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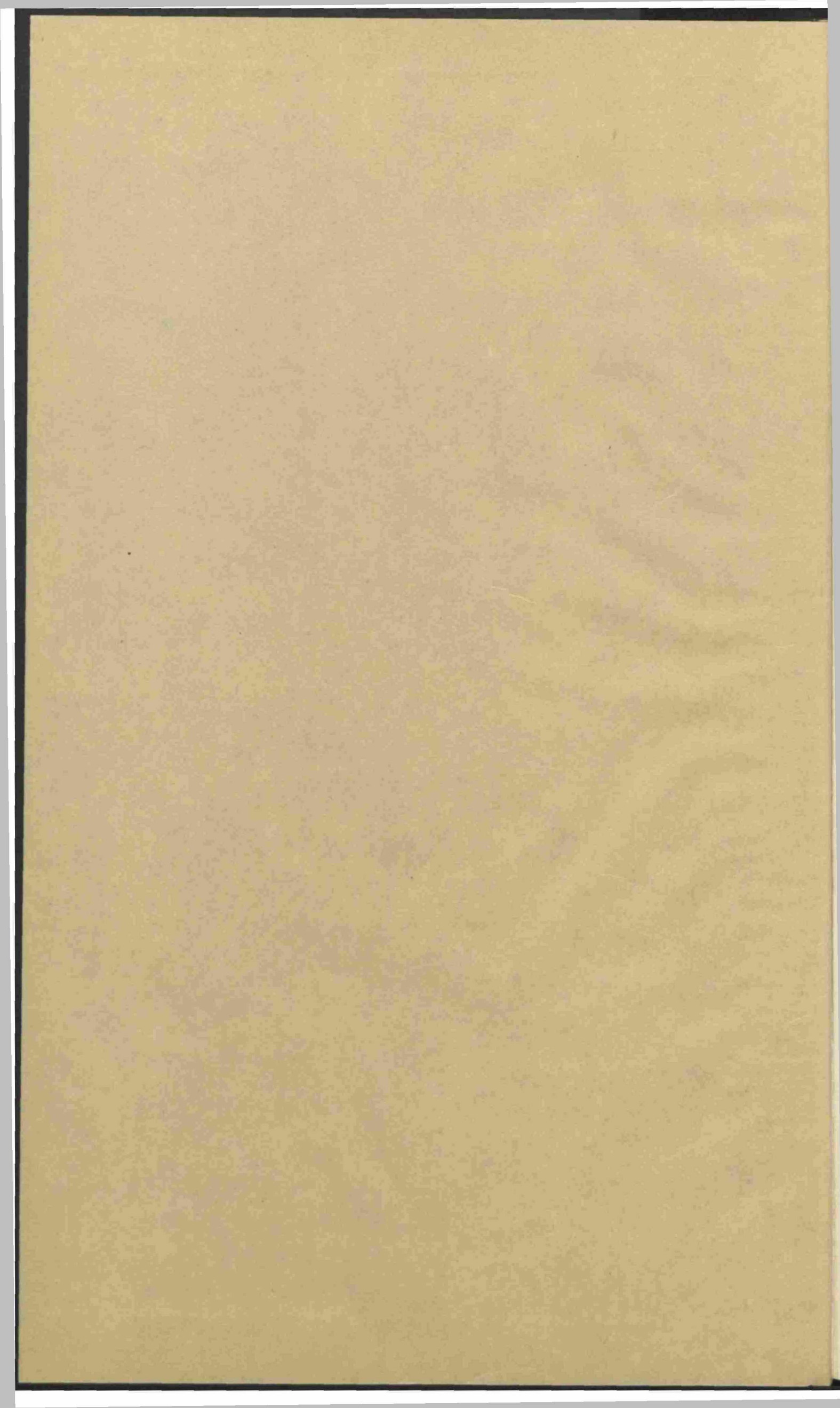
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FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING

MIDDLE EAST (GENERAL) AFFAIRS

PART 3

January to December 1949

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**FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE RESPECTING
MIDDLE EAST (GENERAL) AFFAIRS—PART 3**

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No. 1

**CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE
FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER**

Situation in the Middle East

Mr. Bevin to Sir O. Harvey (Paris)

(No. 595. Secret)
Sir,

*Foreign Office,
5th May, 1949.*

When the French Foreign Minister called to see me to-day we had a brief discussion about various Middle Eastern problems.

2. I began by asking M. Schuman whether the French Government knew much about the new régime in Syria. He replied that, while they had recognised the Government of Colonel Husni al Za'im, they had little reliable information about him. The Colonel's attitude towards some of his neighbours was not very reassuring, but there was so far very little firm evidence to go on.

3. I then said to M. Schuman that we had recently been giving much attention to the economic problems of the Middle Eastern countries. Two projects in which I was particularly interested were the Euphrates Irrigation Scheme and the Nile Waters Scheme. I had had a chance to discuss these projects with Mr. McCloy and had asked him whether the International Bank would be prepared to help. My impression was that the Americans were very interested in these plans. For my part I had always felt that the social structure of the Arab States was weak, and that it was most important that we should endeavour to build them up by raising the standard of life of their peoples. I knew that the French Government were interested in the Gezira Scheme in Syria,

and I thought that we ought to have a full and frank exchange of views about the economic development of the whole area. In some cases, no doubt, our commercial interests would conflict, but that need not prejudice our co-operation on development plans.

4. M. Schuman expressed interest in what I had told him, but said that so far the French Government had not gone into the question fully.

5. I then referred to the problem of the Arab refugees, and mentioned that we were making £1 million available to help with the resettlement of refugees in Transjordan. The Gezira was another area where there seemed to be good possibilities for resettlement, and if some of the refugees could be moved there that would greatly relieve the situation. I also mentioned that we were looking into the possibility of constructing a new road which would lead from Beirut through Transjordan to the Red Sea south of Aqaba. This would help to open up a new area, and it might then be possible to construct a new pipe-line from Iraq to the Red Sea.

6. It was agreed that it would be useful if M. Massigli would discuss these questions further with Mr. Wright.

I am, &c.

ERNEST BEVIN.

SIR WILLIAM STRANG'S TOUR IN THE MIDDLE EAST

(21st MAY-18th JUNE, 1949)

Report to the Secretary of State

I.—Introductory

This visit to the Near East was undertaken for the same purpose as that made earlier in the year to South-East Asia and the Far East, namely, to educate myself, to meet His Majesty's representatives in the foreign countries visited, to tell them about developments at home, to give them a picture of the foreign situation as seen from Europe, and, generally, to demonstrate the interest of the Foreign Office in Middle Eastern affairs. Its timing, climatically ill-chosen, was determined by the decision to hold a conference in London in July 1949 of His Majesty's representatives in the Middle East, for which it was a useful preparation.

2. I visited Tripoli, Benghazi, Cairo, Amman, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Beirut, Damascus and Tehran. Owing to loss of a few days through illness, I had to abandon my proposed visits to Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf. I spent only a brief refuelling stop at Bagdad, but I was able in the time to have a talk with the Iraqi Prime Minister (Nuri Pasha es Said), and I was fortunate enough to meet the Regent of Iraq and the Iraqi Foreign Minister in Tehran. I thus saw something of most of the countries of the Arab world, and, in addition, of Israel and Persia. Persia, apart from religion, has not much in common with the Arab countries. In Tehran one thinks more naturally of Turkey or Afghanistan or even of Pakistan than of Iraq or Syria.

3. In all the capitals visited, in addition to having conversations with the senior members of His Majesty's Missions, I walked round all branches of our offices to see our staffs at work, saw leading members of the British communities, was received by heads of States and members of Governments, and usually had talks with the United States, French and Commonwealth representatives.

4. In the second part of the present report, I append some notes on the more salient transactions in each place visited. In the present section I submit a few general observations. The report is not exhaustive, makes no claim to originality

and is not written for experts. But it may give a broad picture of the present state of this area at a crucial period of its history.

5. For all its importance in the history of civilisation and religion, the vestiges of which are to be found in profusion, the Near East has not the teeming vitality of India or South-East Asia or the Far East. There are vast reserves of oil and two great river systems, but most of the area is desert or bare hill-side. Tartar and Turk and perhaps Arab also, and maybe Islam itself, have laid a blight on this once flourishing part of the Greco-Roman world. Moslem Arabs are not usually as interesting to talk to as Hindus or Buddhists or Confucians. Intellectually a European is more at home in Israel than in any of the Arab countries.

6. The Arab States are weak, divided and lacking in a sense of direction. As has happened in the past when the strong hand of a dominating Power has been removed, the Middle East has broken up into a group of small quarrelsome States. The Arab countries gained their independence in a world politically and economically disrupted by war. They inherited the consequences of centuries of Turkish misrule. Their Governments are unstable and corrupt, and their social systems marked by extremes of wealth and poverty. Potential leaders are few and the best of these, like King Abdullah or Nuri Pasha, are discredited or old or tired. I was told again and again that if King Feisal had lived the situation might have been saved. There are few new or younger men on the horizon. The Arab States also face the great challenge of our time, Soviet communism, along their northern border and in the hearts of their people. In this condition of unpreparedness, they face an incalculable new challenge in the dynamic and expansionist State of Israel, vastly superior to them in intelligence, tenacity and purpose, planted among them by superior force and skill, against a futile resistance on their part, the defeat of which has left them humiliated and resentful. They are burdened with $\frac{3}{4}$ million Arab

refugees from Israel. With all this, they have to bear the impact upon them of rapidly developing Western techniques which they perforce must use without at this stage successfully absorbing them. It is small wonder that the picture is a generally discouraging one.

7. Nevertheless, there are stirrings of the social conscience in what one might have thought to be unlikely places. At the suggestion of the King of Egypt, I spent the better part of a day in the Delta visiting welfare centres established partly by Government action and partly by voluntary effort to combat disease, ignorance and poverty among the agricultural workers. There are not many of these institutions yet, but at least a start has been made and the work is being pursued with devotion and enthusiasm. I also visited a model textile factory (cotton and wool) of which the Egyptians are justifiably proud.

8. In Tehran, the Shah of Persia spoke to me for an hour, with sincere concern for the welfare of his people, of the abuses for which he was determined to find a remedy. This young man, with his Swiss education and recent experience of Great Britain, and his touch of generous idealism, has come to look upon his country with fresh eyes and has grown into the conviction that if he himself does not give the impulse for reform no one else will. But even the pashas of Egypt and the magnates of Persia have begun to see the red light and to talk not merely of economic development but of the need to raise the conditions of the common people. Husny Zaim and his Ministers in Syria speak the same language.

9. *Arab-Unity*.—In spite of disillusion, sentiment for Arab unity is still strong. The unity of the Arab world is favoured by religion, language and political interest and a common anti-Communist outlook. It is frustrated by dynastic and personal jealousies. Iraq and Jordan have a common dynastic interest, but the Hashemite House, which rules them both, is disliked by almost all other Arabs. Egypt is jealous of Iraq and has an *entente* with Saudi Arabia in opposition to the Hashemite *bloc*. The present cultivation of Iraq and Jordan by Persia is said to be a counter-move in this game of politics. Husny Zaim, the new usurping ruler of Syria, has bitter enemies all round him and hardly a friend other than the King of Egypt. Most Arabs still cherish the Arab League, but it will not be made effective until Iraq and Egypt, who both desire to dominate

it, are reconciled; or until it can be furnished with a secretary-general more practical than Azzam Pasha. Some Arabs think that the Arab League has no future and that the Arab world falls naturally into three parts: Egypt and North Africa; the Arabian Peninsula; the Lebanon, Syria, Jordan with Arab Palestine and Iraq. In Lebanon and Iraq there are proponents of the "fertile crescent"—Syria and Iraq. But some of them seem to have been converted to the idea because they see in it a way of getting rid of Husny Zaim. Some want it under a Hashemite monarch, some under a republic. No one has any idea how either result is to be achieved or how the traditional jealousies of Damascus and Bagdad are to be allayed. King Abdullah and some of his Ministers want to reunite Jordan and Syria in "Greater Syria" under the Hashemite Crown. Among other supporters of "Greater Syria" there is great opposition to union under the Hashemite ruler. Union would be a natural thing and may well come about when King Abdullah dies, since his son Talal is said to have little ambition to be King, even of Jordan, still less of "Greater Syria."

In Arab Palestine, there is much opposition to the incorporation of Arab Palestine in Jordan. In other Arab countries, it is seen as no better than a regrettable necessity, in view of the exasperating personality of King Abdullah. A fertile topic of conversation even among Arabs who see the full tragedy of the Arab situation is abuse and ridicule of other Arabs.

10. *Attitude to Israel*.—The Arab States are not fully united in their attitude to Israel. Jordan, Egypt and Syria, while not willing to "accept" or "recognise" Israel, do not recoil from the prospect of provisional arrangements with her. Iraq will have no dealings with Israel of any kind. The Lebanon takes an intermediate position. No Arab is at heart reconciled to the existence of Israel: Israel is a canker which unless checked will spread from the Nile to the Euphrates, in the oft-quoted words attributed to Ben Gurion. Even if territorial expansion is averted there is the danger of economic domination of the Arab States by Israel with American assistance. The presence of this disruptive alien civilisation is viewed with horror. It is feared that the growth of this Israeli will-to-power will mean the end of the old easy-going Arab world. There is no sign, so far, of a robust response to this grim

challenge. Only sorrowful reproaches and pathetic appeals for help. The best that the Arab States can look forward to is the maintenance of economic pressure on Israel, which they profess to think will in the long run be effective; and military resistance when once they have arms in their hands.

