

would refrain for some period of time from attempting to pass Israeli vessels through the Canal. Thus while Israel was not relinquishing its legal rights, a period of relaxed tension would ensue during which a general accommodation of this and other issues would be sought, perhaps with the assistance of third parties. However, if the Egyptians refused to permit the completion of the *Bat Galim's* voyage Israel would be compelled to continue to press for its rights both in the Security Council and by attempting to exercise its right of free passage with its shipping.

Mr. Jernegan mentioned a reported Egyptian broadcast indicating that the *Bat Galim* had been released by an Egyptian prize court on condition that it would not enter the Suez Canal Zone and stating that the ship could weigh anchor on December 29 or 30 with its entire crew. Messrs. Eban and Shiloah thought that even if this information were accurate, it should not be impossible for the Egyptians to find some way to release the ship to the north.

I agreed to convey the proposition made by the Israelis to the Egyptians, although I pointed out that the Egyptian Government might very well believe it more important to cater to domestic opinion by preventing the *Bat Galim's* transit than to end Security Council debate and future controversy by passing the ship through the Canal.

(Approach to Egyptians conveyed in Department's telegram 994 to Cairo, December 30.)¹

ROBERT MURPHY

¹ *Infra*.

No. 945

984A.53/12-3054; Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Egypt*¹

SECRET PRIORITY WASHINGTON, December 30, 1954—7:25 p. m.

994. Please urgently convey following to GOE: Department has been reliably informed (in your discretion you may say officially informed by Israeli Embassy) that if *Bat Galim* were moved through Canal, even with Egyptian crew, and released to its own crew at Northern end, Israel would drop present Security Council complaint and would refrain for some period of time from attempting to pass Israeli vessels through Canal. We think this worthy serious consideration by GOE since it would assure them of quiet period.

¹ Repeated to New York and Tel Aviv.