

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

En Clair

FOREIGN OFFICE AND
WHITEHALL DISTRIBUTIONSir R. Stevenson
No. 261
February 25, 1954.D. 12.05 p.m. February 25, 1954.
R. 12.31 p.m. February 25, 1954.IMMEDIATE

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 261 of
February 25
Repeated for information to: Washington Beirut (for Merdiv)
Paris U.K.T.C. Khartoum.
and Saving to B.M.E.O.

Resignation of General Neguib.

In a communiqué issued at 4 a.m. on February 25 Council for the Revolutionary Command announced the resignation of General Neguib and the appointment of Lieutenant Colonel Gamal Abdul Nasser as Prime Minister.

2. After rehearsing the history and aims of the revolutionary movement the communiqué described the "psychological crisis" from which General Neguib suffered as a result of the Council's attempt to present him to the world as the leader of the revolutionary movement, when he was, in fact, no more than the president of a committee of equals. Within six months of the revolution he had begun to demand for himself powers exceeding those of an ordinary member. The Council had refused categorically to deviate from its established procedure, which was one vote for each member and a casting vote for the chairman. Finally, General Neguib had made specific demands for the power to veto a unanimous decision of the Council, the authority to appoint and dismiss Cabinet Ministers and the power to approve promotion, the dismissal and even the posting of officers. The Council tried for ten months to persuade him to withdraw demands which would have meant a return to the autocratic rule from which the country had just been delivered. The General had attempted, by increasingly frequent confinements to his house, to force the Council's hand, and finally three days ago had presented his resignation. Despite the crisis political, economic and administrative, which the country was traversing, the Revolution /Council

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(ENN)

Cairo telegram No. 261 to Foreign Office

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Council had no alternative but to accept.

3. At its meeting on the night of February 24/25 the Council unanimously adopted the following decisions -

- (i) to accept the resignation of General Neguib from all the posts which he had occupied,
- (ii) that the C.R.C. under the leadership of Lieutenant Colonel Gamal Abdul Nasser would continue to exercise all its existing powers until the revolution achieved its principal aim to drive out the imperialists from Egyptian territory,
- (iii) the appointment of Lieutenant Colonel Nasser as Prime Minister.

4. Answering questions, Major Salem said that the post of President of the Republic would remain vacant until elections had been held after the restoration of the parliamentary system. Egypt would be represented at the opening of the Sudanese Parliament by the Minister of Wakfs, Sheikh Bakoury, and Major Salem himself would not go. There would be no Cabinet reshuffle.

5. It had been announced earlier that the Minister for Foreign Affairs would also be going to Khartoum. It is not clear whether this still stands or not.

Foreign Office please pass Washington as my telegram No. 42.

[Repeated to Washington].

ADVANCE COPIES TO:

Sir I. Kirkpatrick.
Private Secretary.
Mr. R. Allen.
Head of African Department.
Head of News Department.

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the *Egypt*
(Main file)

CONFIDENTIAL

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FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Cypher/OTP

FOREIGN OFFICE AND WHITEHALL
DISTRIBUTION

Sir R. Stevenson

No. 265

February 25, 1954

D: 1.26 p.m. February 25, 1954

R: 1.58 p.m. February 25, 1954

IMMEDIATE

CONFIDENTIAL

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 265 of February 25,
Repeated for information to UKTC Khartoum B.M.E.O.
and Saving to Washington
Paris
Beirut (for Merdiv).

My telegram No. 261: Resignation of General Neguib.

Although it was well known that relations between General Neguib and the C.R.C. were often strained, it was not until mid-day yesterday that there was any indication that trouble was brewing. Foreign journalists, who had been invited to accompany General Neguib to the Sudan, were then informed that the arrangements had been cancelled. Even so there was no hint that the General was about to resign.

2. According to the communiqué it was on February 21 that General Neguib offered his resignation. On the previous day Colonel Nasser had returned from what purported to be a week's holiday in Alexandria. It is possible that the trouble had started before he left and even that he absented himself in the hope that it would blow over. The meeting of the C.R.C. prior to his departure is known to have been a stormy one.