11. *Attitude to the United Kingdom.*—In spite of everything, the Arab States have not lost faith in Great Britain. They have, in truth, no one else to turn to. We are the best of a bad lot. In capital after capital, I found that we were still regarded as the only hope, thanks to our experience, our tradition of friendship, and the personality of His Majesty's representatives. (Warm tributes were paid in particular to His Majesty's Ambassadors at Cairo and Tehran for their patience, courtesy and sympathy. Usually it was arms that they wanted; sometimes it was immediate financial assistance; sometimes the urgent plea was made that we should have a clear and active policy, to be pursued without too much regard to the squabbles of the Arab States or the views of the United States or France. If we would only make up our minds and tell the Arab States what we wanted, we would be astonished by the response. Meanwhile, the first thing for us to do was to settle our relations with Egypt; if we could do that we should put new heart into all the Arab States. Other things we could do would be to keep King Abdullah from talking too much; to try to reconcile Iraq and Egypt; to come out definitely in favour of groupings of Arab States, help them to sink their differences and strengthen their economies, as a preliminary to some form of Middle Eastern Pact. Sometimes, again, what was asked for was no more than a sympathetic and understanding approach.

12. *Israel.*—Whatever the ultimate territorial ambitions of the Israelis may be (and the Arabs think that they are expressed in Ben Gurion's remark about the Nile and the Euphrates), there is little doubt that they will aim at the economic domination of the Middle East. This offers them the best chance of economic survival. They are determined to double the present population by bringing it up to 2 million. Though migration from Eastern Europe is drying up, they expect an increasing influx from the precariously situated Jewish minorities in Arab countries (Nuri Pasha told me that he had in mind to take Arab refugees, head for

head, in place of all the Jews now in Iraq). They believe that by developing agricultural, mineral and industrial wealth, by promoting joint irrigation schemes in neighbouring countries, by making Israel an *entrepôt* for international trade, by developing economic collaboration with other Near Eastern countries, they can support a population of 2 million, but on one condition, namely, that adequate investment capital is available. This they at present lack, and they hope to get it from the United States. But a current foreign view is that American Jewry, having taken a look at Israel's economic policies and prospects, is likely to go on contributing but not to invest. The Arabs think that, by maintaining an economic boycott, they can in the long run bring Israel down; but the intelligence, resource, tenacity and vision of the Israelis is such that it would be imprudent to assume that they will succumb to economic pressure, or capitulate before economic difficulties, or that American Jewry would in the last resort, however deep the American recession, let the Zionist enterprise fail for lack of funds.

13. The Israelis are going to be tough customers to deal with, and their parlous economic situation will make them all the tougher and more determined. On frontiers, on Jerusalem, on refugees, they are taking an intransigent line; but this will not prevent them from making a bid for economic collaboration with us. Like other Middle Eastern countries, they will probably find that they cannot ignore or cut adrift from Great Britain. Our economic relations, and those of the United States, with Israel, raise questions which we shall sooner or later have to face and answer. If the Arabs cannot respond to the present challenge and build up their national economics on a solid basis, are the Israelis to be permitted, or indeed assisted, to bring in their economic dynamism as a solution? On which side does our best long-term interest lie?

14. Tel Aviv is a terrible place, noisy, tawdry, vulgar, but active, bustling, full of purpose. There is no stagnation here. Seen in the mass under Eastern skies and in an Eastern landscape, the Jews do not look out of place. Dress them the same as the Arabs and they would not look very different from them. For all their European culture, they remain an Eastern people, at home in Palestine. When one remembers that Zionism was distilled from the miseries of the ghettos of Eastern

Europe and brought to fruition by the Nazi savageries, it strikes a sympathetic chord to see the Israelis walk as free men in a land of their own, however unjustly acquired.

15. *Syria*.—That upstart lower middle-class soldier, Colonel Husny Zaim, has put the cat among the pigeons in the Middle East. By a well-organised *coup*, executed by the army, he seized power without shedding blood. There are no stories of shootings or tortures. He throws a lot of people into jail, but soon lets them out again. He confines others to their houses. He works sixteen hours or more a day and makes his Ministers, quite a respectable lot, do the same. He says that he intends to remove abuses and to modernise and secularise the country on a new constitutional basis and to give the common people a square deal. He is credited with great powers of decision and is said to be getting things done, including the promulgation of a new Civil Code.

16. There are constant comings and goings between Damascus, Bagdad and Beirut by members of the displaced Syrian parties and confabulations with their friends in the Governments of the Lebanon and Iraq, who are persuaded by them that Zaim has no support in the country and that the Syrian people are only waiting for a sign to throw him out. Outwardly, there are few indications of tension in the country, and I was told on what seemed to be good authority that the new régime is widely supported, if only because it is, by Levantine standards, a relatively honest one. I was assured by Lebanese and Iraqi Ministers that Zaim is half crazy. Certainly his views about the size of the Syrian army are fantastic and he has made some foolish statements; but some of the things he said to me seemed to be common sense. He may not be a Kemal Atatürk, but he may perhaps be in the same tradition. It would be prudent to put a big question mark beside him, and he may be capable of great follies; but members of His Majesty's Legation and the small British business community in Damascus are inclined to think that, quite apart from Zaim, the potential resources of Syria and the steady qualities of her people point to a hopeful future, and that the coming of Zaim has done nothing to mar this prospect.

17. *Economic Development*.—What I saw of the British Middle East Office con-

firmed my view that it is an institution of great value for the maintenance of our position in the Middle East and for the Middle Eastern countries themselves. Almost all the members of the Development Division were away on tour when I was in Cairo. I came upon Sir Herbert Stewart (agricultural adviser) in Jerusalem and Mr. Murray (statistician) in Tehran. But in spite of the labours of Sir John Troutbeck and his staff, of all the surveys and plans made by them and by visiting experts and consultants, British and American, in the last few years, the actual work of economic rehabilitation lags sadly behind. The Palestine crisis and the burden of the Arab refugees have been too much for the Arab countries; and Persia, although relatively free from these obligations, is in no better case. Their budgets cannot carry all the necessary internal expenditure and their credit is not adequate for the requisite foreign loans. Their Governments cling precariously to office and are too often composed of men with an interest in preserving the present overwhelming privileges of great wealth which frustrate the building of a solidly based economy. The International Bank may come to the help of Iraq and Persia in a small way, and enable a start to be made with preliminary schemes. But there is disappointingly little prospect that any large economic development schemes will be brought into effect in any early future. It is difficult to see how Middle Eastern Governments are to be jolted out of their rather helpless inertia. There seems to be no solution but patient and persistent effort along a clear line established by agreement between ourselves and the Americans. The Arabs beg for a clear policy from us and we must find it if we can. We may blame the Arabs for inertia, but we are bound to ask ourselves whether our own purpose is clear. Certainly, several Arab Ministers to whom I spoke seemed to fear that we might be intending to wash our hands of the Middle East and to abandon the charge which they still continue to regard as ours and ours alone. Indeed, the Iraqi Foreign Minister put me the question straight. I think that I was able to reassure him.

18. On my way to South-East Asia and the Far East in January last, I had a discussion at Alexandria on Middle Eastern affairs with Sir Ronald Campbell, Sir J. Troutbeck and the two Commanders-in-Chief. As I reported at the time, the

following were some of the chief points made during that discussion:—

“*Palestine*. (At this date, His Majesty's Government had not yet recognised Israel.)

(a) Agreement between Israel, Trans-jordan and Egypt should be promoted.

(b) The frontiers of Israel should satisfy the conditions:—

(i) Of being not too unsatisfactory from the point of view of the defence of the Canal Zone. The G.O.C. stressed the vital importance of the Canal Zone and of Egypt generally from the point of view of the defence of the whole Middle East.

(ii) Of being likely to gain the acquiescence, in the long run at any rate, of the Arab States.

(c) Israel should be drawn into the orbit of the Western Powers and denied to Soviet influence; for this reason the moderate Israeli parties should be supported. This is vital from the point of view of defence.

(d) To this end, a joint United Kingdom-United States policy should be worked out. Diplomatic action should be taken both with Israel and the Arab States, the United States taking the lead in appropriate cases, in agreement with the United Kingdom.

Middle East Generally

(a) Once the Palestine question is settled, defence arrangements should be worked out between the United Kingdom and the Arab States.

(b) The United States should be associated with these, the object being (i) to build up a Middle Eastern front against the Soviet Union; (ii) to safeguard Middle Eastern oil supplies.

(c) Special attention should be given to the economic rehabilitation of the Arab States, particularly Iraq and Persia.

(d) A meeting should be held in London next summer attended by His Majesty's representatives in the Middle East, the Commanders-in-Chief and representatives of the London departments concerned. A time could be chosen when some of our representatives would normally be on leave. This was thought preferable to a meeting in Cairo or elsewhere in the Middle East.

(e) Commanders-in-Chief should have greater liberty to discuss defence matters with His Majesty's representatives. At present, while they may talk to Sir J. Troutbeck, they may not open themselves fully to His Majesty's Ambassador at Cairo.

(f) Special attention should be given to the relationship between the new United States co-ordinator of plans and (i) our own Commanders-in-Chief; (ii) the Governments of Arab States.”

19. At the meeting of His Majesty's representatives in the Middle East which is to be held in London later this month, we shall have to see how far these preliminary suggestions require to be adjusted in the light of later knowledge.

II.—Notes on the Tour

A.—Tripoli: 21st–23rd May, 1949

1. Tripolitania has an Arab population of about 700,000. There are 45,000 Italians, of whom 27,000 live in the towns and 18,000 in the country. Before the war there were 70,000. Mussolini's objective for the total Italian population of all Italian colonies was a mere 300,000. Italy's material achievement in Libya is impressive. But the memories of Italian exploitation and oppression are such that, while Italian colonists are still tolerated, there is a determination never again to accept Italy as administering Power or to see Italians giving orders again.

2. We arrived in Tripoli shortly after the rejection of the resolution at the General Assembly of the United Nations which would have brought Italy back again

for a period as administering Power under United Nations trusteeship. It had been touch and go whether disorders would break out, leading to a massacre of Italians. Everyone, officials and population alike, was breathing a sigh of relief that this had been averted. The handling of the situation by the Chief Administrator (Mr. T. R. Blackley) was widely regarded as having been wise and skilful.

3. Normally, relations between the Arab and Italian populations are friendly. It is not the case that the Italians always have the best land; rather that they usually make better use of it. But the recent crisis caused some disturbance of mind among the Italian residents, and there were applications for repatriation to Italy.

4. I was told that Tripolitania can be made nearly self-supporting. In seven years out of ten the budget will balance, including the cost of administration. After two bad years in succession—and this is rare—owing to lack of rain, there will be a bumper harvest this year, and the Administration has budgeted for a surplus. There is generally an adverse balance of trade, not much of it in hard currency. It has been estimated that over a ten-year period the total cost to the British taxpayer of covering budget deficit and adverse balance of trade would be about £2½ million only, including measures of economic (mainly agricultural) improvement going beyond care and maintenance, but not on the grandiose Italian imperial scale.

5. I was informed that the recent crisis had crystallised local opinion in three ways. First, there was an insistent demand for a declaration by His Majesty's Government that, so far as they were concerned, they would now oppose the return of Italy as administering Power. Secondly, there was an equally strong demand that His Majesty's Government should make an early declaration of policy, stating the measures they proposed to take to provide self-government in Tripolitania. It was not enough to promulgate such plans for Cyrenaica and say nothing about Tripolitania. Thirdly, sentiment for a united, independent Libya under the Amir (Seyyid Idris el Senussi) was growing, in spite of marked reluctance on the side both of the Amir and of the Tripolitarians in the past. The fulfilment of this aspiration will not be without its difficulties: the two parts of Libya are separated by a desert; have different customs and traditions and outlook; and also separate currencies. The Chief Administrator was turning his mind to the solution of the problems raised by these developments and he gave me the benefit of his reflections. As he has since conferred in person with the Foreign Office about them and a line of action has been decided upon, I need not deal further with the matter here.

6. It was emphasised to me that until our long-term policy is determined it will be difficult to recruit adequate staff for the Administration. Only three members of the present staff have university degrees. The need for staff of the quality of the Sudan or Colonial Services is obvious. Indeed, the Chief Administrator, himself from the Sudan Service, thinks that the

international complications which will always beset our administration of Tripolitania (relations with Italy, France, Arab World, United Nations) will place an especially heavy strain on the directing staff. From this point of view, he welcomes the transfer of responsibility for Tripolitania from the War Office to the Foreign Office. This has enabled foreign incidents to be promptly and adequately dealt with, and has, among other things, promoted a better understanding between the Administration at Tripoli and His Majesty's Embassy at Rome.

The Chief Administrator thought it best that I should not, in view of the recent crisis, see any of the local notables: but I had talks with the chief members of the Administrator's staff, with some of the foreign consular representatives, and with Major-General H. Murray, Commanding the 1st Division with Headquarters in Tripoli, to whom I am grateful for a luminous exposition of the military problems, administrative and strategic, that face us in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica.

