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23 Feb. 60

D. H.'s memorandum

23 February 1960

Yesterday afternoon Ambassador Bérard came to see me exerting <sup>strong</sup> violent pressure regarding the circulation of the Afro-Asian letter on atrocities in Algeria and quoting a cable from Paris expressing their disappointment that I had "given in to pressures" from the Afro-Asian group. I pointed out that they were exercising a right and that I had exerted pressure on them, not the other way around. When he did not succeed with his pressure, he said - probably with the best of intentions - that, anyway, the French Government could not attach great importance to the whole story.

At the end of our talk I raised the question of the situation in the Middle East. Bérard said that they had studied the matter carefully in the Quai d'Orsay while he was there. They agreed with me about the tension, but they did not believe that Israel would attack. I replied that I had never said that they would, but that my concern was related to the utter rigidity from both sides regarding <sup>a</sup> the matter where the Israelis had asked for something we could never support and the Syrians could never grant. With such rigidity it might prove any day very difficult to contain an incident. Bérard then said that he was <sup>"</sup> the last one to defend Israel in the latest incidents, <sup>"</sup> but that something could be said also about the behaviour of the Afro-Asians on the Palestine issue.

In the light of the two statements regarding Israel, I am inclined to believe that there have been contacts between Paris and Jerusalem in which Paris has warned against a continuance of a retaliation policy on the basis of claims which they have found weak.