

cision until some of the complications connected with MEDO were resolved.

Mr. Bidault answered that the establishment of a body to discuss the question of freedom of transit through the Suez could be done without great fanfare or publicity. The French Government was not thinking in terms of informing Egypt and was quite willing to begin discussion at whatever level the U.S. desired, including at the level of experts. However, it was important to decide this question as soon as possible so that, if the countries involved were taken by surprise, they would be able to act in concert. Secretary Dulles suggested that, if the opportunity arose, some members of the French delegation present in Washington might discuss with Mr. Byroade the possibility of setting up a future meeting of experts.

[Here follows discussion of Item D, Organization of Defense in the Balkans: Yugoslavia and Trieste; Item E, U.S. Policy in South America; and Item F, Status of American Forces in France and Morocco.]

No. 128

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*The British Embassy to the Department of State*¹

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IRAQ

Her Majesty's Government welcome the Iraqi approach insofar as it indicates an increasing realisation by Iraq of the need to strengthen her forces and to increase her contribution to the defence of the Middle East.

2. Her Majesty's Government have already, in conjunction with the Iraqis, prepared plans for increasing the size of their army, building up a modern air force and equipping their forces throughout. The proposed programme for the army has been divided into three phases:—

(a) Phase I covers the equipment of the first two Iraqi Divisions, a third "cadre" division, two training brigades and a mechanised force. This is practically complete.

¹ Handed on Apr. 22, 1953 to Deputy Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs Jernegan by Harold Beeley, British Counselor of Embassy.