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19TH NOVEMBER, 1953

CABINET

ANGLO-JORDAN TREATY

Memorandum by the Secretary of State for  
Foreign Affairs

The Cabinet on 17th November invited me to consider further the question of the despatch of British forces to Jordan and the statements which might be made to the Jordan and Israel Governments as regards our obligations under the Anglo-Jordan Treaty of 1948 (C.C. (53) 67th Conclusions, Minute 5).

2. The Cabinet has already decided in principle to send an armoured squadron to Jordan for training. I am in favour of doing this when the Security Council has pronounced on the Qibya incident.

3. I would give the Israel Government an assurance that no British troops would ever be used for an aggressive purpose. The Israel Government were told of the possibility that we might send troops to Jordan as long ago as last April; they raised no objection. In telling them again, we should remind them of our Treaty obligation to assist Jordan.

4. As regards a statement to the Jordan Government there seem to be two alternatives:-

- (i) We could merely accept the Jordan Government's invitation to station the armoured squadron there for training purposes, and say nothing about our intention to use it or any other British forces to carry out our engagement under the Treaty. The Jordan Government have not in fact asked us for any re-assurance about the Treaty (they received one shortly before Qibya) and have hitherto resisted for political reasons the despatch of any British forces to Jordan other than the armoured squadron.
- (ii) Alternatively, in sending the squadron to Jordan, we could tell the Jordan Government that we were prepared to discuss with them ways and means of fulfilling the Treaty if Jordan was attacked. We should remind them that the Anglo-Jordan Defence Board has for some time past recommended that if the United Kingdom is to be able to carry out its obligations under the Treaty, it is necessary for an armoured brigade to be stationed in Jordan in time of peace. In this way we could seek the agreement of the Jordan Government in principle to the stationing of an armoured brigade, while making it clear that the timing of this move would require further consideration owing to difficulties of accommodation, etc. and would depend on the outcome of our negotiations with Egypt.

5. As between these alternatives, the second has the advantage that it would assist in the re-deployment of our forces from Egypt and would serve to show our continued interest in the Middle East. There was, I think, a time when we were anxious to station a brigade in Jordan. On the other hand, it might be thought wiser not to offer to commit larger forces at this stage.

Conclusion

6. I recommend therefore that:-

- (i) We should, as the Cabinet has already agreed in principle, send an armoured squadron to Jordan as soon as the Security Council has pronounced on the Qibya incident.
- (ii) My colleagues should consider whether it would be preferable in this connexion to approach the Jordan Government on the lines of the first or second alternative in paragraph 4 above.
- (iii) Whichever of these alternatives is adopted, we should approach the Israel Government as suggested in paragraph 3 above and should inform the Jordan Government that we have done so.

A.E.

Foreign Office, S. W. 1.

18TH NOVEMBER, 1953.