3. It is not clear why, or on what issue, matters were brought to a head now. It may be that Neguib felt that his position on the eve of his visit to the Sudan was a strong one, and that the C.R.C., who were aware of his popularity with the Sudanese, would not dare to accept his resignation. On their side Nasser and the C.R.C. may have felt they could not afford to let him strengthen his position by a successful visit.

4. By getting rid of General Neguib, the C.R.C. has clearly weakened itself both at home and abroad. Though his popularity has waned he was still a much respected figure and confidence
✓ in the régime

CONFIDENTIAL

Cairo telegram No. 265 to Foreign Office

- 2 -

in the régime must have been shaken.

5. Cairo has taken these developments quietly. Only limited additional security measures appear to have been taken. General Neguib is at his home. He has declined to make any statement to journalists.

6. I have no information yet as to the reactions in the armed forces or in the country generally.

Foreign Office pass Priority to UKTC Khartoum as my telegram No. 29 and Saving to Washington and Paris as my telegrams Nos. 39 and 63 respectively.

[Repeated to Trade Commissioner Khartoum and Saving to Washington and Paris].

ADVANCE COPIES TO:

- Sir I. Kirkpatrick
- Private Secretary
- Mr. R. Allen
- Head African Department
- Head News Department

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SECRET

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

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Cypher/OTP

FOREIGN OFFICE SECRET
AND WHITEHALL SECRET
(CABINET) DISTRIBUTION

Sir R. Stevenson

No. 285

February 27, 1954.

D: 10.20 a.m. February 27, 1954

R: 12.05 p.m. February 27, 1954

PRIORITY

SECRET

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 285 of February 27

Repeated for information to: U.K.T.C. Khartoum

B.M.E.O.

and Saving to: Washington

Paris

Beirut (for Merdiv)

Anglo-Egyptian Defence Negotiations.

For some weeks Colonel Gamal Nasser has avoided any contact with this Embassy. Yesterday, however, he asked the Oriental Counsellor to go to see him at his house. ✓

2. Wing Commander Gamal Salem was also present at the interview which has, of course, been kept secret. Both of them said that the decision to accept General Neguib's resignation had been forced upon them, and they gave every appearance of regretting its necessity. Representatives of the armed forces whom the C.R.C. had consulted had insisted that there was no alternative. Both Colonel Nasser and Wing Commander Salem appeared to be confident, and the former said that he was sure that the people would "try to understand" the necessity of what had happened.

3. Mr. Trefor Evans said that the British public was bound to find recent developments difficult to understand. General Neguib had been presented to them as a generally sympathetic figure, while on the other hand intemperate speeches had given the impression that Colonel Nasser and his colleagues on the Council were extremists. If there was to be any chance of a resumption of the talks on the Canal Zone problem it was essential that, especially over the next few weeks, there should be no violent speeches by Egyptian leaders and that incidents in the Canal Zone should cease. Colonel Nasser said that "all was now quiet" and he appeared to see the force of these arguments. As regards the talks, Colonel Nasser said that he was waiting for some initiative from us. Wing Commander Salem, who spoke very frankly of Egypt's need of a settlement, added that he

/hoped

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Cairo Telegram No. 285 to Foreign Office

hoped that speeches on the British side also would be moderate.

Foreign Office please pass U.K.T.C. Khartoum and Saving to Washington and Paris as my telegrams Nos. 36,44 and 68 respectively.

[Repeated to U.K.T.C. Khartoum and Saving to Washington and Paris].

VVVVV

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AMS
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FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Cypher/OTP

FOREIGN OFFICE AND
WHITEHALL DISTRIBUTION

Sir R. Stevenson
No: 287
February 27, 1954.

D: 11.12 a.m. February 27, 1954.
R: 11.23 a.m. February 27, 1954.

