

Telegram from the British Embassy in The Hague on the measures taken by the Netherlands Government following the nationalisation of the Suez Canal (The Hague, 6 August 1956)

Caption: In a telegram dated 6 August 1956, the British Embassy in The Hague informs the British Foreign Office of the measures that the Netherlands Government is intending to take following the nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company. The Government will suspend transfers of arms and ammunitions to Egypt and will no longer grant credit facilities. However, it emphasises that it is unable to freeze all Egyptian assets in the Netherlands.

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FROM THE HAGUE TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Cypher/OTP

FOREIGN OFFICE AND
WHITEHALL DISTRIBUTION

Sir. P. Mason
No. 155
August 6, 1956

D. 6.49 p.m. August 6, 1956
R. 8.29 p.m. August 6, 1956

IMMEDIATE
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My immediately preceding telegram and my telegram No. 152:
Suez Canal.

As regards the economic measures, the Minister without
Portfolio informed me of his Government's intentions as follows:

(a) The Netherlands Government will refuse, until further
notice, any provision of arms or ammunitions to Egypt (this
request was not covered in your telegrams Nos. 836 to Bonn and
241 to Oslo, but was apparently put to The Netherlands Government
in a parallel approach from the French Government). This would
be done by administrative measures and there would be no (repeat
no) public statement.

(b) They will not (repeat not) give facilities for credit
financing or credits. The Minister indicated, however, that
there might be one or two special cases, arising under paragraph
2 (a) of your telegram No. 836 to Bonn of August 2, where
the Netherlands Government might feel compelled to relax this.

(c) They will make enquiries as to what, if any, assets
of the Universal Suez Canal Company are held in this country.
The Minister said, after discussion with the Minister of
Finance, that he was certain that Bank of Netherlands would take
steps to hold tight to any such assets. I said that I supposed
that the bank would be in consultation with the Netherlands
Government and that the latter's advice would be against letting
any of them go. He said yes.

2. The Minister explained that they could not go so far as to
freeze all Egyptian assets in this country because this would
be contrary to their bilateral monetary agreement with Egypt
(please see my telegram No. 152). He said, moreover, that they
had not been able to go so far as this with the Indonesian
Government when the latter were defaulting on their payments

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The Hague telegram No. 155 to Foreign Office

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and abrogating the state of union with the Netherlands, and that they could not go further with Egypt than they had with Indonesia.

3. In all the circumstances, I think that this is as satisfactory a result as we can hope for, though obviously all these measures will be taken administratively and I imagine that no public statement will be made about them. I therefore think that we should get no more by further pressure and that we should rest content with this.

4. I explained fully the reasons why we ourselves were taking the steps we have taken and the Minister showed himself in full sympathy with them.

ADVANCE COPIES:

Private Secretary

Sir. I. Kirkpatrick

Mr. Ross

Head of African Department

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