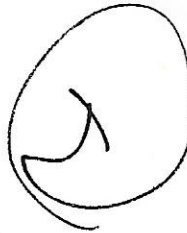


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D r a f t



Your Excellency,

On the instructions of the Government of Israel I have the honour to draw Your Excellency's attention to the ~~great~~ ^{grave} threat to the security of the State of Israel arising from the conclusion of an agreement between the Czechoslovak (People's) Republic and the Government of Egypt for the sale ~~of large quantities of arms to the latter.~~ by the former of large quantities of arms to the Government of Egypt.

When several months ago reports first appeared in the world press that the USSR was about to sell arms to the Arab States, acting on the instructions of my Government, I raised the matter with Mr. G.T. Zaitsev, the Head of the Near and Middle Eastern Department and was told by him on September ~~the~~ 12th, 1955 that he was authorised to inform me that these reports were devoid of foundation. He also stated that he was not aware of any negotiations being conducted between any of the democratic republics and Arab states for the supply of arms to the latter. In the course of that interview I referred to the numerous declarations made by members of the several Arab Governments, including the Egyptian Government, to the effect that the extermination of Israel was a major object of their foreign policy and that they intended to start a new war against Israel as soon as they were ready for it. I also drew attention to the action of the Egyptian Government in maintaining - in flagrant defiance of the terms of the Israel-Egyptian Armistice Agreement - of an economic boycott and blockade of Israel, involving the closing of the Suez Canal to Israel merchant-men and to ships of other nations carrying cargo to Israel ports, as well as to the constant guerilla raids made by Egyptian regular and irregular forces into Israel territory. These activities, I pointed out, clearly revealed the aggressive policy pursued by the Egyptian Government against the State of Israel. I submitted that in these circumstances the sale of arms to Egypt

agreement had been concluded for the sale of Czechoslovak arms to Egypt in exchange for Egyptian cotton and rice. It was explained that this agreement constituted a purely commercial transaction, it being the lawful right of every state to buy arms from other states on the usual commercial terms.

The Government of Israel does not dispute the principle that it is a lawful right of every state to enter into commercial transactions, including arms sales with other states. It is, however, the established and generally accepted practice of peace-loving states not to sell arms to governments which openly pursue aggressive designs against other states. The government of Egypt has made no secret of its intentions to use the arms which it is about to receive from Czechoslovakia for launching a war of annihilation against Israel. In the words of the Egyptian Prime Minister, Colonel Gamal Abdul Nasser, (as reported on 8 May, 1954, in the Greek newspaper "Kathimerini", "Israel is an artificial state which must be disappear". In view of these declarations it is difficult to see how the arms sale agreement between Czechoslovakia and Egypt can be viewed as an ordinary peaceful commercial transaction. The Soviet Government has on many occasions expressed itself emphatically in favour of the promotion of international peace and disarmament and against the conclusion of treaties involving aggressive designs against other states.

On the occasion of the reestablishment of diplomatic relations between the USSR and the State of Israel in ^{July} September, 1953, the Government of the USSR requested and received from the Government of Israel an undertaking that Israel would not join any alliance having aggressive purposes against the USSR. This undertaking, which has been strictly observed by the Government of Israel, implied that the Government of the USSR would for its part also abstain from lending support to states pursuing aggressive designs against Israel. The conclusion by the Government of Czechoslovakia, which under the Warsaw Pact is a close military ally of the USSR,

respectively. Nor can the Government of Israel fail to be concerned about ^{the} reports which have appeared in recent weeks in the Arabic press to the effect that the USSR and its allies contemplate the supply of arms also to other Arab States whose aggressive designs against Israel are no less outspoken than those of Egypt. In the light of the threats of a renewal of hostilities against Israel which are being constantly made by the political leaders of these states, the supply of arms to them constitutes an imminent threat to the peace of the Middle East. The Government of Israel has been equally firm in opposing the supply of arms by other states to Arab countries whose intentions towards Israel are as warlike as those of Egypt. No greater misfortune could, indeed, befall the peoples of the Middle East who are striving hard to improve their lot, than that their scant financial sources should be dissipated on a ruinous arms race which must inevitably lead to war. It would be the very denial of the spirit of international cooperation and goodwill which inspired the recent Geneva Conference and on which all peoples of the world have placed their hopes for peace and security.

In the light of this situation the Government of Israel addresses a most urgent appeal to the Government of the USSR to use its influence to prevent the supply of arms by its allies to Egypt or to any other Arab state which pursues aggressive designs against the security and very existence of the State of Israel. Such supplies could only lead to competitive arms races and alliances whose outcome could not be other than a general Middle Eastern conflagration threatening the peace of all mankind.