EMERGENCY
CONFIDENTIAL

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No: 287 of February 27
Repeated for information to: B.M.E.O.. Washington.
B.T.E., Gov. Gen.
U.K.T.C. Khartoum. Khartoum.

It is now clear that there is a serious split in the Egyptian army over the issue of Neguib.

2. The cavalry officers last night made a declaration to Gamal Nasser in favour of Neguib and in consequence there have been a number of arrests this morning.

3. The early resignation of the C.R.C. is a possibility.
See my immediately following telegram.
Foreign Office please pass above to Service Ministries for Directors of Intelligence from Service Attachés.
Foreign Office please pass Governor General Khartoum (emergency) and U.K.T.C. Khartoum and Washington as my telegrams Nos: 31, [grp. undec.] and 45 respectively.

[Repeated to Governor General Khartoum, U.K.T.C. Khartoum and Washington]

[Extra copy sent Admiralty, War Office and Air Ministry for Ds. of I.]

ADVANCE COPIES:

Sir I. Kirkpatrick.
Private Secretary.
Mr. R. Allen.
Head African Department.
Head News Department.

JJJJ

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File.

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FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

En Clair

FOREIGN OFFICE AND
WHITEHALL DISTRIBUTION

Sir R. Stevenson
No. 292
February 27, 1954.

D. 5.26 p.m. February 27, 1954.
R. 5.37 p.m. February 27, 1954.

IMMEDIATE

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 292 of February 27
Repeated for information to B.M.E.O.
B.T.E.
Governor General Khartoum
Washington

My telegram No. 288.

It became generally known this afternoon that Neguib has been reinstated as President.

2. An official announcement has just been made over the ESB as follows:-

"To safeguard the unity of the nation the Revolutionary Council announces the return of General Neguib to the Presidency. General Neguib has agreed to this.

Foreign Office please pass Washington as my telegram No. 47

[Repeated to Washington].

ADVANCE COPIES TO:

Private Secretary
Sir I. Kirkpatrick
Mr. R. Allen
Head of African Department
Head of News Department

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SECRET

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FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Amb

Cypher/CTP.

FOREIGN OFFICE AND
WHITEHALL DISTRIBUTION

Sir R. Stevenson
No: 298
March 1, 1954.

D: 4.03 p.m. March 1, 1954.
R: 4.06 p.m. March 1, 1954.

IMMEDIATE

SECRET

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No: 298 of March 1
Repeated for information to: B.M.E.C., Governor-General
Khartoum.

U.K.T.C. Khartoum.

B.T.E..

Washington.

Beirut (for Merdiv). ✓

My telegrams Nos: 284, 287 and 288.

Reports now received make it clear that the confusion on February 26 and 27 was even greater than appeared at the time. Not only was the army split into two violently hostile factions, but several members of the C.R.C. were not fully in agreement with the decision to dismiss Neguib and there were strong demands in the provinces (particularly in upper Egypt) for Neguib's reinstatement.

2. Open hostilities nearly started at Abbassia on February 27 between the cavalry who were in favour of Neguib, and the so-called "free officers" and elements of the artillery who supported the C.R.C. decision. The Commander-in-Chief at one moment threw in his hand altogether. The cavalry officers were only partly placated by the reinstatement of Neguib and continued to refuse to take orders until the morning of February 28.

3. The terms on which the apparent "reconciliation" was effected were vague in the extreme, amounting to little more than acceptance of a demand by Neguib that parliamentary life should be re-established and that he, as President, should have greater powers. Nobody has apparently thought out what these powers should be or how the constituent assembly announced last night (but given no (repeat no) prominence in Arabic Press) shall be appointed and shall get to work. Neguib is thought to have in mind a nominated body of about 100-120 members. Ali Maher, Suliman Hafez and Sanhoury are being consulted about this.

