

heavily in the Middle East in any tension which involved the British.

Exploring the availability conditions, Admiral Radford pointed out that they are very limited if Iran was not included; and that the USSR could initiate a military operation in the Middle East (in Iran, for example) without violating Turkey.

The Air Force representative did not believe that the proposed "availability" arrangement would mean as much to us as it would if it involved NATO, and that it would assist the British position in the Near East far more than it would our own in a global war.

One JCS suggestion was that we should agree to the proposal on condition that the United States present it to Egypt and that, if acceptable, the British accede to it. Mr. MacArthur stated that if we let the British propose it we would still get the credit . . . ; and that an easing of UK-Egyptian tensions might also result—which would not be the case if the U.S. presented it.

Mr. Jernegan stressed the importance of time. He said that this was a desperate and last ditch effort by Eden to get a settlement and that it put the Foreign Secretary very much out on a limb.

Discussion took place concerning the possibility of having an answer from the JCS by Saturday. The JCS felt that this was not nearly enough time.

Consideration was given to the suggestion that the United States Government should take a long hard look at this proposal and should not be stampeded into making a hasty decision. The JCS felt a short but reasonable study should be made of the implications of the British proposal.

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*Memorandum by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs (Jernegan) to the Secretary of State*¹

TOP SECRET

WASHINGTON, March 19, 1954.

Subject: New British Proposals on Suez Base

Eden has submitted for our comments new proposals on the Suez Base involving: (1) Withdrawal of all British troops; (2) Maintenance of essential facilities by civilian contractors; and (3) Retention of reentry rights for twenty years. The plan is conditioned

¹ This memorandum was drafted by Burdett.