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incoming Telegram Department of State

ALEXANDER EELK

34/ Action

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Info

PP RUEHCR
DE RUCHVL 545 15/2110Z
P 152100Z ZEA
FM AMEMBASSY TELAVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC
STATE GRNC
BT
SECREPPRIORITY 1054

APRIL 15 11 P M

LIMDIS

SAV PRIMIN ESHKOL TODAY AT HIS REQUEST FOLLOWING INDEPENDENCE DAY RECEPTION JERUSALEM, AT WHICH TIME HE HANDED ME RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S LETTER OF MARCH 19. TEXT FOLLOWS:

S MOVEN

"DEAR MR. PRESIDENT

I HAVE GIVEN CAREFUL THOUGHT TO YOUR MESSAGE ON THE DIMONA MATTER, TRANSMITTED TO ME BY AMBASSADOR BARBOUR ON MARCH 53.

CFN 1854 15 19 23

1964 APR 16

PAGE O RUOMVL 545-6-6-0-R-E-TIT IS WITH MUCH REGRET THAT I HAVE TO INFORM YOU THAT MY
DEEPENING CONCERN FOR ISRAEL'S SECURITY DOES NOT PERMIT ME TO
DEPART FROM THE POSITION I CONVEYED TO YOU THROUGH AMBASSADOR
BARBOUR ON MARCH 3. ALLOW ME TO EXPLAIN.

THE COURSE YOU SUGGEST DERIVES, AS I UNDERSTAND, FROM THE CONSIDERATION THAT PRESIDENT NASSER'S FEAR MAY DRIVE HIM TO A CHOICE SETWEEN ACCELERATING THE UAR MILITARY BUILD-UP OR A DESPERATE PRE-EMPTIVE ATTACK. WE ARE, HOWEVER, CONVINCED THAT THE RATE AND SCOPE OF THE EXPANSION OF THE EGYPTIAN WAR MACHINE IS DETERMINED BY THE DEVELOPING POTENTIAL OF EGYPT AND THE AVAILABILITY OF FOREIGN ASSISTANCE, MILITARY AND ECONOMIC. MOREOVER, IT WOULD APPEAR TO US TO BE BEYOND DOUBT THAT IS PRESIDENT NASSER CONSIDER THAT ISRAEL'S MILITARY CAPACITY HAD DETERIORATED BEYOND THE MARGIN OF SAFETY, HE WOULD NOT HESITATE TO UTILIZE WHAT WOULD APPEAR TO HIM TO BE A SUITABLE OPPORTUNITY FOR LAUNCHING SUDDEN ATTACK. THIS IS INDEED THE THESIS WHICH, IN FLAGRANT VIOLATION OF THE U.N. CHARTER. HE CONSISTENTLY PROPAGATES TO HIS OWN PEOPLE AND TO THE OTHER ARAB PEOPLES OF THE MIDDLE EAST.

DECLASSIFIED E.O. 13292, Sec. 3.5 NLJ 03-192

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By ica, NARA, Date 12-15-03

1 6 1954

## \_SECRET\_

## -2- 1054, APRIL 15, 11 PM, FROM TEL AVIV

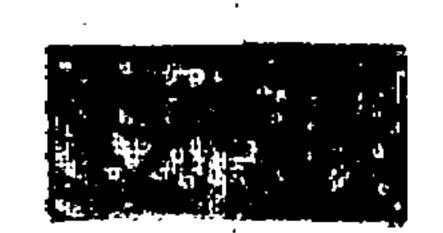
PAGEE 3 RUOMVL 545 SECRET
THESE PROCLAMATION ARE ACCOMPANIED BY EXTENSIVE WAR PREPARATIONS.
IS IT THEN NOT SAFER TO ASSUME THAT THE PROSPECT OF WAR WILL
RECEDE IN THE MEASURE THAT HIS APPREHENSIONS WILL INCREASE AND,
CONVERSELY, THAT THE DANGER OF WAR WILL GROW MORE ACUTE IF
HIS APPREHENSIONS REGARDING ISRAEL'S DETERRENT CAPACITY
ARE ALLAYED?