7. I spent an hour or so looking at the ruins of Sabratha, the Roman seaside town which was one of the three cities of the Tripolis, from which Tripoli takes its name.

B.—Benghazi: 23rd–24th May, 1949

8. Tripoli is on an international air route. Benghazi lies off the beaten track. It is smaller than Tripoli and less pretentious. Cyrenaica has a population of only 300,000 against Tripoli's 700,000. There is a mere handful of Italians, a few dozen only. Feeling against Italians, and not merely against Italy, is more deep-seated than in Tripoli. Cyrenaica was several times fought over, and the population cruelly treated by the Italians. They fought for us against the Italians. Cyrenaica is a poor and primitive country and, unlike Tripolitania, far from being self-supporting. The cost of administration to His Majesty's Government over a ten-year period might be £15 million, as compared with £2½ million for Tripolitania: this does not include military expenditure. Cyrenaica has been carried rather further towards self-government than Tripolitania. It has been possible to do this, in a somewhat patriarchal way, because of the existence of the Amir, to whom the people look as the centre of their political and religious life.

9. As in Tripoli, I met the chief members of the Administration, including the Chief Administrator's two Arab lieutenants, whose counterparts do not yet exist in Tripoli. The Chief Administrator (Mr. E. A. V. de Candole) kindly arranged a party at his house where I met a company of the local notables: a tribal chief, some relatives of the Amir, one of the judges (a Lebanese), the Grand Qadi, some of the chief merchants, local lawyers and young firebrand journalists. The theme of their talk, as of that of a deputation which I received next day in the Administrator's office, was, first, immediate independence, and secondly, continued association with Great Britain.

10. I was received by the *Amir* (*Seyyid Idris el Senussi*), who kindly entertained me to lunch in the Graziani-Balbo palace. He is elderly, quiet-mannered, with a touch of humour and a small thin voice (a tiny voice like a grasshopper was King Abdullah's description). His remarks have already been reported and I will not give them at length. They were chiefly concerned with the declaration which he would feel bound to make about independence at the forthcoming congress. He first traced the history of the association between Great Britain and Cyrenaica. The ideal was a direct treaty relationship. But the Council of Foreign Ministers and the United Nations had chosen a different path. It was time to go back. The people were impatient, particularly the tribes who had fought the Italians. They were pressing for a declaration of independence and the formation of a Government under the Amir. He would have to say something at the congress and try to elicit a public response from the Chief Administrator. There was a growing feeling for the unity of Libya under the Amir, both in Cyrenaica and in Tripolitania. He would have to mention Tripolitania at the congress. A free association between Great Britain and Cyrenaica would be better than a forced association, that is to say, a trusteeship. He was confident that His Majesty's Government could set their course towards a direct agreement. The proceedings at the General Assembly and the shock administered to Arab sentiment by the proposal for the return of Italy to Tripolitania and by the revival of the proposal for a trusteeship for Cyrenaica had made the need for action an urgent one and had fostered the feeling for Libyan unity. As His Majesty's Government have

since decided what response to make to this plea, I need not elaborate further upon it.

C.—Cairo: 24th–29th May, 1949

11. We were taken from Tripoli to Benghazi and from Benghazi to Cairo by the R.A.F. Between Benghazi and Cairo we re-fuelled at El Adem, an R.A.F. station which serves as a staging point for service and civilian aircraft. The station commander took me round his establishment, which is a demonstration model of how to keep 300 men fit and in good heart in the middle of the desert.

12. Egypt's problem is over-population. The productivity of the land is prodigious, but so are the birth-rate and the death-rate. Public health measures, which have begun to have their effect, serve to increase the population pressure. Birth-control and emigration are not at present practical politics. Industrialisation will not become practical economics until the purchasing power of the population at large can be increased, and for this drastic measures of social reform, of which there is as yet little sign, will be required. As Sir F. Leith-Ross observed to me, in spite of the luxury of Cairo, Egypt is a poor country. The standard of living is, for the moment, not falling as it has been doing for some time, but is very precarious. He said that the budgetary position was critical, and that Egypt could not afford to spend £30 million on an army which would be of no use anyway.

13. For all that, Egypt is the strongest and best equipped of the Arab States. She is fortunately placed, protected by deserts, and has escaped some of the catastrophes that have visited other parts of the Middle East. She is strategically more important than any of the others, and we have perforce to rely on her.

14. Egyptian Ministers are obsessed by the financial situation. *The Prime Minister* (*Abdel Hadi Pasha*) made this one of the themes in my talk with him. He urged a more generous policy on our part in the matter of the release of sterling balances. The Egyptian Government wanted something tangible from us, like money or arms: otherwise the Government would find it hard to explain to the people why it was in their interest that His Majesty's Government should enjoy military facilities in Egypt. Money was needed not only for arms, but also for schemes for the utilisation of the Nile Waters. On Palestine and Tripolitania he spoke with moderation and without rancour. Generally the Egyptian

Ministers whom I met avoided broaching the more delicate subjects, like the Sudan. Abdel Hadi is tall, rubicund, mild-mannered and slow-speaking, far removed from the slick Levantine. In this he resembles the Prime Ministers of Jordan and Persia, who are of the same steady kind, and differs from his opposite numbers in Beirut and Bagdad. Unlike them, he goes in daily fear of assassination.

15. *The Ministers of Education and of Public Health* were at pains to make clear to me the encouraging progress now being made in the sphere of welfare and public health. The campaign against disease was showing good results. There was a shortage of doctors, but a new medical faculty was about to be formed. Malaria, small-pox and cholera were almost stamped out. A campaign of education against disease, ignorance and poverty had been set on foot. At the suggestion of King Farouk I spent a long morning looking at welfare centres and agricultural institutes in the Delta. An encouraging start has certainly been made. The directors in Cairo and the executants in the countryside are moved by enthusiasm and devotion. But it is no more than a start, and it will take more than these palliatives to cure the ignorance and poverty of the *fellaheen*. Still there is a stirring of conscience among the pashas. Lip-service is better than nothing. *The Governor of the Bank* said to me that the Middle East was in a turmoil of social unrest and that the possessing classes would have to yield up their privileges in order to raise the condition of the masses.

16. *The King of Egypt* received His Majesty's Ambassador (Sir Ronald Campbell) and myself at his palace on the outskirts of Cairo. We stayed rather more than half an hour. His Majesty could not have been more affable, laughing and talking easily. Whatever else he may lack, he does not lack a ready wit. He paid a spontaneous tribute, well deserved, to His Majesty's Ambassador and the place he had made for himself in Egypt. He took up a reference to Tripoli and said he would speak his mind. The Arab world felt that once again we had let them down. Egypt did not want the Italians on her doorstep again. Once let the Italians regain a foothold in North Africa and it would begin all over again. As to world affairs, he was pessimistic: as regards the coming of war, the question was not if but when: and it would come sooner rather than later. I

liked him better than I had expected to do. His ability should not be under-rated.

17. Thanks to the kindness of His Majesty's Ambassador, I was able to meet at the Embassy some of his foreign colleagues, including representatives of the other Arab States, many Egyptian notables and leading members of the British community. As I found on my Far Eastern tour, so also in the Middle Eastern capitals our business communities and indeed the British colonies as a whole do us great credit. In the Middle East one finds almost everywhere residents of long standing who are held in high honour locally, among them, in Cairo, such now almost legendary figures as Sir Thomas Russell Pasha and Sir Robert Greg. Our business men are worried, but not all of them unduly despondent. Some of them are doing well —e.g., tobacco firms and chartered accountants. Egypt is passing through a nationalist phase and is insisting on an excessive degree of "Egyptianisation" of branches and staffs of foreign concerns and introducing other similar restrictions. British firms are refraining from tendering for contracts because they foresee obstruction and frustration. But there are said to be signs of a return to more reasonable methods.

18. By and large, the outlook for Egypt is not a happy one. Corruption has grown and efficiency fallen away since the British officials left. These are not fatal evils if the State has vitality to renew itself. In Egypt there do not seem to be many positive signs of renewal. Power passes from the hands of one ageing group of individuals to another rival group. In a few years these men will have died out, in course of nature or by violence. There do not seem to be many younger men able to take the place of the old gang. The appeal to the young is from the Moslem Brotherhood or from the Communists. One way out might be free elections leading to a Wafd Government. This would be most unwelcome to the King, who may, as an alternative, be meditating a military *coup à la* Husny Zaim. Meanwhile, the Egyptian ruling class, for all its cynicism, does not lack charm and urbanity.

British Middle East Office

19. Sir John Troutbeck took me round his offices and I met those members of his staff who were in Cairo. As was to be expected, most of the members of the Development Division were on tour. But

I had a talk with the Locust Adviser, who had with him by chance his colleague of the Desert Locust Survey from Nairobi. I found the B.M.E.O. well spoken of in the posts which I visited and I met some of the members of the Development Division on tour. I was assured that Heads of Missions warmly welcomed Sir J. Troutbeck's visits to them and wished they could be more frequent. The B.M.E.O. is, to my mind, an excellent institution which should be maintained. It projects upon the Middle East the principle of British collaboration as opposed to British exploitation, the principle which is sustaining our good name in the Middle East as in South-East Asia.

Azzam Pasha

20. Sir J. Troutbeck and I visited Azzam Pasha, secretary-general of the Arab League, at his small, plainly furnished flat in Cairo. Except Sir J. Troutbeck, hardly anyone, British or Arab, had a really good word to say for him. Yet he was perhaps the one Arab I had any talk with who was able to look at the Arab world as a whole and not merely in the light of his own personal or local interests or ambitions or jealousies. He may be a dreamer; and the Arab League has broken in his hands. But he seemed to me to have some saving qualities, though not indeed those of a secretary-general.

21. What he said to me was, in outline, as follows:—

In the Arab world, leaders are drawn by merit from great families rather than from dynasties as such. There is little dynastic feeling, except in Egypt. There is no possibility of a Hashemite dynasty for Greater Syria. Syria and Jordan, or Syria and Iraq could unite to-morrow on a republican basis. The *coup d'État* in Syria was the result of disillusion and disgust after the defeat of Palestine. Not a shot was fired. Two years earlier, Husny Zaim would have been strung up if he had made the attempt. He will now either be assassinated or become a constitutional President. The normal Syrian situation will then reassert itself. The "Fertile Crescent" (Syria, Iraq, Jordan and perhaps Lebanon) might be brought into being now, not on the basis of union or federation, but by the creation of a central council on which the presidency would rotate. Something of this kind is absolutely necessary: with Egypt on one side and this new group on the other, the Arabs could face Israel. The Arabs

have failed because they are weak and divided, and have been neglected by the British and opposed by the Americans and exploited by the Russians. The Arab States must have arms. When Syria and Egypt have two or three divisions each, there will be no more trouble from the Jews. Twenty years hence Israel will have ceased to exist. The Arab States can go on withholding recognition for many years. British policy is not clear. He understands our economic objectives as stated by the Secretary of State. But we think too much of treaties and bases. The Middle East is a place where people live, not merely a place to which troops should be sent. Treaties are not required: *ad hoc* arrangements between General Staffs are much better. We all have a common enemy, communism. The British can have any facilities they want, anywhere. But they must treat the Arabs as friends and gain their trust and confidence, and not seem to care more for bases than for their good will.

D.—Amman: 29th–31st May and 3rd–8th June, 1949

22. The Hashemite Kingdom of the Jordan is still rooted in the patriarchal age, though Packards and camels jostle in the narrow streets of Amman. Amman is an upland town, strung along a deep valley and up the steep hillsides that enclose it. His Majesty's Legation (formerly the Residency) shares a hill-top with the Royal Palace. His Majesty's Minister will point out the spur where Uriah the Hittite must have met his death. There is a Roman theatre in the middle of the town, built when its name was Philadelphia.

23. King Abdullah, the eldest surviving son of King Hussein, is a king indeed and not merely in name; a figure out of the "Arabian Nights"; of impish wit, the subject of innumerable anecdotes; the *enfant terrible* of the Arab world about whom even the mild Regent of Iraq, his nephew, was sardonic, when I met him in Tehran. His Majesty's Minister (Sir A. Kirkbride) was with Lawrence in the Arab revolt, has spent most of his life since in Transjordan, and has an unrivalled position with the King and his Government.

24. At the best, the Jordan Kingdom is not self-supporting and requires to be subsidised. Now with the strain of the Palestine war and the burden of refugees an economic crisis is approaching. The population of Jordan is about 400,000; that of

Arab Palestine about the same. On top of this there are about 500,000 refugees. Like their Nabataean Arab predecessors the present Jordanians make a good thing out of smuggling. The import duties into Jordan are much lower than into Lebanon and Syria. Goods from overseas consigned to Jordan through Lebanon and Syria—at present Jordan's only commercial access to the sea—find their way quietly back across the frontier into Syria. The Jordan Kingdom has certain advantages over its neighbours—an able monarch, the right kind of constitution (a blend of autocracy and representative institutions), steady and dependable Ministers, an administration still drawing strength from the mandatory régime, and able British advisers for the army, finance and lands.

