

EMBARGO ON SHIPMENTS OF ARMS TO THE MIDDLE EAST

4. *The Secretary of State for External Affairs* said that, with the conclusion of the debate in the House on foreign policy it would be advisable to lift the embargo on arms shipments to the Middle East. All cargoes destined for that area had been held up, but, in fact, they included only a very small amount of goods which could be regarded strictly as warlike materiel. If an affirmative decision — and such a decision should be explained — was not taken, it would be said that the Canadian government had been driven from a policy which it had been following for two years and which he considered sound. The alternative was to continue the embargo which, in practice, would mean an embargo against Israel only, because the Arab countries would continue to get arms from other sources. There were only one or two commitments which had not been fulfilled. These consisted of some spare parts and a small amount of electronic equipment the delivery of which had been held up, and some 25-pounder ammunition ordered by Israel but on which a decision had yet to be made.

5. *During the discussion* the following points emerged:

(a) The sale of 25-pounder ammunition should be allowed. If it were not, this would be regarded as very unfriendly by the Jewish population of the country. However, the sale should not be approved until some time had elapsed after the lifting of the embargo, and after talks had been held with the U.K., the U.S., and France on Middle East problems.

(b) It might be said that the embargo was being lifted after consultation with our allies, in particular with the U.K. To this it was replied that the general policy on this matter was the government's responsibility and should not be determined as a result of discussions even with friendly countries.

6. *The Cabinet* noted the report of the Secretary of State for External Affairs on shipments of arms to the Middle East, and agreed that the recently imposed embargo be lifted with effect from the time of announcement in the House of Commons,¹⁶ and that the authorization of export of 25-pounder ammunition to Israel be withheld until after the matter had been discussed with the United Kingdom and United States.

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¹⁶ Le 20 janvier, le premier ministre a annoncé un embargo sur les envois d'armes au Moyen-Orient, en attendant la tenue du débat sur les affaires étrangères à la Chambre des Communes. Voir Canada, Chambre des Communes, *Débats*, 1956, volume I, p. 360. L'embargo a été levé le 6 février. Voir Canada, Chambre des Communes, *Débats*, 1956, volume I, pp. 920 à 921.

On January 20, the Prime Minister announced an embargo on arms shipments to the Middle East pending the debate on foreign affairs in the House of Commons. See Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, 1956, Volume I, p. 344. The embargo was lifted on February 6. See Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, 1956, Volume I, pp. 880-881.