4. The basic.....

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Cairo telegram No: 298 to Foreign Office

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4. The basic problem of the future status and powers of the C.R.C. appears to be still unresolved. Neguib has told both his own supporters and also Gamal Nasr to keep things quiet until his return from Khartoum; the situation will then be sorted out, but it is unlikely that Neguib's supporters will be easily persuaded to agree to continuation of Gamal Nasr and Salah Salem in their present appointments. There is some talk of the establishment of a civilian Government and the relegation of the C.R.C. to the advisory position which it held in August 1952.

5. Meanwhile the loss of face undergone by the C.R.C., the personal behaviour of certain of its members, and the general feeling of uncertainty may give a chance to disorderly elements such as the Ikhwan to make trouble. The wording of Government statements and appeals for order this morning give the impression of weakness. The security forces are however showing determination to keep order and numerous arrests are being made of "Communists" and other potential trouble-makers.

Foreign Office please pass Washington, Governor-General Khartoum, U.K.T.C. Khartoum and Beirut as my telegrams Nos: 49, 38, 41 and 47 respectively. B.M.E.C. please pass BTE as my telegram No: 28.

[Repeated to Washington, Governor-General Khartoum,
U.K.T.C. Khartoum, and Beirut]

ADVANCE COPIES:

Sir I. Kirkpatrick.
Private Secretary.
Mr. Dods Parker.
Mr. R. Allen.
Head African Department,
Head News Department.

JJJJJ

EGYPT (main file Part 5)

C.C. (54) 13⁴ Conclusions Minute 2. 1.3.54 42

EGYPT

(Previous Reference: C.C. (54) 9th Conclusions, Minute 3)

↓
See "Sudan"
Part 3

2. THE FOREIGN SECRETARY read to the Cabinet a telegram from H. M. Ambassador in Cairo (Cairo telegram No. 298) commenting on the latest political developments in Egypt. General Neguib's resignation, and his subsequent reinstatement as President of an Egyptian Parliamentary Republic, had shaken the stability of the military regime in Egypt. The political prospects were uncertain.

In discussion it was suggested that it might not be profitable to continue the attempt to conclude a defence agreement with so unstable a regime.

The Cabinet took note of the Foreign Secretary's statement.

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EGYPT (Main File
Part 5)

SECRET

39

FROM KHARTOUM TO FOREIGN OFFICE
(United Kingdom Trade Commissioner)

Cypher/OTP

FOREIGN OFFICE SECRET AND
WHITEHALL SECRET
(CABINET) DISTRIBUTION

Mr. Riches
No. 54
March 2, 1954.

D. 8.40 a. m. March 3, 1954.
R. 8.45 a. m. March 3, 1954.

IMMEDIATE
SECRET

Personal for Secretary of State from Minister of State.

I had a lengthy conversation with General Neguib in the palace during the events of yesterday morning. He was very tired but obviously rather pleased with himself. His English is far from perfect and he was very hoarse and this made him difficult to understand. He said that everything was now all right in Cairo, he had settled everything to his satisfaction and did not expect any more trouble. "The boys" were very good and very keen but they all worked too hard and their nerves had got on edge. He, as a much older man, had told them that he was quite willing to leave things to them and that they could get on without him. He had offered his resignation several days before it had been accepted. They had then realized that they could not get on without him and had come begging him to return. They had said that he could appoint anybody to any post and make anybody he liked Prime Minister if only he would come back. He had said no to this. He was quite willing for them all to keep their posts. He did not believe in being vindictive or taking offence at what had been said about him. I said that I supposed he was referring to Salah Salem; he replied "Yes, of course I do not think he meant what he said. He is a nice young fellow but very excitable. He came and said he was very sorry and asked me to forgive him. I told him to forget all about it."

2. I asked Neguib whether he was going to make any changes. He said there were some minor ones to be made. I told him that there had been rumours in Khartoum the day before of some constitutional developments. He said that they intended to have a body, a sort of Parliament, of "very brilliant and respectable men" to advise on making things more democratic. He said that had been partly clarified. The boys had been taking decisions without much regard for public feeling.