25. At the legation I met not only the three British advisers (Brigadier Glubb and Messrs Kendrick and Walpole) but the other chief British personalities in this little country—the Director of Antiquities, the representatives of the British Council, of the British Red Cross, of the Bank of Iran (which is now attacking the quasi-monopoly of the Ottoman Bank), the headmaster of the British School, and the R.A.F. station commander.

26. *The Minister for Foreign Affairs (Ruhi Bey Abdel Hadi)*, formerly the most senior Arab official in the Palestine Administration, received me in the very small, new and simple building that houses his department. He is one of those who admit and deplore Arab disunity and he is ready to take part of the blame upon Arab shoulders. But greater fault is ascribed to those who partitioned the Arab lands after the first world war and built it up part on British and part on French lines.

27. *The Prime Minister (Tewfiq Pasha Abul Huda)* is quiet of manner and speech and inspires confidence. He made three main points. First, the acute need for arms, which would never be used for aggressive purposes or for purposes disapproved by His Majesty's Government. Secondly, the need to preserve land communication between Jordan and Egypt across the Southern Negev. He had discussed this with the Egyptian Prime Minister in Cairo, and would raise it in London later in the summer, with the support of the Egyptian and Saudi Arabian Ambassadors. Relations between Jordan and Egypt had improved. A settlement between the United Kingdom

and Egypt was most desirable and would give renewed confidence to the whole Arab world. Thirdly, the need for the amalgamation of Syria and Jordan into Greater Syria, not necessarily now, but by agreement at the right time.

28. *His Majesty King Abdullah* talked to me for an hour and kindly entertained me to luncheon. He is growing old and is losing weight, but is still alert, witty, charming, with more than a touch of malice. He referred, of course, to the arms question. He had no intention of fighting Israel. Indeed, some accommodation would have to be found between Jordan and Israel; but this would be easier to find if Jordan were properly armed. He spoke of the danger of communism in Egypt and Iraq. It was important that Great Britain should keep troops in Egypt, and that land communication between Jordan and Egypt should be maintained via Aqaba. But he was not willing to be dominated by Egypt: he had not thrown out the Turks in order to let in the Egyptians. Hence the need for Greater Syria. He spoke quite sympathetically of King Ibn Saud and hoped I would not like him better than I did himself. He thought it essential that His Majesty's Government should not drift into aloofness in their handling of the Arab States: they should have a clear and active policy of their own and one not too much influenced by the United States. They would find a ready response from the Arab countries. In this, he echoed what had already been said by his Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs.

29. I went to see a camp of 5,000 Palestine refugees on a windy hill-top a few miles from Amman. Most of the refugees were better-class town-dwellers. The camp was staffed by representatives of the British and Swedish Red Cross. I also met there, by chance, the deputy United Nations representative from Beirut. A ration of 1,500 calories or so is, to the surprise of the nutritionists, proving adequate. The inmates are beginning to show an interest in life and are making small gardens round the tents. They do some business with a neighbouring village and with an Iraqi military camp in the vicinity. Some of them help with the harvest. I was told that they are beginning to realise that they will never return home and must make a new life somehow. Health is good; sanitation well cared for. There is a school and a clinic. This camp should not be taken as a type: it is better than most.

E*

30. The harvest will be plentiful this year. There has been good rain on the uplands, and the marginal lands on the edge of the desert-line have yielded. Sir A. Kirkbride took me out across the line into the desert to see the transition. We halted at a ruined Ummayyad hunting-lodge and saw bedouin in the desert and their camels camped around a Roman cistern by a station on the Hedjaz railway.

E.—Jerusalem: 31st May—1st June, 1949

31. Amman is about 2,500 ft. and Jerusalem about 2,000 ft. above sea level. Between them runs the Jordan Valley, 1,200 ft. below sea level. We did the journey by car, following a river-valley lined with flowering oleanders down to the Jordan. The famous Allenby Bridge is a routine engineering job, and the Jordan at this point is a small rather turbid stream flowing through a green strip in a barren waste; but Jerusalem, approached through Bethany and by the Mount of Olives, is of haunting beauty.

32. The line between Arab and Jew runs generally north and south through Jerusalem, leaving the whole of the old walled city, which contains the holiest places, Jewish, Christian and Moslem (the Wailing Wall, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Dome of the Rock) within the Arab lines. The Israelis are across Arab communications north to Nablus and south to Bethlehem; the Arabs are across the direct road from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv. The Arabs will only allow passage across the line at fixed points at fixed hours of the day. No one to whom I talked thought that internationalisation of the whole Jerusalem area was feasible. Partition somewhat along present lines, with guaranteed access to and international administration of the Holy Places, seemed to most people the only possible solution. The Israeli and Arab Commanders and administrators of Jerusalem are in regular touch and making adjustments for practical purposes from day to day.

33. His Majesty's Consul-General, Sir Hugh Dow, formerly Governor of Sind, has his offices and quarters in a fortress-like German hospice just outside the old city walls, right in the front line. It still bears the marks of rifle and mortar fire; there are armoured cars and a grave in the courtyard. The staff still live a monastic or barrack-like life, but are in excellent heart. What gets them down most is delay in the arrival

of letters from home; the bag has to come via Cairo and Amman and there are sometimes gaps.

34. Sir Hugh Dow took me to call on the *Mutasarrif of Jerusalem* (*Abdullah el Tel*), who entertained me to tea in his office inside the walls and had some of his colleagues and a group of *Arab journalists* to meet us. Abdullah el Tel was a tired and worried man (he has since given up office and returned to the Arab Legion) and had not much to say, but some of the journalists let themselves go. There is deep and abiding hatred of Israel, this canker in the Arab flesh; a bitter and humiliating sense of defeat and of an affront to Arab pride; a realisation of Arab shortcomings, the recognition of the need for renascence, but not the least idea how it is to come. Reproaches are levelled at His Majesty's Government, and with them goes a pathetic longing for sympathy and guidance. The first step to take is to unite Jordan and Arab Palestine and then recreate Greater Syria. But this prospect is not alluring to the Arabs of Palestine, who have been accustomed to a higher standard of life and civilisation than Amman can offer. Nor do they take kindly to King Abdullah and his "goatherd Ministers." Constitutional changes will be required, they say, yet the only alternative to fusion with Jordan is a régime under the Mufti, and that would mean chaos and immediate trouble with Israel. I met other Arab notables, including the *Mayor of Jerusalem*, at a party kindly given by Sir Hugh Dow. The Mayor was deeply despondent at Arab divisions and frustration. He thought that the Arab League was useless and Azzam Pasha a disaster. The Arab world was not a single entity, but fell into three parts—Egypt and North Africa; the Arabian Peninsula; the Fertile Crescent.

35. *Sir Herbert Stewart, Agricultural Adviser to the British Middle East Office*, was in Jerusalem, in the middle of a survey of agriculture in Arab Palestine, following upon a similar survey of Transjordan. He and Sir Hugh Dow, both eminent ex-Indian administrators and former colleagues, in the intervals of a fascinating return to the past, emphasised that both in Jordan and Arab Palestine the land, such as it is, is well cultivated. Every yard of soil is used and the cultivators are skilful and hard-working. It is a mistake to think that the Israelis have anything to teach the Arabs in this respect. Indeed, the Israelis lack what the Arabs

have in abundance, namely, good agricultural labour. The lands we saw in Israel between the coastal plain and the Judæan hills, evacuated by the Arabs, are still derelict. Many of the citrus plantations in the coastal plain are going to waste through lack of labour or lack of funds to water the trees or gather the fruit.

F.—Tel Aviv: 1st–3rd June, 1949

36. The Israeli authorities gave us a police escort from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv. His Majesty's Minister (Sir A. K. Helm), himself newly arrived in Israel, met us at Rehovoth (where President Weizmann has his residence and scientific institute) and took us into Tel Aviv through the ruins of Jaffa. We stayed at a large and well-run sea-side hotel forty-five minutes by car from Tel Aviv. His Majesty's Minister and his wife are still living in acute discomfort, and at fantastic expense, in an inferior, beach-hotel in the town, the best accommodation they can find. I went with him to look at a house, the purchase of which, however outrageous the price demanded, seemed to him and to me the only hope of a tolerable existence. His Majesty's Minister has been well received by the Israeli Government, who are apparently anxious to establish good relations with us. They are dependent on the United States, but are apt to resent United States domination. The United States Minister is both openly hostile to ourselves and clumsy with the Israelis. His staff, against his orders, are beginning to fraternise with ours. This is the only place where I did not find a close relationship between the United Kingdom and United States representatives.

37. I called on the *Prime Minister* (Mr. David Ben Gurion), who received me with the *Minister for Foreign Affairs* (Mr. Moshe Sharett) and Mr. Comay (a South African), the official in charge of relations with the Commonwealth. I had expected this to be a brief visit of courtesy and that I should have a talk with Mr. Sharett alone; but Mr. Ben Gurion kept us over two hours. He is the real power in the land.

38. The following is a summary of some of Mr. Ben Gurion's remarks:—

39. *Refugees*.—It had been the original intention to have a large Arab minority in the Jewish State. This would not be a practical possibility now. It would require not merely repatriation but resettlement and re-integration. Israel had become an

almost purely Jewish State. His Majesty's Government must bear part of the responsibility for this. Israel was still in a state of war with the Arab States, who were unwilling to make peace. It would be impossible, while this state of war existed, to receive enemy nationals into the country, including men of military age who might act as a fifth column. It was not true that the Arab refugees were driven out by the Israelis. Some had been sent out by the British. Most of the others had gone of their own accord.

40. *Israel's Rôle and Relations with His Majesty's Government*.—Israel was here to stay. If the appeal was to history, Israel was in Palestine by right. Israel's purpose was to bring Europe plus the Bible to Palestine. She had a contribution to make in the economic sphere, particularly in the realm of trade, which should be restored to the old channels in the Middle East. Israel had something to teach the Arabs in agricultural methods. She had other skills to make available, as Jews had done during the mandatory period when their advice had been welcomed. There were also joint irrigation schemes to be promoted with neighbouring countries. All this offered a basis for collaboration with the United Kingdom. It was of vital interest to Israel that the standard of life in Arab countries should be raised, otherwise there would be an invitation to communism. But collaboration with the United Kingdom must be on the basis of full respect for Israel's independence. The relationship must, of course, be that between a great State and a small State; but on the model of that between the United Kingdom and Belgium rather than between the United Kingdom and Jordan or even Egypt. Israel had a civilising mission in the Middle East.

41. Mr. Comay interjected at this point that just as the British relationship with Arab States was, in the British view, not directed against Israel, so Israeli policy in the Middle East was not directed against British interests. Israel was not going to allow herself to be a spring-board for other external hostile interests, *i.e.*, the Communists, as was sometimes alleged. Mr. Ben Gurion said that "not to be against" was not an adequate basis for good relations. There must be something more positive.

42. *Immigration*.—Mr. Ben Gurion said that Israel was determined to increase her

population by immigration. The position of Jews in Arab countries was becoming increasingly precarious and the flow towards Israel was growing. Immigration from satellite countries had been stopped by the Governments concerned, but there were still 400,000 Jews in Roumania. By hard work and organisation, agricultural and industrial production could be sufficiently increased and commerce sufficiently expanded to carry this population. Israel was in a hurry and could not afford to stand still. British economic policy in the Middle East was moving in the right direction, but too slowly.

43. I had several talks with *Mr. Sharett*, one at his house where he was kind enough to invite me to an informal lunch. I asked him about Judaism. He said that about 35 per cent. of the population were practising Jews. The percentage of practising Jews plus those who conformed and sometimes went to the synagogue would be something over 50 per cent. The State was so organised as to enable practising Jews and non-Jews to fulfil their religious observances. In the Army all food was Kosher, to provide for the practising Jews. The same in hotels. There was a small Christian minority in Israel; and there were still about 120,000 Moslem Arabs.

44. *Mr. Caplan, the Minister of Finance*, whom I met at *Mr. Sharett's* house, is also reputed to be a power in the land. He avoided politics and spoke about Israel's financial problems. Provided that sufficient capital for investment was forthcoming, Israel could support twice her present population. This would be done by agricultural and industrial development, desert culture, potash and other Dead Sea salts, disposal of oil by-products, mineral development. Inflation was the present danger and prices were far too high. But the Government faced the future with sober confidence and determination. The crucial problem was capital for long-term investment.

45. Finally, I called to pay my respects to *President Weizmann*. He received me in his room at the Scientific Institute at Rehovoth, which we also visited. This—rather than politics or even Zionism—is his life. He is said to be mortified at the direction now being taken by political Zionism, to be out of sympathy with his Government and to have little influence on affairs. He has grown very old and frail. I found the interview sad and rather painful. He was full of bitterness about past

policies of His Majesty's Government and about past and present actions of the Arab States, with a special dose of venom for Iraq. About the Arab refugees, he took a more extreme line than his Ministers; and *Mr. Comay*, who was present, intervened tactfully to correct his asperities. His mind was fixed on the past, and only when I took leave did he express hope for a happier future.