ON THE FURTHER QUESTION OF THE POSSIBLE EXPLOITATION BY
PRESIDENT NASSER OF THE PROPOSED REASSURANCE, IT IS OUR VIEW
THAT PRESIDENT NASSER MIGHT UTILIZE IT IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN
HIS APPEAL TO THE OTHER ARAB STATES FOR CONCERTED AGGRESCION
AGAINST ISRAEL. THERE IS THE FURTHER CONSIDERATION THAT
HAVING REGARD TO THE OSCILLATING PATTERN OF PRESIDENT NASSER.C
FOREIGN POLICY, HE MIGHT FIND IT OPPORTUNE IN CERTAIN CIRCUMCTANCES
TO REVEAL AND EXPLOIT THE EXISTENCE OF A SPECIAL U.S. - ISRAEL
RELATIONSHIP. THE RECORD OF THE MIDDLE EAST OVER THE PAST DECADE
IS REPLETE WITH EVIDENCE OF PRESIDENT NASSER.S UNRELIABILITY.
THE FACT THAT ON A PREVIOUS OCCASION HE REFRAINED FROM ABUSING
CONFIDENCE ON THIS PARTICULAR MATTER CANNOT, IN OUR VIEW,
GUARANTEE THE EXERCISE OF RESTRAINT ON HIS PART IN THE FUTURE.

PAGE 4 RUMMVL 545 SECRET

LET ME ASSURE YOU, MR. PRESIDENT, THAT I HAVE WEIGHED UP THIS
MATTER MOST CAREFULLY FROM EVERY ANGLE, AND DO NOT LIGHTLY
RETERATE MY RESERVATIONS. IN THE EVOLVING SITUATION IN THE AREA,
THE ASSESSMENTS AND CALCULATIONS IN THE MIND OF THE MAN WHO
UNREMITTINGLY PROPAGATES A DOCTRINE OF WAR AGAINST ISRAEL,
ARE HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT. NO GOVERNMENT IN CIRCUMSTANCES SIMILAR
TO THOSE IN WHICH WE FIND OURSELVES, COULD PERMIT ITSELF
TO FOREGO EVEN A PSYCHOLOGICAL ADVANTAGE. IF WE HAD CONCRETE
EVIDENCE THAT PRESIDENT NASSER WAS ABANDONING HIS DECLARED POLICY
OF AGGRESSION, WE COULD OF COURSE RECONSIDER OUR POSITION.
AT THIS STAGE, UNFORTUNATELY, THERE IS NO SIGN OF ANY SUCH
DEVELOPMENT.

SECRET-



-3- 1054, APRIL 15, 11 PM, FROM TEL AVIV

IN THE LIGHT OF YOUR INTEREST IN ISRAEL'S SECURITY AND WELL-BEING, I AM SURE YOU WILL UNDERSTAND THE MOTIVES FOR THE POSITION I FEEL OBLIGED TO TAKE.

CONVERSATION LASTING APPROX FORTY-FIVE MINUTES FOLLOWED DURING WHICH PREVIOUS GROUND GONE OVER IN SOME DETAIL. HOWEVER, IN RESPONSE MY QUESTION AS TO WHETHER HE CONSIDERED DECISION IRREVOCABLE, PRIMIN STATED MIND NOT NECESSARILY MADE UP FOR ALL TIME.

GP-3

BARBOUR

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U.S. Ambassador Walworth Barbour provides Secretary of State Dean Rusk with text of Israeli Prime Minister Levi Eshkol's message to President Lyndon B. Johnson in which Eshkol expresses concern over the scope and capability of Egypt's military might. Department Of State, 16 Apr. 1964. U.S. Declassified Documents Online, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CK2349615337/USDD?u=wash74137&sid=USDD&xid=0150d2f0. Accessed 30 July 2020.