

ידיעות לנציגות ישראל בחו"ל

מס. 652

בינה של ישראל כמו"מ הבריטי - מצרי על תעלת סואץ
(איגרת ישראלית למחלקת המדינה האמריקנית)

היריעות על פתיחתן הקרובה של מו"מ בין ממשלות בריטניה ומצרים של בעיית אזור תעלת סואץ, הוחלט לפנות אל ארצות הברית ובאגרת בה תוסרצנה ממשלותיהן לאימולך בישראל - בעוד סוער הכבוד בסו"מ זה הנרוע בה במישרין.

בזה מקלא של האיגרת, שהוגשה למחלקת המדינה ע"י שגריר ישראל בוושינגטון, נעזר להיום - בעת וכעונה אחת עם הנשחה של איגרת דומה למ"ץ הבריטי ע"י שגריר ישראל בלונדון.

חוכן האיסטר לנציגי צרפת ותורכיה בישראל.

(ר' מ.ס. 527, 567 - תיק 630).

The Ambassador of Israel presents compliments to the Honourable the Secretary of State and has the honour to refer to reports that negotiations are about to begin between the Governments of the United Kingdom and of Egypt with respect to the Suez Canal and the adjoining area; and that the Government of the United States is likely to be consulted by one or both parties in the course of these negotiations.

The Government of Israel understands that the negotiations in question may directly or indirectly bear upon such matters as the defence of the Canal area; the status of the waterway; the possible evacuation of British troops; the consequent disposition and maintenance of considerable military stores and installations; the equipment of Egyptian forces in connection with the defence of the Canal area and of the Middle East; and the defence of the Middle East region as a whole.

The Government of Israel has the honour to point out that almost all these subjects have a bearing on the vital interests of Israel, including especially its security.

It is clear that any threat to the Canal area would inevitably be a threat to a wider region, and especially to territory lying immediately to the north of the Canal zone. Thus, the defence of the Canal area affects Israel directly.

The evacuation of British troops from the Canal area were to result in the occupation of that area by Egyptian forces and the transfer of large quantities of military stores and equipment to the Government of Egypt, the consequent alteration of the military balance would be of the gravest concern to Israel. The same is true of any proposal to alter the equipment, fire-power or mobility of Egyptian armed forces at any time before Egypt has established peaceful relations with Israel.

The formulation of any new plans to prepare for the defence of the Canal area and indeed of the entire Middle East must, by the sheer fact of geographical proximity, be of concern and interest to Israel, whose determination to resist aggression is wholehearted and well-known. Furthermore, such planning cannot be dissociated from the relations between Israel and other States in the area.

Israel also has a most vital recognized interest in the full restoration of international rights with respect to free passage through the Suez Canal, in accordance with the decision adopted by the Security Council of the United Nations on September 1, 1951. The placing of the Canal in the sole effective custody of Egypt raises the problem of the extent to which that country can be depended upon to honour its international obligations regarding the freedom of passage through that waterway for the benefit of the whole world. The fact that Egypt has so far been able to flout with impunity that obligation in relation to Israel therefore acquires a disturbing significance of wider import. Accordingly, the discontinuance of that practice would not merely be the redress of a grievance vis-a-vis Israel, but would serve as an earnest of good faith on the part of Egypt towards the entire international community. The Government of Israel therefore believes it to be a paramount international interest that a final settlement with Egypt as to her status in the Canal area should be made contingent upon the compliance by Egypt with the above-mentioned resolution of the Security Council.

It is therefore evident that Israel's crucial interests, and indeed the prospects of effective defence of the Canal area and of the Middle East, would be prejudiced if the settlement of the above issues were effected without due regard to Israel's rights and position. The Government of Israel accordingly requests the opportunity to consult with the Government of the United States, before the commencement of the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations on the Suez Canal area and while they are in progress, on all aspects of the problem bearing on the interests of Israel.

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