G.—Beirut: 8th–12th June, 1949

46. The words generally used to describe the Lebanon are "mosaic" and "link." Several Moslem and several Christian sects live together in a single State with little national feeling. The Lebanese are great travellers and traders and settlers abroad, and they have taken on Western culture more liberally than most Middle Easterners. They claim to interpret the East to the West and the West to the East. They have discovered how to import without visibly exporting—the balance being made up by invisibles, including tourism and remittances from settlers abroad, and smuggling. Their cosmopolitanism, their corruption and their luxury are a matter of scorn to the more austere kind of Arab. They are a smiling, hospitable and friendly people with a lovely country to live in—the summer mountain resort of the wealthy from Cairo to Bagdad. The Lebanon is thickly populated, but there is none of the grinding poverty of Egypt. Polity and economy are both precariously balanced.

47. I was unable, owing to Lebanese not Israeli opposition, to cross the Israeli-Lebanese frontier and had to go from Tel Aviv to Beirut by way of Jerusalem and Amman, over-flying Damascus and skirting the snows of Mount Hermon. I was delayed a few days in Amman by illness on the way and decided, on advice, to avoid the great heat by cutting out Riyadh and Bagdad from my programme.

48. *The President of the Republic (Sheikh Bechara Khalil El-Khoury)* received His Majesty's Minister (*Sir W. Houston-Boswall*) and myself for half an hour before the luncheon which he was kind enough to offer me. He, like his Minister for Foreign Affairs, is a Christian; the Prime Minister is a Moslem. He is a man of solid ability. He spoke of Lebanon as a link between East and West. It faced the Mediterranean, had cultural links with Europe, and a population partly

Christian. It could also serve as a link between the Arab States as it is not in either camp. The Lebanese Government were at present trying to reconcile Egypt and Iraq and to bring about another meeting of the Arab League. Syria was a question mark. Zaim's *coup* in Syria was something new in the Arab world and more like Latin America. Zaim would not last long; the opposition to him would gain in strength. Israel was an even bigger question mark. Her existence was a blow to the Arab world which had tried to prevent her getting a foot-hold, but had failed. The Arabs must take account of Israel as a hard fact. They must find a way to live together, however difficult. The United Kingdom had a part to play in the Middle East. The United States was too remote and lacked understanding. Arab unity must be fostered and the United Kingdom must help in this, since His Majesty's Government still wielded great influence. His Majesty's Government could count on the friendship and collaboration of the Lebanon. It was not possible for the Lebanon to absorb any Arab refugees. They would disturb the equilibrium between Moslem and Christian.

49. *The Minister for Foreign Affairs (Hamid Frangieh)* touched on a number of topics. He talks easily, but is not a man of any great consequence.

50. He was despondent about the proceedings of the Conciliation Commission at Lausanne, where the Israelis were showing bad faith. Israel was in a bad economic state and the Arabs were in a position to exert economic pressure and keep it up for a very long time. The Jews were also intriguing in the Lebanon to set the Moslems and Christians against each other. The present good feeling between these religious groups was a remarkable achievement. Lebanese, both Moslem and Christian alike, were at one in opposition to the recent antics of the Syrian Moslem, Zaim.

The Arab League should be maintained and reformed. Azzam should be replaced by someone who lives in the 20th Century. Iraq and Egypt must be reconciled. The Lebanon alone of the Arab States could act as conciliator. The Arab States must be brought together again. They were at present disorganised and in despair and needed encouragement and guidance. In spite of everything, His Majesty's Government still retained their influence over Arab Governments, and enjoyed their respect. They should try to keep

King Abdullah in order, bring Nuri Pasha back into the Arab fold, and hasten a settlement between themselves and Egypt. Such a settlement would make the whole Arab world feel more secure. The prospects were better now that Lord Killearn and Nokrashy Pasha had gone. Strong measures were being taken against communism both in Egypt and Iraq. The same was true of the Lebanon, in spite of charges by Syria to the contrary. The Arabs would be on the right side unless the Americans drove them into the other camp.

50. I had two conversations with *the Prime Minister (Riad Bey Solh)*. He is a figure in the Arab World and very conscious of it. He lacks the steadiness of his colleagues of Egypt, Jordan and Persia. He has become a recent convert to the "Fertile Crescent." This, and his hatred of Zaim, were the keynotes.

51. The problem of Arab unity could, he said, be easily solved. All should work for the Fertile Crescent—Syria and Iraq. This would give the Arab States confidence in face of Israel. The United Kingdom should make a treaty with the new united State, on the Anglo-Turkish not the Anglo-Jordanian model. Egypt and Saudi Arabia would accept this solution in the end. The first step was to reconcile Nuri Pasha and the Egyptian Government. The second to promote action in Syria to bring Zaim down. The Lebanon must remain outside the Fertile Crescent in order to preserve her present internal equilibrium. If she joined up, the Christians would want to secede and turn either to France or to Israel. Zaim had created a double problem: first the precedent of a military *coup*; second, a card of re-entry for France. He was promising everything to everybody and living in a fool's paradise. Greater Syria could not come under King Abdullah. The smaller could not swallow the greater. The King was an obstacle to Arab unity, if only because he talked too much. Arab Palestine would have to go to Abdullah, but this was a regrettable necessity. King Farouk was sucking up to Zaim, and this was the measure of his uneasiness in the face of a military *coup*. His Majesty's Government had a part to play. We were less mistrusted than other Powers and still had influence which we should use. The Arabs were waiting for a lead, and under our impulse there could be an Arab revival.

52. In our second conversation, he reverted to the Fertile Crescent. This had been facilitated by two unpleasant

experiences, namely, the Palestine crisis and the appearance of Zaim. The new State was more likely to be a monarchy than a Republic, with summer and winter capitals at Damascus and Bagdad. There would have to be single direction of foreign affairs and defence. Jordan would not be included: its ruler was too unstable. It was most important that His Majesty's Government should come to a settlement with Egypt. This would have a great effect in the Arab world. The Arab States were unlikely to recognise Israel. They could afford to play a waiting game. They could use the economic weapon and keep Israel in a state of uncertainty and thus constrain her to maintain military and economic mobilisation. This would be effective in the long run. Account would, however, have to be taken of Israel's existence and agreements made on a provisional basis without formal recognition.

53. One of the more pleasant interludes was a drive over the mountain roads—catching a glimpse of one of the two remaining groups of cedars on the way—to Beit-ed-din, an early 19th century palace of one of the Emirs, now being restored as a labour of love by his descendant, the present Director of Antiquities, Emir Maurice Shehab. It is used as a summer retreat by the President of the Republic. After Emir Maurice had showed us round, we took lunch in the open air with a view over terraced hills and valleys.

54. His Majesty's Minister arranged for me to have a talk in the garden afterwards with *Habib Bey Abi-Shahla, Deputy for Beirut*, former Minister, now political adviser to the Trans-Arabian Pipeline, known by common repute as the "American Agent," as Camille Chamoun is known as the "British Agent." He is Greek Orthodox by religion. A smart fellow, but not a bad one. Like others, he spoke of the remarkable harmony between Christian and Moslem which must be preserved, and of Lebanon's mediatory rôle. The Lebanon, like Hong Kong, was a free port area, an *entrepôt* that lived on invisibles. The French had a strangle-hold on the economy. The port, the railways, the trams, the Bank of Issue, all were French. The Middle East was as important strategically and politically as Western Europe. His Majesty's Government should pull the Arab States together and have a positive policy and not hold aloof as they had recently appeared to do. They should do this in concert with the

United States. A tithe of the money devoted to Western Europe would save the Middle East. There was nothing to be hoped for from the French, who were decadent and would crumple up as they did in 1940. His Majesty's Government should first reach a settlement with Egypt; then promote agreement among the other Arab States; and after that work for a Middle Eastern pact. The second of these three steps was not so difficult as it might seem. The differences among the Arabs were superficial. Abdullah should be kept in order. There was no need to force the Fertile Crescent, but merely help it on if there was a desire for it. Zaim was a force to be reckoned with. He had the army behind him. He might be half-crazy, but he stood for something new. Something had had to happen in Syria. Some of the things he had done in Syria were overdue. Better get on terms with him and try to lead him into good courses than let him fall into the sole hands of the French. If he could feel sure of himself, his relations with Iraq and Jordan would improve. Zaim had the welfare of the common people at heart; it would be better if more Governments in the Middle East felt the same, especially in Egypt.

55. I attended His Majesty's Minister's party for The King's birthday and was able to talk to many members of the very large British colony. The news of the knighthood conferred on him gave great pleasure to British and Lebanese alike, marking his very high standing in their affection and respect.

H.—Damascus: 12th–15th June, 1949

56. The Lebanese Director of Antiquities was good enough to come with me as far as Baalbek on my way from Beirut to Damascus in order to show me over the ruins of the Roman temples, now in his charge. Baalbek lies in the uplands between the Lebanon and anti-Lebanon ranges, in the northward extension of the Jordan Valley rift. His Majesty's Minister at Damascus (Mr. Philip Broadmead) met me at Baalbek, and after this glimpse of the majesty of the ancient world we crossed the anti-Lebanon into Syria and sat down to lunch in the foothills by the waters of Abana, one of the rivers of Damascus. Beirut belongs to the Mediterranean; Damascus to the desert. It lies in a great oasis at the foot of the anti-Lebanon, and its western suburbs run up

into the hills. The rivers are led through it by devious channels and there is the sound of running water. It claims to be the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world.

57. I paid my first call on the *Minister for Foreign Affairs* (*Emir Adel Arslan*), known as a soldier and a poet. He had not very much to say. The Jews at Lausanne were asking for Lebanese territory up to the Litani River. If Syria made an armistice with the Israelis, the latter would probably attack Arab Jerusalem. If they could take the old city they could whip up enthusiasm in the United States and the money would pour in again. The best solution would be immediate internationalisation lest worse happen. He was in touch with the Foreign Minister of Jordan about all this. The best way we could help the Arabs would be to let them have arms. All Arabs would resist the return of Italy to Tripolitania.

58. At dinner at His Majesty's Legation, I sat next to the able but taciturn *Minister of Finance* (*Hassan Jabbara*). He thought that Arab differences were superficial. The best link between the Arabs and Anglo-Saxons was anti-communism. There could be no solution of the problem of Israel unless the Israelis gave up their plans for the economic exploitation of the Middle East. The Arabs would go on resisting this.

59. Mr. Broadmead and I called on *Husny Zaim* at the Ministry of Defence, where he has his office. I met him a second time at the dinner offered by the Minister for Foreign Affairs at the Damascus Club. He is short and stout and undistinguished in appearance. He likes to speak as a plain, blunt soldier, without circumlocution. What he said was somewhat as follows:—

60. Syria lies open to Soviet attack and must organise her armed forces. He was working up to a figure of 50,000 men; his objective was 300,000. He needed arms and would like us to supply them. He had given us lists. He wanted close relations with Great Britain because of her position in the Middle East. He did not want to be in the French pocket, however grateful he was to them. France had come to his help at a critical moment and had given him arms. Without this he could not have maintained his position. The former régime had neglected and feared the army. When he came to power, the army had no

ammunition. Syria must be rebuilt on modern lines and the condition of the people improved. The old régime had been totally inactive. He had schemes for extending the port of Latakia, and for irrigation, and would push on with them. Syria must remain republican and independent. Subject to this, he was ready to make friends with Iraq, but Nuri Pasha was intriguing against him. The Fertile Crescent was a possibility, but not with Nuri and not under the Hashemites. The latter had no credit in the Moslem world. Relations with Jordan were better and the two Governments were in touch about Jerusalem. Greater Syria was a possibility, but not under King Abdullah. Syria was more stable and superior in culture to both Iraq and Jordan. He was ready to make an agreement with the Lebanon, whether for economic integration or for separation: preferably the former. Relations with Egypt were cordial and he had relations of confidence with King Farouk. He hoped we would reach a settlement with Egypt. He was ready to make an armistice with Israel, but the frontier must be the waters of the Sea of Galilee and of the River Jordan. Israel must be contained: there must be no more talk of expanding from the Nile to the Euphrates. He wanted an agreement with Great Britain, if necessary a treaty. If we could tell him what we wanted, he would open his mind to us. If we had not yet succeeded with Egypt or Iraq, we could try with Syria. The Marshall Plan should be extended to the Middle East. He had funds for some of his projects, but needed more.

61. At a party at His Majesty's Legation for the small British community, I had a talk with *two of our more prominent business representatives*. They thought that Syria was a solid country with a hopeful future. The people were hard-working, reasonably honest and very proud. The Lebanon, by contrast, had no good prospect for the future but lived precariously beyond her means and her people were tricky and corrupt. Syria was fundamentally more advanced, but lived on a more modest scale and had great resources to develop. British firms had a good feeling for the Syrian business community and administration, in spite of difficulties. Whatever British policy might be in the future, the Syrians would never forget that it was the British who secured their liberation from the French.

I.—Iraq

62. His Majesty's Ambassador at Bagdad (Sir Henry Mack) came to Damascus to see me. I stopped at Bagdad for one and a half hours *en route* for Tehran, and saw the Prime Minister (General Nuri Pasha es Said) at His Majesty's Embassy. I met the Regent of Iraq (His Royal Highness Amir Abdul Illah) and the Iraqi Foreign Minister (Mohammad Fazil Jamali) at Tehran, where the former was paying a State visit.

