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TOP SECRET

SECRETARY OF STATE

I attach a draft paper on Propaganda and Political Warfare in the Middle East, which has been drawn up by a working party of the Advisory Committee of the Information Co-ordination Executive.

I believe that this memorandum will be of value to the Egypt Committee, and I recommend that it should be circulated to the Committee over your signature as soon as possible.

The Committee will prepare a separate paper dealing with the problem of the reservists mentioned in paragraph 5 (d) of the attached draft.

*A.D. Dodds-Parker*

(A.D. Dodds-Parker  
October 18, 1956.)

Copy, with annex to:

Mr. P.F. Grey  
Mr. Rennie  
Mr. Stewart

*Mr. [unclear] I should like to have a word with you about this.*

*The S.P.S. has discussed with [unclear] and agrees to circulation to Egypt Office, subject to the two changes marked in paras 6 & 7.*

Registry No.

PROPAGANDA AND POLITICAL WARFARE  
IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Draft of Paper for Egypt Committee

Top Secret.  
~~Secret~~  
~~Confidential~~  
~~Restricted~~  
Open.

Draft.

Limiting Factors.

~~The~~ <sup>On the</sup> Advisory Committee <sup>which I was asked to set up</sup> have been considering

*to consider connection with the Suez dispute has made certain which I wish to bring my colleagues.*  
political warfare and propaganda for two months. Its members feel that their recommendations should now be brought to the attention of Ministers.

Limiting Factors  
2. In

considering these recommendations it is important to bear in mind the factors limiting our control of propaganda:

(a) None of the usual wartime constraints can be applied. We cannot control the press; there is no means of stopping Parliament from asking questions which may have a bad effect abroad from the point of view of propaganda.

*essential basis of our propaganda policy. We cannot abandon or even appear as events develop to depart from the line of major Ministerial pronouncements without damaging our propaganda as a whole.*

(b) ~~Any threat or promise by a Minister is a commitment which cannot later be abandoned without damaging our propaganda~~

*In other words, we cannot speak with two voices*

(c) Any Ministerial statement is bound to be carried by the agencies of propaganda abroad. This means that it is not possible to limit to internal use any statement made primarily for internal purposes.

Conversely, Ministerial statements are a useful source of propaganda since they automatically obtain good publicity.

~~With these considerations in mind the Committee puts forward the following aims.~~

/Aims.

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Aims. *In making its recommendations the Ctee*

3. This paper is written on the <sup>assumed</sup> assumption that there ~~will~~ <sup>would</sup> be a prolonged period of negotiation and/or political and economic pressure on Nasser. If at any time the decision is taken to use force the position will change and immediate tactical needs will be paramount rather than long-term strategy.

4. The two main general aims in the long term are to weaken Nasser and to strengthen our standing in the Arab world. In the short term we must try to strengthen our hand in negotiation and help the prospects of an agreed settlement satisfactory to us; we must not in our attempts to weaken Nasser in the long run spoil the prospects of such a settlement. Once a settlement is reached we must represent it as a success for us and a ~~loss~~ <sup>and a victory for international good behaviour;</sup> defeat for Nasser, <sup>and we must</sup> and try to ensure that that

*indeed at home and throughout the world.*  
interpretation is widely accepted in the Middle East, and  
If at any time it becomes apparent that a negotiated settlement will not be possible we can concentrate our efforts on the two main long-term aims mentioned above.

General Considerations.

- 3/ (a) Overt attacks on Nasser will tend to strengthen his position inside Egypt and to a lesser extent in the rest of the Arab world; covert attacks attributable to Arab Moslem sources will tend to weaken him.
- (b) Threats of action which we do not in the last resort intend to take are generally ineffective <sup>particularly when used</sup> whether used covertly or overtly, and their cumulative effect is to injure the validity of all our propaganda. It is usually better to act first and to use propaganda afterwards to make it clear to all what we have done and how Nasser will suffer thereby.

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<sup>Advisory</sup>  
(c) The Committee can perhaps perform its

most useful function where there is to be  
*a new phase of some clearly marked development*  
~~a change or reversal~~ of national policy.

Where such a move is contemplated, it is important that all the organs of propaganda should have as long notice as possible. Not only must propaganda agencies be given a chance to prepare the ground for any such change, and incidentally be prevented from being left too far out on a limb, but it may sometimes be possible, given sufficient advance notice, for propaganda to be used to help to solve an awkward problem. ~~A good example of the way in which propaganda can be used for this purpose is given in the appendix to this paper.~~

*insert (d)  
from A-B  
of letter attached  
at page 5*

#### Themes for Propaganda.

<sup>6</sup> & The following are the main themes which should be used at present. The extent to which each theme can be used varies from time to time depending on the needs of the current situation, on the propaganda material available and on the opportunities afforded. The first two are the main themes which can be used continuously.