3. Neguib then made a long and involved statement about suppression of the Moslem Brotherhood. I gathered that Nasser had been in favour of arresting them all when they were at some religious meeting but /grp. undec. ? Neguib/ himself had advised that they should act more discreetly.

/ 4. He then

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SECRET

From Khartoum (United Kingdom Trade Commissioner)
telegram No. 54 to Foreign Office

- 2 -

4. He then switched to Anglo-Egyptian relations. I weighed in at once with a statement that it was a crisis of confidence and that the British people felt that it was not worth making any agreement with an Egyptian Government whose members spent their time abusing and denouncing Britain. I said that Salah Salem had done as much as anyone to poison Anglo-Egyptian relations and I gave as an example his recent statement about driving out the British Administrators from southern Sudan. I said however that he was not the only one. Other members of the Government had also made violent anti-British speeches. When Neguib intervened to say that we should not pay too much attention to Salah Salem I pointed out that he was a Minister in Neguib's Government.

5. I said that I did not see how Defence Agreement was possible without some assurances and proof that these attacks on Britain were going to stop. Neguib said that people in Britain made attacks on Egypt. I pointed out that members of the Government did not do so. We had been most moderate in our statements about Egypt under great provocation and Opposition attacks in Parliament. He said that if we made an agreement all this would stop. I told him that we had no grounds for thinking that it would.

6. He then began to talk about availability. I said I was not here to negotiate with him and I had no instructions. But I enquired whether it was true that the Egyptian Government were ready to agree that a reference to an attack on Turkey should be included in the availability formula. He at first agreed but later it became clear that he had not understood my question. When he did, he hedged and said that there was always danger of frontier skirmishes on Turco-Russian frontier. He did not see how his Government could commit themselves to anything which might involve the base being reoccupied simply because there had been such a skirmish.

7. Moreover, it was like bringing a lot more countries into the agreement. For Turkey was a member of N.A.T.O. and if they were committed to a formula [grp. undec. ? including / Turkey, the Egyptians may find themselves with a greatly widened commitment. On the other hand, it was of course obvious that a real attack on Turkey would be a threat to Egypt and she would at once agree to the base being put into use.

8. I dealt with these points and then said that I thought the United Nations formula was a perfectly reasonable one but as they had rejected it we could not possibly make an agreement which did not mean the base would be available in the event of an attack on Turkey or Persia. Neguib reverted to the question of frontier incidents and said that they were very likely to happen in northern Persia. Under no circumstances could the Egyptians make an agreement which would involve the base being re-occupied in the event of a frontier skirmish in Persia, either.

/ 9. Neguib

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SECRET

From Khartoum (United Kingdom Trade Commissioner)
telegram No. 54 to Foreign Office

- 3 -

9. Neguib asked me why we were so insistent about uniforms for our technicians. In making an agreement, Egypt would be assuming responsibility for the protection of these men and they would take this very seriously, because if they failed to protect them they would be accused of breaking the agreement. I replied that it was a matter of psychological importance in Britain; and it was necessary that our soldiers should have the right to wear uniforms to protect themselves and their status. He had obviously heard word status before and said that the Egyptians would make arrangements on this point; for example, if one British soldier committed an offence against another one, the Egyptians would not wish to have any jurisdiction in the matter. I contented myself by saying that at present our men had immunity. If he was suggesting that immunity was to be continued I would report the fact. Clearly he did not mean anything of the sort, but he did say that he thought that the question of status was one which should be further examined.

10. The impression I got from the conversation was that Neguib is anxious to talk further about availability and uniforms and would like an agreement with us. I am not sure that there is not rather more behind his air of apparent simplicity than we have hitherto thought. He gave nothing away, but did not rule out the possibility of doing so. I do not think I gave away anything on either point and I really did get home to him our feelings about the constant abuse of us by members of the Egyptian Government.

ADVANCE COPIES TO:-

Private Secretary
Sir I. Kirkpatrick
Mr. R. Allen
Head of African Department
Mr. Dodds Parker

EEE

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Egypt (Plain File)
Part 5
① 37

SECRET

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Cypher/OTP

Sir R. Stevenson

No.310

March 3, 1954.