63. *Nuri Pasha*, whom I have known for many years, looked tired and unwell. He said that the present complications of Arab politics, to which I had referred, were due to the weakness of the Arab States. This intensified personal jealousies and rivalries. There were no great men. If only King Feisal had lived! Iraq needed economic help, in spite of two good harvests. He was anxious about the sale of the barley crop. He was worried about the plan for the development board put forward by the International Bank, which was not suitable for Iraq. He was disturbed about Syria. Zaim was mad and must be told to restore constitutional government, otherwise there would be civil war. As for Israel, he would have nothing to do with her. No oil would flow to Haifa. He had it in mind to expel all the Jews from Iraq and to take refugees in their place.

64. *Jamali* was almost equally despondent. Iraq was in a mess economically and administratively. The Government was not vigorous enough. It needed new blood and a new progressive policy. Younger men should be called in. He had urged this on the Regent, but the Regent was surrounded by reactionary elements. His Majesty's Government should speak their mind firmly and decisively on this subject. His Majesty's Government needed a new positive policy to help the Arab States to meet the twin dangers of communism and Israel. The Arab League still had its uses, but not if dominated by one State (Egypt) or one impracticable personality (Azzam). Israel must be contained and not allowed to exploit the whole Middle East with the help of American capital. Iraq would continue to close the Haifa pipeline. Reverting to the internal situation, he said there were three classes in Iraq: the old governing class now dying out; the younger intellectuals; the illiterate masses. The second should be called in and policy directed to the benefit of the third. His Majesty's Government should not continue to be associated in the popular mind with

the first only. He sometimes wondered whether His Majesty's Government were intending to wash their hands of the Middle East and abandon the charge which was theirs to sustain, so far as their resources allowed. Was he wrong? I said that he was, if he thought this was so.

J.—Tehran: 15th–18th June, 1949

65. The audience granted by His Majesty the Shah stands out as one of the more agreeable events of the tour. The Shah received His Majesty's Ambassador (Sir John le Rougetel) and myself with simple informality at one of his country palaces (the Saadabad Palace), and kept us for over an hour. It is evident that he, like his Ministers, holds Sir John le Rougetel in high esteem as one from whom they can count on receiving wise and sympathetic counsel.

66. *The Shah* spoke with obvious sincerity and some distress of the shortcomings of his country. The administration was dishonest and the functionaries too numerous. He intended to purge the administration by setting up commissions of enquiry. Taxes were indeed levied, but direct taxes were evaded by the rich and indirect taxes were paid by the poor. No wonder communism had an appeal. It was not possible to combat communism unless the common people had a square deal, and they were not getting it in Persia. The administration of justice was corrupt. Without justice, there was no firm foundation for the State. Judges must be paid more so as not to stand in need of bribes. The people must be given the hope of a better and more secure future. Money could be found for these reforms if taxes could be collected. But more would be required; hence the importance of the current oil negotiations and talks about a loan. It was an unfortunate necessity that Persia needed to supplement her armed forces. Persia was as much exposed as Turkey, yet Turkey was receiving more help than Persia, in spite of the promises made in the treaty during the war. Persia suffered during the war, yet others who were on the other side then are now receiving assistance, but not Persia. Was Persia important or not? Did the Western Powers wish Persia to be a buttress or not? There was talk about a *bloc* of Moslem States from Turkey to Pakistan. The first step should be to remove the differences still existing between them. The second should be to attend to their internal

economic situation. Much preparatory work would be required; but the defence of the Middle East must be organised, and in this Persia held a key position.

67. I saw the *Prime Minister* (Mohammed Sa'ed) twice. He is an old acquaintance. He was Persian Ambassador in Moscow when I was there in the summer of 1939, and he was Foreign Minister when I passed through Tehran in October 1943. An unpretentious, shrewd and friendly man of no outstanding ability. Neither he nor the Foreign Minister (M. Hikmat), a man of letters, direct, rather more rough-hewn, is of the smooth and tricky Persian type.

68. The Prime Minister started by talking about Russia. He has a good understanding of the Soviet mind and can deal confidently with the Russians. His policy, he said, was firmness without provocation, based on reciprocity. He did not think that the Soviet Union would invade Persia. If they tried to maintain a state of tension on the frontier by organising demonstrations, he would send up reinforcements. If they attacked on the radio, he would reply. Politically he intended to resist the Russians. He would not yield, but neither would he provoke. He would not give way about North Persian oil. He was under no obligation to the Russians in this matter. To give them what they asked for would be to admit them into the country to disrupt it. The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company could be trusted to observe its undertakings, but not the Russians.

69. The economic situation was bad. The budget was in deficit, and there was a shortage of grain and a danger of famine. The granaries must be replenished to create a reserve and hold the market. He needed 200,000 tons. He had asked the Americans to supply on lend-lease terms and had offered to repay in kind over a period of years, without success. The matter was urgent. Direct financial aid was also required to give the seven-year plan a start. Internal revenues were

inadequate. There would be a good return over a period of years. Help had been promised in the Three-Power Treaty. Russia had tried instead to disrupt the Persian economy. The United States and United Kingdom, while helping Germany and Italy, had not done the same for Persia, who had suffered in the war.

70. Persia also needed help for the army. Turkey, who was receiving assistance, could be turned through an unprotected Persia. If armed, the Persian army could at least retreat in good order and remain in being. For a Middle Eastern Pact to be possible, the States concerned must strengthen their economy and sink their differences. Only then could an arrangement be made with the United States and United Kingdom. He did not believe the stories about United States-United Kingdom rivalry in the Middle East. The two countries should work together for the good of that area.

71. He agreed with the Shah that the common people must be given hope for the future, otherwise communism would spread, though Moslem countries were not a very fertile field for it. But he had doubts about some of the measures which the Shah had in mind. The rich must indeed pay taxes, but capital must not be put to flight.

72. The last function I attended on this tour was an evening party given by the Regent of Iraq in honour of his host, the Shah, in the garden of the country palace of Sahabqaranieh. Fairy lights, running water, soft music, long tables laid under the trees, a marionette show, Persian ladies decked out in Western style; the Regent dead-tired and wishing the Shah would go; the Shah, apparently untouched by fatigue, standing talking seriously to guest after guest. We left the fête in the delicious cool of the early morning. That evening I was in Amsterdam.

W. STRANG.

Foreign Office,
4th July, 1949.

CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR

Policy of the Western Powers in the Middle East

Mr. Bevin to Mr. Ashley Clarke (Paris)

(No. 1221. Secret)
Sir,

*Foreign Office,
15th October, 1949.*

When M. Massigli called on me this morning, he turned to the question of Syria and Iraq and referred to the discussion he had had with Sir W. Strang (reported in my telegram No. 2727). I said I thought Sir W. Strang had made the position quite clear, to which he agreed, and I could add nothing to what he had said. I indicated that while I had not made up my mind as to what our attitude should be in the Middle East I thought that a negative approach to the problem was wrong. I had no intention of intervening in this particular question, but my great fear was that Russia might start or indeed had already started to train Moslems to let loose in her own good time on the Middle East. We should then find ourselves faced with the same position as we now had in China. While we were struggling to retain the *status quo* and all the old régimes, the new

movement would come along and just sweep it all away. I expressed the view that precious little good ever came the way of the ordinary poor people in those areas and while there was so much money in Saudi Arabia and the other oil-producing areas it would be a great temptation to those who were not benefiting from it to turn towards communism. I said that, while I had always been opposed to any forcible change in the *status quo*, I felt that the time had now come when our general attitude to these problems would have to be reviewed. We had not decided what our attitude should be, but I felt that neither we, France nor the United States could afford to sit idly by until some movement comes along, as it has done in the Far East, and just sweeps us all on to one side.

2. I am sending a copy of this despatch to Washington and to all Middle Eastern posts.

I am, &c.

ERNEST BEVIN.

PLAN FOR A GREATER SYRIA

New Statement of Arms

Sir A. Kirkbride to Mr. Bevin. (Received 28th October)

(No. 70)
Sir,

*Amman,
22nd October, 1949.*

I have the honour to refer to the effect of the recent moves towards a union between Syria and Iraq on the so-called Greater Syria scheme which aims at union between Syria and the Hashemite Kingdom of the Jordan.

2. When it appeared that some form of union between Syria and Iraq was imminent, the Greater Syria scheme was eclipsed for two reasons. Firstly, because the union

of Syria and Iraq was potentially of such greater importance to the Arab world and, secondly, because the protagonists of Greater Syria, who were opposed to the Iraqi-Syrian plan, feared that they might precipitate that which they wished to avoid by attempting at that time to further their own plans.

Now, however, that it seems less probable that there will be immediate positive developments with regard to Iraq and Syria, Greater Syria is emerging from the shadow.

(¹) Not printed.

3. A new statement of the aims of the Greater Syria plan and the manner of their achievement has been circulated. It is attributed to some undefined source in Damascus, but seems more likely to have been prepared at the Royal Diwan at Amman. A translation⁽¹⁾ of its text forms the first enclosure to this despatch.

On 20th October, 1949, a royal speech was read, in the presence of King Abdullah, from the balcony of the Municipality of Amman. A translation⁽¹⁾ of its text forms the second enclosure to this despatch. The speech itself was read by an officer of the court, but the final phrase, or afterthought, was pronounced by the King in person.

4. This speech was delivered shortly after the return from Damascus of Mohamed Pasha Shureiki, Jordan Minister to Afghanistan, Pakistan and Hindustan, whose journey is referred to in my telegram No 539 of 20th October, 1949. Mohamed Pasha has always been one of the most enthusiastic promoters of the Greater Syria plan and the fact that the tone of this speech is moderate on that subject may well be due to Mohamed Pasha's report to the King that there is not much support for the idea in Damascus at present.

The statement that force would be never resorted to in connexion with Syrian developments is due, doubtless, to the warning which I gave King Abdullah shortly

beforehand that His Majesty's Government would not tolerate the use of the Arab Legion for coercive purposes in against Syria.

5. There seems to be a growing volume of opinion here that a desirable political development, which would be easier to achieve than complete union, would be a loose federation between Syria, Iraq and the Jordan. Under this scheme each country would retain a separate entity and complete sovereignty, but there would be a federal council consisting of the three Prime Ministers or their deputies, which would deal with matters which were placed within the competence of that council. The suggestions made usually propose that the council should co-ordinate foreign policy and military and economic problems.

Like all such schemes now being discussed, by the peoples of the Middle East, the broad outlines are laid down boldly, but there is a remarkable degree of vagueness about practical details. I have mentioned it, however, because it is a new idea for the Jordan.

6. I am sending copies of this despatch to His Majesty's Representatives at Baghdad, Beirut, Cairo, Damascus, Jedda, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Washington and to the British Middle East Office.

I have, &c.

A. KIRKBRIDE.

E 13574/1023/65

No. 5

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND M. SCHUMAN AT PARIS

Situation in the Middle East

Sir O. Harvey to Mr. McNeil. (Received 10th November)

(No. 1214) *Paris,*
(Telegraphic) *9th November, 1949.*
Following from Secretary of State

I reminded M. Schuman that at our last meeting he had said that he believed in the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Middle East and I had expressed agreement. We had not intervened in any way in the discussions between Syria and Iraq, but it seemed difficult to prevent them from talking. Now the position was complicated by the proposals put forward by King Farouk.

2. I told M. Schuman that I did not wish to make any official proposal to him, but I wanted him to know of my anxiety lest the

Russians should succeed, with the help of Moscow-trained Moslem agents, in working up an agitation particularly among the younger Arabs, which would end by sweeping away the existing régimes which in most cases were none too firmly established. I was afraid that insistence on the maintenance of the *status quo* was not a good enough defence against such tendencies. The Arabs had shown their weakness and their inability to work together effectively in the struggle against Israel.

3. I said that I had no particular proposals to make but I thought there might be advantage in having secret discussions

with the French and the Americans with a view to seeing whether we could give our support to any political developments in the Middle East while, at the same time, trying to work for better economic and social conditions. Such a programme would enable us to give the Arab countries the leadership which was needed. If we were disunited the only people to gain would be the Russians. If my proposal was acceptable I would ask the Americans to join with us in such talks.

4. M. Schuman said that it was difficult to refuse to study the problem together, particularly in the spirit which I proposed, but he feared that, while solving some problems, we might create others which would prove even more difficult. The maintenance of the *status quo* might seem a somewhat passive policy and there might be occasions when some new initiative would be called for, but he was afraid that if some of those concerned knew that we were discussing these problems, they would start a propaganda campaign which would seriously complicate the situation. He was therefore doubtful of the wisdom of instituting such discussions.

5. M. Schuman went on to say that he had not suspected His Majesty's Govern-

ment of intervening in the Syrian-Iraqi affair but, according to his information, some British officials had been involved. I replied that I could not accept this criticism. Some of our representatives had been taken into the confidence of some of the Arab statesmen and it had been impossible for them to refuse to listen. They had, however, faithfully carried out the instructions of His Majesty's Government. Some of those who had been accused of interference, *e.g.*, Colonel Stirling, had in fact no official position of any kind.

6. I reverted to the danger of Russian intrigues in this area and said I thought that conditions, particularly in Egypt, were favourable to the spread of communism. M. Schuman agreed that the Communists profited from economic distress and agreed that conditions in Egypt and among the refugees in Syria were in their favour. On the other hand the major problems at the moment were dynastic rivalries in which the Communists played no part. He repeated that if we were to encourage changes there was a danger that there would be nothing new ready to take the place of the old and the result would be anarchy.

