

X50

MIDDLE EAST

PS

PS/MR. RAYMOND/LADYXOON

PS/PUS

MR. DEREK THOMAS

MR. FERGUSSON

SIR D. HIRAS.

HD/NENAD

HD/MED

NO. 10 DOWNING STREET

CABINET OFFICE DIO

IMMEDIATE

PUSD (2)

NEWS DEPT

RESIDENT CLERK

1.10.85

CONFIDENTIAL

FM WASHINGTON

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 1444

OF 292248Z MAY 86

INFO IMMEDIATE CAIRO, TEL AMM

INFO PRIORITY DAMASCUS, AMMAN, JERUSALEM, RIYADH

MIPT: TABA

1. STATE BRIEFED US ON 29 MAY ABOUT THE LATEST PHASE IN THE TABA NEGOTIATIONS. SOFAER'S EFFORTS APPEAR TO HAVE COME TO NOTHING.
2. ACCORDING TO STATE SOFAER SPENT TEN HOURS IN JERUSALEM ON 28 MAY CONSTRUCTING YET ANOTHER APPROACH TO THE QUESTION FOR THE ARBITRATORS. TO MOVE AWAY FROM THE QUOTE CORRECT/EXACT UNQUOTE DEADLOCK, HE WAS TRYING A PACKAGE, WHICH INVOLVED ADDING A PREAMBLE AND AN ANNEX TO THE BASIC QUESTION. THE ISRAELIS AGREED TO DROP THE WORD QUOTE CORRECT UNQUOTE, BUT REFUSED TO ACCEPT AN EGYPTIAN DRAFT QUOTE SAFETY-NET CLAUSE UNQUOTE IN THE PACKAGE. (QUOTE THE TRIBUNAL SHALL STILL STRICTLY OBSERVE THE STATUS QUO ANTE BELLUM WHICH EXISTED PRIOR TO THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION OF SINAI IN 1967 UNQUOTE.)
3. SOFAER RETURNED TO CAIRO ON 29 MAY WITH ISRAEL'S MODIFICATIONS TO THE PACKAGE WHICH HE HAD SOME HOPES THE EGYPTIANS WOULD ACCEPT. BUT MEGUID SAID ONLY THAT HE WOULD REFER THE TEXT TO A CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE FOR STUDY AND ADDED THAT THE UNITED STATES MUST UNDERSTAND THAT THE CONCEPT IN THE SAFETY NET CLAUSE WAS THE KEY TO EGYPT'S POSITION AND WOULD NOT BE DROPPED; THE ARBITRATORS HAD TO ADDRESS THAT CONCEPT DIRECTLY. SOFAER DECIDED THAT THIS DID NOT GIVE HIM ENOUGH NEGOTIATING ROOM FOR A FURTHER SHUTTLE AND SET COURSE FOR HOME.
4. AS OF 29 MAY, STATE DID NOT KNOW IN WHAT TERMS SOFAER WOULD DESCRIBE THE EGYPTIAN POSITION TO THE ISRAELIS. THEY ASKED US, THEREFORE, TO HANDLE THIS INFORMATION DISCREETLY. IT WAS LIKELY SOFAER WOULD LEAVE THE WAY OPEN FOR FURTHER CONTACTS. THE EGYPTIAN POSITION MIGHT CONCEIVABLY UNBEND AFTER A PERIOD OF REFLECTION. BUT FOR THE MOMENT THE AMERICANS COULD SEE NO WAY FORWARD.

WRIGHT