D.11.34 p.m. March 3, 1954.

R.11.59 p.m. March 3, 1954.

PRIORITY

SECRET

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No.310 of March 3

Repeated for information to

B.M.E.O.

Governor General Khartoum

Beirut (for Merdiv)

Egyptfor

Washington

My telegrams Nos.298 and 304.

The situation is still completely unresolved. In spite of repeated announcements of solidarity between Neguib and the C.R.C. (which are clearly window-dressing) relations are still strained between him and those members of the C.R.C. who engineered his resignation.

2. Statement referred to in my telegram No.304 has proved to be completely untrue. The officers concerned were arrested on February 27 but their release was ordered after Neguib's comeback on February 28 and they were set free on March 1. They have not been re-arrested.

3. According to secret sources the C.R.C. have been making soundings in the army and find that there is widespread feeling against them, particularly against the Salem brothers; and the idea of a civilian Government is thought to be gaining strength. Neguib is probably biding his time, but the outcome is still quite uncertain.

4. Cairo is completely calm and considerable numbers of Police are still in evidence. Arrests in last few days are reported to have been very numerous.

Foreign Office please pass Governor-General Khartoum, Beirut and Washington as my telegrams Nos.42, 53 and 51 respectively.

[Repeated to Governor-General Khartoum, Beirut and Washington].

Egypt (Main file Part-5.)

38

As

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FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Cypher/OTP

FOREIGN OFFICE AND WHITE HALL DISTRIBUTION

Sir R. Stevenson
No. 304
March 2, 1954

D. 2.08 p. m. March 2, 1954
R. 3.21 p. m. March 2, 1954

PRIORITY
CONFIDENTIAL

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 304 of March 2
Repeated for information to B. M. E. O. Beirut (for Merdiv)
Washington and BTE Governor General Khartoum ✓

My telegram No. 298, paragraph 4.

You will have seen official account given last night by spokesman of Revolutionary Command Council (Major Amin Shaker) to Arab News Agency of events leading to resignation and subsequent restoration of Neguib. Spokesman repeated reasons previously given for the former and alleged that whole of subsequent trouble was due to Communist plot. He said that 8 Communist cavalry officers would be court martialled and severely punished for their part in it notwithstanding Neguib's announcement on February 28 that no one would be punished for the events of last week.

2. This is clearly the C.R.C. party line. It seems significant that it was put out after news had been received here of the disturbances at Khartoum and therefore probably in anticipation of Neguib's return. The tone suggests that the "reconciliation" between Neguib and the C.R.C. is even more bogus than it had previously appeared. The United States Embassy, however, apparently accept the C.R.C. version. To us it seems that the struggle for power between Neguib and the Council is far from settled.

3. There is no mention of the spokesman's statement in today's Arabic press; this, however, is not remarkable since it was given to A.N.A. for outward transmission only. It remains to be seen whether the local press will be allowed to reproduce quotations from abroad.

Foreign Office please pass to Governor General Khartoum, Beirut, and Washington as my telegrams Nos. 41, 49 and 50.

[Repeated to Khartoum, Beirut and Washington]

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File

Egypt (Admin file. Part 5)

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

En Clair

FOREIGN OFFICE AND
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33

Sir R. Stevenson

No. 325

March 6, 1954.

D. 11.55 a.m. March 7, 1954.

R. 12.34 p.m. March 7, 1954.

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 325 of March 6

Repeated for information to: U.K.T.O. Khartoum
Beirut (for Merdiv)

and Saving to: Paris
Washington
B.M.E.O.

Return to Parliamentary Government.

A statement read by Colonel Nasser early on the morning of March 6 following a lengthy meeting of the Council for the Revolutionary Command, announced the council's decision to take immediate steps for the creation of a Constituent Assembly to be elected by general direct poll and to meet on July 23, 1954. The assembly's tasks would be

- (a) to examine and ratify the new Draft Constitution and
- (b) to perform the functions of parliament until a parliament could be elected under the new constitution.