E 13922/1025/65 G

No. 6

CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR

French Policy in the Middle East

Mr. Bevin to Sir O. Harvey (Paris)

(No. 1347. Secret) *Foreign Office,*
Sir, *15th November, 1949.*

M. Massigli called on me to-day to tell me, on behalf of M. Schuman, that the French Government had, as a result of M. Schuman's conversation with myself reported in telegram 1214 from Paris, reconsidered their Middle Eastern policy. They were now anxious to co-ordinate their policy if possible with that of the United States and the United Kingdom, so that a common line could be adopted by all three towards any Arab problems which might arise in the future. With this end in view, they would now enter into secret discussions

with the United States Government and His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom.

2. I asked the French Ambassador to thank M. Schuman for this communication, and undertook to communicate with Mr. Acheson to see whether discussions of the type suggested could be arranged.

3. Copies of this despatch are being sent to Washington, Cairo, Bagdad, B.M.E.O., Amman, Beirut, Damascus, Tel Aviv and Jedda.

I am, &c.

ERNEST BEVIN.

J 9294/11922/16G

No. 7

CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR

(1) Defence of Middle East; (2) Eastern Mediterranean Pact

Mr. Bevin to Sir R. Campbell (Cairo)

(No. 668. Secret) *Foreign Office,*
Sir, *23rd November, 1949.*

In the course of conversation with me to-day the Egyptian Ambassador expressed satisfaction at the way in which military matters had been dealt with, and at the progress made. He was also appreciative of the way in which the Egyptian purchasing commission had been received in this country, and of the efforts that had been made by His Majesty's Government to meet their requirements. He said that this was highly appreciated in Egypt and by the Egyptian Prime Minister.

2. I told Amr Pasha that we were anxious to co-operate in the defence of the area and I trusted that further and more concrete steps would be the results of these efforts.

3. The Ambassador then mentioned the question of the Eastern Mediterranean, about which he understood I had had talks with M. Tsaldaris of Greece and M. Sadak of Turkey. M. Tsaldaris had been talking rather freely, and Amr Pasha said he had been wondering whether there was anything new in the situation.

4. I told Amr Pasha that there was nothing new. I had seen M. Tsaldaris and

M. Sadak and had emphasised to them, as to everyone I saw who was associated with the Middle East, that we felt every effort should be made to strengthen the economic position, but that we did not think that a military pact was practicable at the moment. The position was better safeguarded by the declarations by the United States and ourselves at the time of the signing of the North Atlantic Pact.

5. Amr Pasha indicated that his Government would like to be told of our views on this subject, and I said that I would ask you to inform the Egyptian Government of our general attitude. This is described in my despatches No. 296 to Athens of 10th November, No. 190 to Angora of 10th November, and No. 206 to Angora of 23rd November. You should, however, not enter into the details of the question when you carry out these instructions.

6. I am sending copies of this despatch to His Majesty's representatives at Angora, Athens, Beirut, Damascus, Amman, Bagdad, Jedda, Tel Aviv and B.M.E.O.

I am, &c.

ERNEST BEVIN.

E 14607/1071/65

No. 8

ELEVENTH REGULAR SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE ARAB LEAGUE, CAIRO, 17th-31st OCTOBER, 1949

Sir J. Troutbeck to Mr. Bevin (Received 6th December).

(No. 42) *Cairo,*
Sir, *22nd November, 1949.*

I have the honour to forward herewith a memorandum on the proceedings of the 11th Regular Session of the Council of the Arab League held at Cairo from the 17th to the 31st October, 1949.

2. I am indebted to Mr. Morris, Assistant Oriental Secretary at His Majesty's Embassy for those portions of the memorandum which deal with the proposals for the amendment of the

internal regulations of the league. The remainder was written mainly by Mr. Rodgers of this office who drew freely on secret sources for the purpose.

3. The Special Committee formed to report on the proposal for an Arab Collective Security Pact is now in session, as is presumably the Standing Committee on Palestine.

4. I am sending copies of this despatch and its enclosure to His Majesty's representatives at Cairo, Amman, Bagdad,

Beirut, Damascus, Jedda, Teheran, Ankara, and Washington, to the United Kingdom Delegation at New York and to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf.

I have, &c.

JOHN TROUTBECK.

Enclosure

The 11th Regular Session of the Council of the Arab League held at Cairo from 17th to 31st October, 1949.

The Background

It was widely believed that the 11th Regular Session of the Council might see the break-up of the Arab League. Neither the Council nor the Political Committee had met since the adjournment of the 10th Regular Session on the 17th March, and in the meanwhile great tension had arisen between States members of the League. In May Dr. Fadhil al Jamali, the Iraqi Foreign Minister, had attacked the internal organisation of the League and had later circulated to Arab Governments for study the draft of a proposed new regulation designed to limit the wide powers of the Secretary-General (and consequently Egyptian influence) by establishing a more precise definition and closer supervision of his functions. (The text of this proposal formed the enclosure to Cairo Chancery letter No. 553/48/49 of August 14th). The failure of the Arab armies in Palestine had been clearly realised and bitterness and mutual recrimination remained. Egypt and Saudi Arabia were opposed to any move by King Abdullah for the incorporation of central Arab Palestine in Jordan. The relationship between King Farouk and the late Husni al Zaim during his short-lived régime in Syria had aroused resentment among Lebanese leaders. And finally the rumoured impending union between Syria and Iraq, ostensibly occasioned by fear of Israel, was unwelcome in greater or lesser degree to every other Arab State.

2. This last point, Iraqi-Syrian unity, was in fact the crux of almost all that took place at the session, despite the fact that in the event it was not placed on the agenda for discussion by the Council. On the one hand it was suspected that if the matter was discussed the existing Iraqi and Syrian Governments were prepared to leave the League, rather than have their plans frustrated. On the other hand Egypt and Saudi Arabia were determined to do all that they could to frustrate such a union,

and an attempt was made by the press to give the impression that Egypt would leave the league if it did come about.

3. The battle however was fought on less open ground. Nuri as Said Pasha was at first determined to do all he could to detract from the importance of the meeting. It was rumoured in fact that he intended to appoint the Iraqi representative in Cairo or some other minor figure as Iraqi delegate, and when it seemed that he would not attend in person the press reported that Sirry Pasha, the Egyptian Prime Minister, wrote personally to request him to lead the delegation himself, and that Riad as Solh of the Lebanon also urged him in the same direction. Sirry Pasha has since confirmed that he did urge Nuri Pasha to attend in person. In the event all delegations were headed by leading figures from their countries, namely Hussein Sirry Pasha, Prime Minister for Egypt, Nuri as Said Pasha, Prime Minister for Iraq, Riad as Solh Bey, Prime Minister for the Lebanon, Taufiq Abdul Huda Pasha, Prime Minister for Jordan, Shaikh Yusuf Yasin, Deputy Foreign Minister for Saudi Arabia, Dr. Nazim al Kudsi, Foreign Minister for Syria; and Sayed Ali Mo'ayyed representing the Yemen. Palestine was not represented. When the Egyptian delegation suggested that a Palestinian should be invited to attend the proposal was strongly resisted by Jordan, which even threatened to quit the meeting if the proposal were adopted. Nuri as Said Pasha supported Jordan's attitude, saying that the situation in Palestine had changed and it is reported, adding that his delegation too would walk out if a Palestine representative attended. The session therefore was essentially a contest between Hussein Sirry Pasha, seeking to express the instructions of King Farouk to preserve the League, and more particularly Egypt's dominant position in it, and at the same time to prevent the union of Iraq and Syria, and Nuri as-Said, convinced that the League was in its present form useless, and indeed irresponsible and dangerous, and that Iraq and Syria must unite or federate, partly for the sake of feeling if more secure against Israel.

Tactics Adopted

4. The tactics adopted were as follows. On the Egyptian side the Palace had been giving thought to ways and means of blocking the project for the union of Iraq and Syria. Secret sources report that after enquiry into the state of opinion in

Damascus King Farouk was persuaded that any open opposition to the proposal would be disastrous, as it would give Nuri Pasha an opening to complain of interference in the internal affairs of his country. It was therefore in the Egyptian interest that this matter should not be discussed. The curious position thus arose that both parties might wish to skate lightly over the subject. Enquiries in Damascus had shown that there had grown up in Syria a strong body of opinion that some kind of union with Iraq was essential if Syria was to be secure against Israel. The question for the Palace was therefore to find some positive policy which would offer to Syria some equivocal guarantee and so neutralise the movement towards union with Iraq. This was found in the concept of a general military alliance of the Arab States. Reports from secret sources indicate that the suggestion of such a step was in fact first made by Nazim al Kudsi to Karim Tabet, the King's Press Counsellor; not however with the intention that it should be adopted, but rather in the expectation that Egypt would refuse to be drawn, and that Nazim al Kudsi would therefore be able to argue that since Egypt would not help there was no alternative but to turn to Iraq. There were press reports too that some similar proposal was made by Riad as Solh. The suggestion was, to the surprise of the Syrian delegation, taken up with enthusiasm by the King; there is in fact some reason to believe that the idea of such a pact had been in his mind, although not in the minds of Egyptian politicians, for some time. Hussein Sirry Pasha too was convinced, despite the fact that he had previously opposed Egyptian interference in Arab affairs, and preached the doctrine of Egypt first.

5. Nuri Pasha's intention was to attack the existing organisation of the league and its consequent ineffectiveness; to stress its failures, the past irresponsible actions of the Secretary-General, and the excessive powers concentrated in his hands. By so doing he would by implication emphasise the need for other combinations and even for treaty relationships with the western powers. He also hoped no doubt to divert energies from the union project. Nuri Pasha fired his first shot before the council assembled by protesting that the agenda circulated (for which the Secretary-General is entirely responsible) was not sufficiently detailed and was received too late to be of use.

The Council Meets

6. The Council assembled for the first time at 6 p.m. on the 17th October. The Jordan delegate, as President of the previous session declared the 10th Regular Session closed. Dr. Nazim al Kudsi of Syria then took over the presidency, and after his opening address, and a speech of welcome by Hussein Sirry Pasha, the Council began to consider the agenda. Nuri Pasha at once moved to the attack. He requested that a proposal for the amendment of the internal organisation of the league should be placed first on the agenda. His speech was presumably on the lines of that given at a press conference which he held some days, later on the 23rd October (see Cairo chancery letter 553/83/49 of the 29th October). He argued then that some Arab leaders, and some sections of the Secretariat had moved in directions which were not in accordance with the charter. The result had been chaos and contradiction. The basis of the league had been voluntary co-operation and in such an organisation it was essential that each Government should retain its own responsibilities. The Arab states could have adopted a federal system and agreed to relinquish part of their sovereignty to a central organisation; but they had not done so. To go on wavering between these two alternatives could only lead from bad to worse, and he proposed amendments to the internal regulations which would safeguard the sovereignty of the member States by rationalising the position of the Secretary-General, who under the existing arrangements was largely a law unto himself.

7. This proposal was of course not merely a tactical move in Nuri Pasha's drive against Egyptian influence. There was a considerable amount of support for the principle that some modifications were needed in the statutes of the league, and Azzam Pasha himself had annoyed many. In fact, although in this matter they found themselves, for tactical reasons, the defenders of Azam Pasha, neither King Farouk nor especially Sirry Pasha is conspicuously attached to him. Riad as-Solh, Tewfiq Abdul Huda Pasha and Nazim al Kudsi are known to have had discussions on this subject some weeks before the session and to have agreed in general to support any move to oust, or at least to limit the powers of, the Secretary-General. Hence although it must have been realised

that a possible effect of Nuri Pasha's attack on the league's organisation might be to further the cause of the union of Iraq and Syria, yet opinions on this subject was not divided purely on the basis of concurrence in or opposition to the idea of union. At the first meeting however the project of amendment was not pursued far. The chairman ruled that written proposals submitted by the Iraqi delegation should be studied by the other delegations before the next meeting of the council.

Towards a Security Pact

8. There followed four days (18th to 21st October) of intensive lobbying and private meetings behind the scenes, in the course of which it is now clear from reports from secret sources that the Palace and Hussein Sirry Pasha made contacts with one after another of the delegations and obtained their support for the proposal for an Arab collective security pact. A reliable source has reported that influence was brought to bear as follows. Riad Solh had come to Egypt not at all disposed to do anything to further Egyptian ends, and indeed perfectly willing to join in the attack on Azzam Pasha. He was suspicious of the nature of King Farouk's relationship with Marshal Zaim during his short lived régime in Syria, and had been personally irritated by a rebuke administered to him by King Farouk for having voted against Egypt's candidature for the Security Council. He was however approached by an emissary of the palace whom he knew to be a personal friend of the Lebanese President, Beshara el Khoury, and, stimulated by the fear that if he was not accommodating an approach might be made behind his back to the President (who, being a Christian, fears the possible repercussions on the Lebanese of the emergence of Iraq and Syria as a unitary Muslim State, which would completely dwarf the Lebanon), he allowed himself to be persuaded that the Pact would be in the Lebanon's interest.

