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NEJ 95-157

By lig, NARA, Date 2-7-96

Tuesday, June 6, 1967

Approved by the President - 10:03 am.

Transmitted by US Molink - 10:21 am.

Received by Soviet Molink - 10:43 am.

To Chairman Kosygin

From President Lyndon B. Johnson

Mr. Kosygin,

We continue to believe that the fighting in the Near East should be stopped as soon as possible. We were disappointed that the UN Security Council lost a full day yesterday in its effort to call for a prompt cease-fire. I understand that our representatives in the Security Council will be discussing this matter further this morning. The matter is urgent.

I was puzzled, Mr. Chairman, by what has been said by the Soviet Press and Radio since our exchange of messages yesterday morning. It does not help to charge the United States as a participant in aggression, especially when our only role has been to press for restraint at every step of the way.

I know you are not responsible for Cairo. But you should know that we were astounded that Cairo, just a few hours ago, alleged that U.S. Carrier aircraft had participated in attacks on Egypt. This wholly false and obviously invented charge has led to attacks on our representatives in various Arab localities in violation of the most elemental rights of legation. Since you know where our carriers are, I hope you can put Cairo right on this matter and help us eliminate that kind of needless inflammation.

We have expressed to your government our views on the strait of Tiran in my letter to you of May 28 and Secretary of State Rusk's letter to Foreign Minister Gromyko of the same date.

In this personal exchange I should like to emphasize one point which goes beyond general principles about international rights of passage through narrow waters. President Eisenhower, in 1957 was faced with the problem of obtaining the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Sinai. In pressing for a withdrawal which was earnestly desired by Egypt, President Eisenhower committed the United States to international passage of the strait. President Nasser's declaration of May 22 that he would close the strait runs squarely into a commitment we undertook while supporting Egypt, quite apart from our interests as a maritime nation.

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In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I suggest that we both do our best to obtain prompt action by the Security Council. The Resolution, submitted by Ambassador Goldberg to Ambassador Federenko last night, meets the points raised in your communication to me, as well as the realities discussed above. We earnestly hope you can give it your support.

For your convenience, the key paragraph in this Resolution is the following:

"Calls upon the Governments concerned to take the necessary measures for an immediate cease-fire and prompt withdrawal, without prejudice to the respective rights, claims or position of anyone, of their armed personnel behind the Armistice Lines, and to take other appropriate measures to ensure disengagement of forces, to refrain from acts of force regardless of their nature, and to reduce tension in the area."

Respectfully,

Lyndon B. Johnson

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