Martial law would be abolished before elections were held and press censorship, except for defence matters, would be abolished at once.

2. Colonel Nasser said that these decisions had been taken by the C.R.C. at its meeting on Thursday. Discussions were then held on Friday with President Neguib, Ali Maher (President of the Constitution Committee) and Al Sanhoury (President of the State Council) at which the date for the convening of the assembly was fixed.

3. Answering questions, Colonel Nasser said the assembly itself would decide about the future of political parties in Egypt. The members of the assembly could be elected as individuals not as representatives of any political party or organisation. There would be about 250 members which was the number proposed by the Constitution Committee for the future Chamber of Deputies. The C.R.C. would continue to exercise /sovereignty

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Cairo telegram No. 325 to Foreign Office

- 2 -

sovereignty and its status would remain unchanged until the election of the new parliament. The date for the parliamentary election would be fixed by the Constituent Assembly. The question of whether the Cabinet would be responsible to the C.R.C. or to the Constituent Assembly was under study. The Constituent Assembly would consider all the laws passed since the revolution. The respective powers of the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, the C.R.C. and the Cabinet would be announced after the next joint conference of the C.R.C. and the Cabinet on Monday next. Members of the C.R.C. might stand as candidates in the new parliament if they wished, but they would have to give up their army posts. Akhbar el Yom quoted Colonel Nasser as saying that he, personally, would leave the army and take up politics, and Al Misri represented him as speaking for all his colleagues in this sense. The date and the manner of election of the President of the Republic would be covered by the new constitution.

4. The future of the Revolution Tribunal would be decided after the completion of the case now before it.

5. The future of the political detainees would be considered by the Military Governor in the light of public security. Speedy action would be taken to settle their cases and release any against whom no charges were made.

6. The position of the Liberation Rally would remain unchanged.

7. If the British made a good offer for the evacuation of the Canal Zone, the present régime would consider it.

8. Akhbar el Yom reported that Soliman Hafez had tendered his resignation as Legal Adviser to the President of the Republic.

9. Al Gomhouria and Akhbar el Yom have editorials entitled respectively "The Peoples Revolution" and "The Peoples Sovereignty" in which the theme is developed that the revolution had done everything "with the people and for the people". Akhbar el Yom says: "the fact that Egypt's revolution voluntarily hands the people their authority, should be a matter for rejoicing for it proves conclusively that rulers who spring from the ranks of the people are different from those imposed on them".

/Foreign

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Egypt (Main File)

Part 5

193

31

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

En Clair

FOREIGN OFFICE AND
WHITEHALL DISTRIBUTION

Sir R. Stevenson

No. 338

D. 10.10 a.m. March 10, 1954

March 9, 1954

R. 10.46 a.m. March 10, 1954

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 338 of March 9,
Repeated for information Saving to: U.K.T.C. Khartoum Beirut (for
Washington Merdiv)
Paris P.M.N.O.

After separate meetings of the C.R.C. and civilian Ministers followed by a joint meeting on March 8, Major Salen announced the following Cabinet changes.

(a) General Neguib resumes the office of Prime Minister and President of the C.R.C. as well as the title "Leader of the Revolution".

(b) Lieutenant Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser reverts to the position of deputy Prime Minister.

(c) The two deputy Prime Ministers, Wing Commander Gamal Salen and Dr. Abdul Galil Al Emari return to their former Ministries of Communications and Finance respectively.

(d) Dr. Gereitly becomes Minister of State for Economic Affairs.

2. According to the communiqué, Colonel Nasser had stepped aside at his own wish in order that the nation should be left in no doubt that recent events had passed without leaving any shadow on the solidity and sanctity of the revolution leaders' unity. According to "Al Arhbar" the atmosphere at the joint Congress was "electric" until he did so. General Neguib, in a subsequent statement, said that this return to the previous arrangement had been decided upon as the easiest way to demonstrate the unimpaired unity of the leaders of the revolution, and proved to the world that they really meant what they said.