##### (a) Egypt's economic interests

Nasser, by his ill-considered actions, is ruining Egypt's economic interests and prospects of capital development. In using this theme we can point to the plans for alternative pipe lines, the difficulty of making funds available for development of the Canal and the financial loss at present being suffered by Egypt; this last point must be used with care since Egypt appears to be getting enough revenue to cover current needs in running the Canal; but we can stress without reservation the damage done to Egypt's prospects of

/capital

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capital development, e.g. in building the Aswan Dam. We can point to the effect of Nasser's action <sup>for instance on</sup> ~~on cotton sales and prices~~ (being careful not to damage our own interests in the process), to the loss caused by the disappearance of the tourist trade, and to the effect on prices in Egypt of the restriction of imports and of hoarding of scarce goods.

Propaganda on this theme can be either overt or covert, although in overt propaganda we have to be careful to avoid giving the impression that we are gloating over the misfortunes of the man in the street in Egypt. This theme can be used both inside and outside Egypt; in the other Arab countries it is best to concentrate on the damage done to the interests of the oil producing countries e.g. in interfering with the future development of the Canal and in making other pipelines necessary.

#### The Interests of other Arabs

We should point out to Egypt's neighbours the dangers of Egypt's pan-Arab imperialist ambitions: Nasser is riding rough-shod over the interests of other Arabs; he has taken action without consulting them and has then expected them to support him. This line is closely linked with the economic line mentioned in the preceding paragraph. Besides thus drawing attention to the damage done by Nasser to the economic interests of his oil producing neighbours, we should try to encourage rapprochement between the Iraqis and the Saudis and between the Iraqis and the Jordanians. We should play on the kings' fear of republicanism and show that in the long run Nasser represents

General statements on this theme do not have much value; facts in the greatest possible detail are needed.

Insert (f) from next page

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a threat to their thrones. Covertly we can welcome any move to Arab unity but overtly we must confine ourselves to welcoming any moves for closer links between Iraq and other Arab countries as a move towards stability. Covertly we should attack Egyptian imperialism and do what we can to undermine the position of known Egyptian agents or sympathisers.

(c) Communism

We must play on Arab fears of Communism and draw attention to Nasser's links with the Russians. We can point out that Nasser has manoeuvred Egypt into a position <sup>where</sup> her only friends are now the Communists. We can at the same time develop the themes that Egypt is being led from behind by the Russians in order to cause trouble from which only the Communists can benefit. Great caution is, however, needed in developing this theme in order not to give the impression that Communism is bound to win in Egypt, thus encouraging a tendency to get on what appears to be the winning side.

(e) Israel

In our covert propaganda we should take the line that Egypt is to blame for the present difficulties on the Israel-Jordan border; by relaxing pressure in the Gaza area Egypt allowed Israel freedom of action to make the recent reprisal raids.

(f) Sanctity of contracts

We must in both overt and covert propaganda point out what it means to all concerned if Nasser is allowed to get away with a

unilateral breaking of an agreement. This theme

is important where the undeveloped countries are concerned; their prospects of obtaining capital for development have been damaged by Nasser's action 17.

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7.

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THE ORIGINAL HAS BEEN RETAINED  
IN THE DEPARTMENT UNDER SECTION  
3(4) OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT 1958

- (b) It has been suggested that we might <sup>be v of v.</sup> persuade the Egyptians to take a given line which will benefit us if they comply; if they do not comply we continue to attack them. We should try to use Ministerial statements for <sup>this</sup> ~~the~~ purpose <sup>where suitable.</sup> We might try publicly to persuade the Egyptians <sup>an independent public corporation</sup> to set up a semi-independent organisation to run the Canal, like the B.B.C. or A.E.A. <sup>In support of this publicists suggest</sup> A useful way of doing this might be to suggest that this is what the Indians wanted but it was turned down by Nasser, even though there was a good prospect that we might be satisfied with it.
- (c) It has been suggested that we should forecast a breakdown in the Canal during the winter and then try to induce it by persuading as many ships as possible to go through the Canal at the same time. This is, however, too dangerous a device. Firstly, Nasser might after all succeed in avoiding a breakdown; <sup>and in any case</sup> ~~secondly~~, a breakdown in the Canal would harm our own economic interests and those of our friends and allies.
- (d) It has been suggested that we should draw a parallel between oil sent through the pipelines <sup>and</sup> as through the Canal and stress that only an international control agreement will lead to the proper development of either system of moving

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This is a fairly transparent device and one which the Egyptians have already resorted to as a means of organising. Secondly

oil. This device is, however, probably not practicable since it might tend to alarm our oil producing friends, in particular Iraq.

- (e) We should do what we can <sup>covertly</sup> to undermine confidence in Egypt's financial credit.
- (f) We should try to encourage ~~much~~ discussion ~~as possible~~ in Egypt about the possibility of alternative governments although we must be careful not to make it appear that HMG is encouraging any particular alternative.
- (g) If a settlement is reached it could be tested by arranging for an Israel ship, preferably in ballast, to transit the canal. If Egypt allowed it to pass this would demonstrate to the Arab world that Nasser's seizure of the Canal had had the effect of ending the ban on the passage of Israel ships. If Egypt stopped it her bad faith in promising freedom of navigation would be demonstrated to the rest of the world.

Recommendations.

8. It is recommended that Ministers approve the use of the propaganda themes listed in para. ~~6~~ and in the appendix to this paper and the action suggested in para. ~~6~~ (a), (b), (e), (f) and (g).

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