9. Nazim al Kudsi Foreign Minister of Syria was similarly approached, after the way had been smoothed by an article praising Syria in the palace-inspired newspaper *Al Zamane*. He likewise was persuaded, being offered the additional bait of the promise of some form of economic assistance. Saudi Arabia (and probably the Yemen) was of course always willing and indeed under orders to follow the Egyptian lead, while the Jordan Prime Minister was

said to be curiously passive. He did however support Nuri Pasha in blocking discussion of Iraq-Syrian unity, as a *quid pro quo* for Nuri's support of Jordan over the question of Palestinian representation. King Abdullah protested the while that the union of Jordan and Syria was of greater urgency than that of Syria and Iraq. By the 21st, if not earlier, Nuri Pasha found himself isolated, and at the session of the Council on 22nd October. Sirry Pasha was sure enough of his ground to introduce the matter formally "in accordance with the desire of His Majesty the King." It was then referred by the Council to the Political Committee for study, the understanding being that the Egyptian delegation would produce a draft.

10. It is convenient at this point to carry the history of the collective security proposal through to the end of the session. The principle of a collective security pact was finally approved by the Political Committee, after delay apparently occasioned by the Egyptians' slowness in producing their draft, on the morning of 29th October, and was reported in to the Council on 30th October. When it was produced the Egyptian delegation seem to have regarded it as too tentative to be called a "draft pact:" it was merely a sketch of their scheme drawn up as a basis for further discussion. The Council approved this, and decided to set up a special committee of one representative of each country in the League to discuss ways and means of pursuing the project. This committee, under the chairmanship of Abdul Khalek Hassouna Pasha of Egypt was to start work in Cairo before 10th November. A French translation of a text purporting to be the Egyptian draft, which appeared in the press was forwarded with Cairo Chancery letter 553/107/49 dated 11th November.

11. In its present form the project is merely a declaration of intention, and not a formal document. There are still many difficulties to overcome before any reality can be given to the scheme. There was much newspaper speculation during the session as to its probable implications. Reference was made to the unification of military training and equipment, and to a common general staff, and many parallels with Western Union and the Atlantic Pact were drawn. It remains to be seen whether the Arab Governments and more particularly their armies will be ready to accept any useful degree of unification, and

whether there is any possibility of overcoming jealousies over command and the like. In fact, although the dissolution of the League has for the time being averted, and a project mooted which may, but only may, prove an acceptable substitute in Syrian eyes for Iraqi-Syrian unity, it remains to be seen whether the shadow can be given any prospect of attaining real substance.

12. It must be added that there is considerable scepticism about the project in Egypt. The question is asked how the proposed pact really differs from the covenant of the Arab League, and why it is likely to be more successful. Doubts are expressed too as to whether it would be to Egypt's advantage to tie herself militarily to the Arab States, whose incapacity for effective action was so amply proved in Palestine. Sidky Pasha in press articles replied that it would not be, and thus provoked strenuous efforts by Gallad Pasha in his palace inspired newspapers to discredit him. Furthermore, although they have accepted the principle of such a pact, neither Iraq nor Syria regard it as precluding them from making additional bi-lateral arrangements.

The Amendment of the League's Regulations

13. As support for the Collective Security Pact increased, Nuri Pasha's attack on the league lost most of its original importance, and it was thought that the matter would be allowed to die. Azzam Pasha had in fact offered his resignation when the first storm broke, but the King and the Government were unwilling to let him go, as to do so would have been to allow a considerable victory to Nuri Pasha without any corresponding advantage to Egypt. At the second meeting of the council on 19th October (when the lobbying of delegation over the Security Pact must have been at its height, and the attention of the delegates turned largely to that subject) the Iraqi proposal was referred to the legal committee for study. The text of these proposals as it was given in *Al Ahram* of 20th October is given at Appendix A⁽¹⁾ in translation.

14. Amendments to articles 5 and 6 merely reduce the lapse of time between a request for an extraordinary session and its meeting in different circumstances. Article 8 is amended so as to take out of

the hands of the Secretary-General his complete control of the agenda, the amendment laying down that he must add to the agenda any additional items sent in by member States. The most sweeping of the proposed amendments is continued in the new article 18 which would have set up a permanent committee of delegates from all member States, to which the Iraqis wished to confide the powers enjoyed by the Secretary-General while the council was in recess. The proposed amended article 21 required the Secretary-General to organise the Secretariat "in collaboration" with this committee. The same article would have limited the power of the Secretary-General to initiate discussion of a subject in the council by requiring the prior approval of the President; and article 26 was reframed to exclude him from the list of speakers in the council's debates (the existing article said that after the President had briefly introduced a subject, either the *rapporteur* of a committee, or the Secretary-General should address the council on it). The keynote of the Iraqi proposals was struck by a remodelled article 1 of the statutes of the Secretariat-General. The existing text reads:—

"The Secretary-General shall act for (lit. represent) the Arab League"

The Iraqi text reads:—

"The Secretary-General is the highest administrative official of the league . . ."

15. Hussein Sirry Pasha had hoped that the subject would be shelved. In conversation with His Majesty's Ambassador on 23rd October he said that it had been unanimously agreed that action should not be taken on the reform of the Charter of the League (which would it was felt inevitably follow from these modifications of the rules) and the re-organisation of the Secretariat-General, but that the Governments of the League should see to it as occasion arose that the Secretariat worked in accordance with what experience had shown to be necessary, the need for some modification in practice being admitted. Nuri Pasha on the other hand was not prepared to let the matter rest, and in a press conference on 23rd he reiterated his attacks on the lines indicated in paragraph 6. He went so far in subsequent discussion as to say that there had been better co-operation between the Arab State before the Arab

(¹) Not printed.

League was formed than since. A full report of this statement and subsequent discussion was enclosed with Cairo chancery letter No. 553/83/49 of 29th October.

16. These public declarations received a hostile press in Egypt, particularly for their reference to "Federal Union," which was rightly seen as a warning that the question of Iraqi-Syrian union had not been dropped as a result of discussions of the Egyptian collective security proposal. What does not seem to have been appreciated is that these declarations of Nuri Pasha were also harking back to the early discussions on Arab Unity in 1943, when Nuri had suggested to Nahas Pasha that the two practicable possibilities were either—

- (a) federation or confederation, or
- (b) co-operation in regard to cultural, economic and defence measures, and a common foreign policy.

(See paragraph 133 of Research Department paper ME 50/49.)

It was Nahas Pasha who rejected the first alternative, so the Arab League was framed on the basis of the second. This seems to have been the point which Nuri Pasha was taking such pains to drive home.

17. After all this it is surprising that when the Legal Committee presented its report on 27th October the Council accepted its recommendation; the Iraqi delegate apparently acquiescing, despite the fact that the revised version omitted what had been regarded as the Iraqi's main desiderata. A translation of the text as it appeared in *Al Ahram* of 28th October is given at Appendix B.⁽¹⁾ This version omits the proposed permanent committee (article 18) and the description of the Secretary-General is restored to something closer to the original wording. The only substantial concession to the Iraqi point of view seems to be the insertion of the words "if the former (the President) thinks necessary" into article 26 (i), thus limiting the Secretary-General's right to address the Council.

18. A point of interest is that Nuri Pasha in a farewell interview with the Arab News Agency before leaving Cairo, said that "one of the most important amendments was that the President of the Council will supervise the carrying out of any Council decisions." There is no trace of this in any published text, and Nuri

Pasha must have been referring to some unofficial, or at least unpublished agreement. Such a proviso may well have been the price of Iraq's acquiescence in the watered-down amendment finally agreed. This statement by Nuri Pasha has now been confirmed by Ruhi Abdul Hadi in conversation with Sir Alec Kirkbride. (Sir A. Kirkbride's letter to Mr. Burrows, reference S 152/49 of 7th November) Ruhi Abdul Hadi also stated that six assistant secretaries (one of each nationality other than Egyptian) would be appointed. Of this likewise there is no trace in the published text.

19. The acceptance of these recommendations was made the occasion of an attempt at a public reconciliation between Azzam Pasha and Nuri Pasha in the shape of votes of thanks to each of them.

The Situation at the End of the Session

20. Thus on the two major matters which were discussed during the session honours remained about even. The dissolution of the League had been avoided, at least for the present. The collective security pact may prove to be a sufficient means to avert the union of Iraq and Syria, but it is by no means certain that it will. Azzam Pasha's face has been saved, but he has little cause for satisfaction. Nuri Pasha has obtained the amendment of the statutes of the League, but in no wise to the extent he would have wished. The Syrian and Lebanese Governments can offer their peoples the prospect of effective military, and perhaps unspecified economic support, the illusory nature of which will be apparent only to the few but it remains to be seen whether any agreement can be reached on the details. Saudi Arabia has pursued her policy of resistance to Hashimite aggrandisement. What the Iman of the Yemen's views are no one knows, nor probably cares: In fact the cracks in the League's structure have been skilfully plastered over, and Egypt has retained the initiative. But the inner tensions, if a little slackened, still remain.

Establishment of a Permanent Committee for Palestine

21. In addition to the two crucial subjects referred to above, a great deal of other business was transacted during the Session, the most important subject being of course Palestine.

(¹) Not printed.

22. A permanent committee for Palestine was set up at the last meeting of the Council on 30th October. The function of this committee will be to follow the development of the Palestine question, and to lay down the line of conduct to be followed in the face of new developments. The delegates (one from each country) are to express their views after obtaining the instructions of their Governments, and if all are agreed, their decision will be binding on all the Arab States. In case of disagreement the matter will be referred to their Governments, who will consider the possibility of calling a meeting of the Political Committee, and if necessary of the Council, to discuss the question.

Routine Business

23. A number of projects on such subjects as nationality, communications, extradition and postal union have been before the various standing committees of the league virtually since its beginning, without apparently making much progress. This was one of the minor factors used by Nuri Pasha to drive home his point about the futility of the League as at present constituted. These were all referred to committees for report during the earlier sessions of the Council, and some of them at least have taken a step forward, if in some cases in a foggy enough form. The texts of the relevant communiqués and summaries of other decisions so far as they are known are as follows.

Decisions of the Cultural Committee

24. "(i) The Council of the Arab League approves the decision of the Cultural Committee regarding the fight against illiteracy, and particularly recommends that the competent authorities in the States of the Arab League should profit by the experience of Egypt in this field, and should seek to extend mental and occupational instruction among the illiterates of the Arab countries.

(ii) It approves the decisions taken regarding the organising of an Avicenna Festival, and particularly recommends to the Arab countries the establishment in their universities of a chair bearing the name of Avicenna.

(iii) It approves the decisions taken regarding the cultural conference in the Lebanon.

(iv) It approves the decisions taken regarding cultural collaboration between Arab States.

(v) The Council has taken note of the decision taken regarding the education of Palestine refugees and of the blind, and of the co-ordination of the attitude of the Arab States at the fourth U.N.E.S.C.O. Conference."

In this case the step forward does not seem to have been a very long one.

Nationality of Resortissants of Arab States

25. "Any person belonging by origin to one of the Powers of the Arab League, who has not acquired a definite nationality, and who has not opted for the nationality of his country of origin within the period fixed by treaties and laws in force, shall be considered as belonging to his country of origin. This, however, will not affect his right to reside in the country in which he is habitually resident, in accordance with the regulations there in force, nor his right to acquire the nationality of that country if he complies with the conditions laid down. should such a person acquire the nationality of his country of residence, he will lose that of his country of origin."

Communications

26. At the same time certain unspecified recommendations regarding communications (by which term is understood all forms of communication, road, rail, sea, air, postal and telegraphic) which were submitted to the Council by the appropriate committee were referred to the Governments for a report on their views within four months.

Decisions of the Political Committee

27. At various times during the session the political committee was reported to have made the following decisions:—

- (a) To recommend the Yemen to continue to seek agreement with His Majesty's Government over the Beihan bombing incident by direct negotiation, and not to refer the matter either to the Council of the League or to the Security Council.
- (b) To have agreed, and communicated to their delegations at New York instructions as to the attitude to be adopted over the ex-Italian colonies. Events at New York have revealed the nature of these instructions sufficiently clearly.

(c) To reassert their attitude that the Palestine refugees must return to their homes. The Committee is however said to have added that they should be given *laissez-passers*, and permitted to move between the Arab States to find work.

(d) No formal decision was taken as to the disposal of Arab Palestine, but the general feeling was that its absorption by Jordan was inevitable, and Azzam Pasha has told Sir John Troutbeck that this question was now merely a matter of timing. Similarly there was no final decision as to the attitude to be adopted towards the Clapp Mission.

(e) Regarding Jerusalem it was decided that the Arab delegation at Lake Success should in general oppose internationalisation, but that as a matter of tactics Iraq and Jordan should press for an Arab Jerusalem

or at least partition, while the other Arab States should oppose the Conciliation Commission's scheme as being unworkable, and demand a complete international administration, with adequate military forces to maintain that status.

(f) A last reported decision, of which more may be heard, is a suggestion that the Arab Governments should approach His Majesty's Government for the release of Arab funds now frozen in British Banks.

The Budget of the Arab League

28. The budget was likewise discussed, and revealed a considerable unanimity on the need for economy in the League's expenditure. On the last day of the meeting indeed Nuri Pasha was joined by Hussein Sirry Pasha in attacking the financial management of the League.

29. The Political Committee held a final meeting on the 31st October, and the delegates left for their capitals on the two succeeding days.

