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Footnotes on A Crisis With Nobody Home

Mr. Eisenhower as we go to press is on his way to Bermuda; Mr. Nixon is in the Sudan, Mr. Dulles is in Southeast Asia; even Mr. Stassen is on his way somewhere, in his case to London. We hope Jim Hagerty sticks around, to make a noise like a Head of State when the Mid-Eastern crisis reaches the boiling point again. We wonder wistfully: doesn't Nasser ever take a vacation or get a cold in the head?

Peace Through Weakness

Perhaps the strangest aspect of the developing situation is that the U.S. government, which has proceeded since 1947 on the premise that only strength can preserve peace, is now acting on the premise that even strong words are dangerous. At the daily State Department briefing Tuesday, Lincoln White, the official spokesman, time after time avoided use of the word "Egypt", as if the syllables like those of Jahveh were too sacred to be uttered, when asked just whom he meant by that statement about the U.S. "hope that all the parties concerned will continue to cooperate with the United Nations." Mr. Eisenhower at his farewell press conference next day was weaker; he did not even "hope", but he had communicated his views to Mr. Hammarskjold. Very daring. The Israeli are being told that the U.S. cannot say more publicly without appearing to be on Israel's side! We gave Naguib a pistol; someone should send Mr. Eisenhower an umbrella.

The Same Cracked Record

The off the record views fed out by the State Department to Washington correspondents strikingly recall the sort of stuff with which the British Foreign Office tried to reassure and defend itself during the heyday of the Axis. The Foreign Office constantly explained away Hitler's violent statements by saying that they were merely propaganda for home consumption. The Foreign Office also excused its truckling to Il Duce by telling correspondents that if Mussolini were weakened Italy would go Communist. The State Department strikes both themes in discussing Nasser. It tries very hard to spread the view that the Egyptian is really more reasonable than he sounds. Its second line of defense is that there is no alternative to Nasser, that the Army would take over altogether, that Egypt would slip into the Soviet orbit, etc. This is the same cracked record London played in the 30's.

"Too Soon" for A Suez Shipping Policy?

The simplest point of policy to be decided is whether and on what terms U.S. ships are to use Suez. The U.S. can boycott the Canal if Nasser does not negotiate some reasonable proposal on tolls. The two U.S. shipping lines, American Export and American President, which use the Canal are both government subsidized and routes are subject to regulation by the

U.S. Maritime Administration. They now have permission to use the Cape of Good Hope route. What happens when the Canal reopens? Shall they pay tolls to the Suez Canal Company or to Egypt? When the *New York Journal of Commerce*, which covers shipping news closely, put the question to the State Department last week, the paper drew a complete blank. "Queried as to whether the Department had a policy," the *Journal* reported March 13, "an official replied that it was 'too soon' to enunciate one." From shipping industry sources, the paper learned that the liaison committee set up by the Department last Fall has not met since last November and no meeting has been scheduled though the reopening of the Canal is imminent. The effect is to encourage Nasser to do as he pleases, since at the Treasury the *Journal* was told that the regulation of August 3 "is still on the books." This tells U.S. shipowners they can pay their tolls to Egypt providing they do so "under protest."

Another Explanation of Aswan

The State Department has almost as many different reasons for the withdrawal of the Aswan dam offer as it has for the refusal of newspapermen's passports to Communist China. Last Tuesday C. D. Jackson, of Time, Inc., formerly special assistant to President Eisenhower, created a minor furore at the Department by telling the Advertising and Sales Club in Toronto that the U.S. touched off the Middle East crisis to force a showdown with Russia. He said the offer to finance the Aswan dam was withdrawn in order to "call Moscow's bluff" when the Soviets shifted from cold war to an economic offensive, and that while perhaps "we told Nasser a trifle too abruptly" the move proved the emptiness of Russian promises of aid. Jackson also said that at a luncheon shortly afterward with Dulles, nationalization of the Suez was mentioned as one of the ways Nasser might retaliate. Philip Deane of the *London Observer*, who also represents the *Toronto Globe and Mail* here, was asked to file a story on State Department reaction. The reaction was tortuous. No single item in the Jackson speech was incorrect but he had put it together wrongly, according to State Department sources. The Department was glad to have called Russia's bluff but the real reason for withdrawing the Aswan offer—so Deane reported to his Toronto paper—was that Nasser had incensed Congress by recognizing Communist China.

Prediction

Eisenhower and Dulles will do all in their power to prove themselves the friends of the oil bearing Arabs up to and including U.S. naval intervention to protect Gaza if Ben Gurion moves again.

Still on Brownell's Payroll, Perjury Investigation Dropped

Bunche's Phoney Accusers Turn Up to Smear The NAACP In Louisiana

Memo to the NAACP: Why not take the offensive against Manning Johnson and Leonard Patterson, two of the state witnesses in the 3-day hearing held by a Louisiana state legislative committee last week-end to smear the Rev. Martin Luther King and the NAACP?

In August, 1954, after the International Organization Employees Loyalty Board had cleared Ralph Bunche of the charges brought against him by Johnson and Patterson, the Department of Justice announced that they had been dropped as "paid consultants." The loyalty board chairman, Pierce Gerety, transmitted the transcript of their testimony to the Justice Department for investigation of possible perjury. Gerety had before him sworn testimony which gave the lie to the charge by Manning and Patterson that Dr. Bunche had participated in Communist activity in 1934. The Board did not find their testimony credible, but there has never been any public announcement as to whether Johnson and Patterson would be tried for perjury.

