not clean on account of the Black Book. I will endeavour to arrange with Hassanein that explanation does not get down to these details.

7. The Prime Minister, after discussion of the points I had raised, said that he wished to raise two on his side. One was the Azhar, the Vice Rector of which has just died. The Prime Minister said that he could not admit the right of the King to appoint Azhar functionaries except on the Prime Minister's recommendation. In view of the fact that Sheikh Al Maraghi, the Rector, was already a dangerous element and anti-ally he, the Prime Minister, could not acquiesce in the appointment of another troublesome element as Vice Rector. I suggested solution might be on the lines followed in the case of the recent Azhar nominations when the same dispute arose. On that occasion the King had appointed by rescript, not by decree, man whom Nahas Pasha wished appointed. The Prime Minister however argued that the solution could not be permanently adopted as it weakened too much the authority of the Government over a religious university which under Palace direction might and probably would become an element of danger to the British and Christians generally.

8. The Prime Minister also referred to the administration of the army. The Minister of War was unable to [1 grp. undec.] his Ministry because the Chief of Staff had instructed the frontier officer not to proceed to Khartoum where he had been transferred by the Minister. It was essential that the Palace should not interfere with the Minister in perfectly normal administration of the army. There was also the question of the appointment of Megoumi to this frontier administration.

9. I said that though I was not optimistic about the Azhar I had hopes that the King would be more coherent generally. We had better deal with these matters as and when they arose.

OTF