

tries and repeated the argument that to sell such planes would be to forfeit the friendship of the Arab countries. I did my best to explain to him that even if a decision were taken to send the planes to Israel, this gesture would in no sense mean that we were espousing one side against the other. All that the Israelis had asked for were interceptor planes capable of use only for defensive purposes. No offensive weapons were under consideration. As Mr. El Khatib constantly insisted that Egypt had no aggressive intentions whatsoever I drew to his attention the fact that although the Israelis had asked us only for defensive aircraft, the Egyptian Government had been buying bombers from Czechoslovakia and that these were useful only for offensive purposes. My argument was pretty difficult as I discovered that the Ambassador had not the faintest idea that there was a difference between a fighter and a bomber plane. He was tremendously impressed with my knowledge of this distinction and assumed that I must have had a long career in the R.C.A.F.

5. During our discussion as to whether or not the supply of aircraft to Israel would contribute to an arms race, I indicated that we were naturally much interested in the intentions of the Egyptian Government. If the Egyptian Government intended to continue buying bomber planes, then this was an important factor which we must consider in deciding whether or not the Israelis should have the means to defend themselves. He assured me that the purchase of bombers from the Soviet countries was something that had taken place and was finished. When I pressed him on this point, he did not seem too sure of himself and I do not think too much store should be placed in this statement. I am not suggesting that he was deliberately prevaricating but I doubt if he is very well informed on the subject. I did let him know, however, that this was something in which we were much interested and would like to know what his Government had to say on the subject.

6. In conclusion, he made some reference, not unfavourable, to Larry Henderson's reports from the Middle East. Although he criticized what Mr. Sharrett had said to Henderson, he admitted that both sides had been given an opportunity to speak. I said I hoped he would bear in mind the length to which the C.B.C. had gone to present the Arab case when he complained about the one-sidedness of newspapers and Members of Parliament in this country, as he had in the earlier part of the interview.

J.W. H[OLMES]

8.

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*Note du sous-secrétaire d'État aux Affaires extérieures
pour le secrétaire d'État aux Affaires extérieures*¹²

*Memorandum from Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs
to Secretary of State for External Affairs*¹²

SECRET

[Ottawa], July 20, 1956

POSSIBLE RESUMPTION OF WORK ON ISRAELI SCHEME
FOR DIVERSION OF ISRAELI WATERS

In our memorandum of June 18,† we speculated that the replacement of Moshe Sharett by Mrs. Golda Myerson as Foreign Minister of Israel might produce a tougher line in Israeli foreign policy. Already there are indications that a policy of very firm diplomacy is being adopted. These have included an increase in the number and intensity of Israeli com-

¹² Note marginale :/Marginal note:

A very interesting and disquieting memorandum. L.B. P[earson]