Perjury Charges Dropped

Now it appears (1) that the Department of Justice has gone on using Patterson as a paid witness, (2) that it is also using Manning Johnson, and (3) that the perjury inquiry has quietly been dropped. The principal source of these revelations is a letter sent by J. M. Swing, Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization, to Joseph Forer, a Washington lawyer, in response to two letters Forer had sent the Attorney General on December 26 and January 17 last, asking why the government was still using Patterson as a paid witness in deportation proceedings.

Swing's letter was dated January 31 but has just been made available for publication. The Forer letters were written in the belief that Manning Johnson had been dropped but since then the government has announced in Los Angeles that both Manning Johnson and Leonard Patterson would be among the professional witnesses to be called in the denaturalization trial of Peter Chaunt which began on March 7.

Victim and Accusers Put on Same Plane

The Swing letter revealed for the first time what had happened to the perjury charges in the Bunche case. "With respect to your allegations concerning Mr. Patterson's testimony before the International Organization Employees Loyalty Board in the case of Dr. Bunche," Swing wrote Forer, "investigation conducted concluded that there was no basis for perjury prosecution against any of the persons who testified in that proceeding." This puts Bunche, the cleared victim, on the same level with the professional informers the loyalty board disbelieved.

Forer's letter of December 26 to the Attorney General pointed out that Patterson's testimony had been rejected as untrue in the deportation cases of Matrona Karpuk and Nathan Stricker, that U. S. District Judge Bryan did not credit testimony given by Patterson in *U. S. vs. Horwitz*, 140 F. Supp. 839, and that U. S. District Judge Westover in Los Angeles had commented unfavorably on Patterson's testimony (and Maurice Malkin's) in dismissing deportation proceedings last August in the Kusnitz case.

Did the FBI Want to Prosecute Bunche?

In his letter to the Attorney General, Forer said that when he cross-examined Patterson in one of these deportation cases, Patterson testified that he was under instructions not to reveal what he testified to in Dr. Bunche's hearing. "He also testified," Forer wrote Brownell, "that the day after he had testified against Dr. Bunche, agents of the FBI came to him and asked if he would testify against Dr. Bunche for perjuring himself." These two bits of testimony, Forer said,

"carry a ring of palpable falsity" and could be "readily checked" within the Department.

"I might also mention," Forer added, "that when I asked Mr. Patterson on cross-examination whether he was 'aware that Ralph Bunche is still Assistant Secretary of the United Nations,' he replied: 'Oh I am sure he is there. So was Dexter White in the Treasury, and Alger Hiss in Yalta.' Mr. Patterson thus smeared Dr. Bunche even while refusing to divulge what he had testified to about Dr. Bunche."

Forer wrote that "in view of the developments which have occurred with regard to government witnesses Matusow, Mazzei, Crouch and Manning Johnson, there has inevitably arisen some public doubt as to whether the Department has been sufficiently careful not to use unreliable witnesses. It seems to me this doubt would be magnified if the public were aware that the Department is still using Mr. Patterson as a witness."

The Second Letter to Brownell

When there was no reply, or even acknowledgement, Forer wrote again on January 17 saying "The natural inference from this silence is one which I am loath to draw, namely, that the Department is unable to assert that Mr. Patterson is a reliable witness and yet intends to go on calling him as a government witness and to rely on his testimony."

This finally elicited the response of January 31. In this letter Commissioner Swing disclosed that perjury charges in the Bunche case had been dropped. He did not discuss the Patterson testimony that the FBI had asked him whether he would testify against Dr. Bunche in a perjury prosecution.

The four deportation cases lost by the government despite Patterson's testimony were easily explained away by the Commissioner. It was not that the Board of Immigration Appeals or the Courts had disbelieved Patterson, it was merely that they found that the government had not proven that the accused were Communists and therefore deportable! No finer hair has ever been split in a phony cause. Judging by the letter, the Justice Department intends to go right on using Patterson.

Indeed, while admitting that Patterson's testimony had been "insufficient" in four deportation cases, the Commissioner pointed with pride to a fifth, that of Milo Jovetich, in which he said an order of deportation "was substantially upheld upon the testimony of Leonard Patterson and another witness."

Bad Faith in Public Relations

What all this shows is (1) that the Department of Justice acted in bad faith three years ago when it told the press that Johnson and Patterson had been dropped as "paid consultants" in the wake of the Bunche case, and (2) that again when its own paid informers are proven false the Department never brings perjury charges. Only victims or recanting witnesses like Matusow are ever charged with perjury.

Finally, from the standpoint of the NAACP and the fight for Negro rights, the continued employment of Dr. Bunche's accusers is serious. Government employment gives added weight to their testimony in Louisiana. This testimony, which pictured Dr. King as a Communist tool and the NAACP as Communist infiltrated, is being made available by Louisiana (according to a March 10 Associated Press dispatch from Baton Rouge) for use in the other Southern States. Several, like Virginia, are already engaged in legal actions designed to prosecute, if not outlaw, the NAACP while forcing it to reveal its membership rolls.

Thus Brownell's paid informers, on the government payroll, are being allowed to undercut in the South that struggle for Negro rights which he claims to support in the North.