3. Both General Neguib and the official communiqué reaffirmed the intention to go ahead with the decisions announced on March 5 regarding the restoration of parliamentary life and the establishment of the Constituent Assembly.

/4. In an editorial

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Cairo telegram No. 338 to Foreign Office

-2-

4. In an editorial on the return to constitutional life, Al Akhbar drew attention to the statement that the C.R.C. would continue to be the repository of sovereign power until the election of the new Parliament, and the decision that members of the C.R.C. might stand for election to the new Parliament if they resigned from the armed forces. The C.R.C. had already announced that its members would withdraw from the Cabinet after the election of the Constituent Assembly and the paper saw some inconsistency in their candidacy for Parliament in such circumstances.

Foreign Office please pass Washington and Paris as my Saving telegrams Nos. 69 and 93 respectively.

[Repeated Saving to Washington and Paris].

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file - EGYPT (Main File)
1956

A 30

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

En Clair

FOREIGN OFFICE AND WHITEHALL
DISTRIBUTION

Sir R. Stevenson

No. 414

March 25, 1954

D: 6.06 p.m. March 25, 1954

R: 7.50 p.m. March 25, 1954

PRIORITY

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 414 of
March 25,

Repeated for information to UKTC Khartoum
B.M.E.O.

and Saving to Paris

Washington

Beirut (for Merdiv).

The following are the main points of an announcement made by General Neguib at about 4 p.m. this afternoon:-

- (a) The C.R.C. would hand over all power on July 24 to a freely elected Constituent Assembly.
- (b) There would be no nominated members in the Assembly which would meet as previously announced on July 23.
- (c) Political parties could be reformed forthwith.
- (d) The C.R.C. would not form its own political party.
- (e) No citizen would be deprived of his political rights.
- (f) The first task of the Constituent Assembly would be to elect a President.

Foreign Office please pass to Paris and Washington as my Saving telegrams Nos. 114 and 91 respectively.

[Repeated Saving to Paris and Washington].

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SECRET

AMENDED DISTRIBUTION

March 29, 1954

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

File EGYPT (Main File)
Part 5.

27

Cypher/OTP

FOREIGN OFFICE SECRET AND
WHITEHALL SECRET (CABINET)
DISTRIBUTION

Sir R. Stevenson
No.426
March 27, 1954.

D.4. 5 p.m. March 27, 1954.
R.4.55 p.m. March 27, 1954.

PRIORITY
SECRET

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No.426 of March 27
Repeated for information to
B.M.E.O. U.K.T.C. Khartoum
and Saving to
Bagdad Beirut Damascus Amman
Jedda Tel Aviv Paris Washington

My telegram No.414. ✓

These decisions were reached after a 5-hour meeting of the C.R.C. at which attempts to find a compromise, particularly on the question of General Neguib's powers, were resumed. It had previously been agreed that the issue should be left pending during King Saud's visit. It is possible that the pace was forced by General Neguib's statement on March 23 (c.f. my telegram No.85(S)) which significantly was not carried in the régime's official newspaper Al Gumhuriya. Secret sources, however, state that it was Colonel Nasser who insisted on maintenance of authoritarian rule.

2. It was also reported from secret sources that a compromise providing for

(a) a civilian Cabinet

(b) the maintenance of the C.R.C. (to be renamed the Republican Council) with powers to appoint and dismiss Ministers, subject to the approval of the President of the Republic, and

(c) the elimination of undesirables from the elections for the Constituent Assembly, was rejected by Nasser at a private meeting between him and General Neguib on March 24.

The C.R.C.'s decisions were therefore almost inevitable. Al Gumhuriya reports today that they were not taken unanimously.

/3. The

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SECRETCairo telegram No. 426 to Foreign Office

-2-

3. The provision that the constituent Assembly shall immediately elect a President of the Republic puts a term to General Neguib's present appointment and has the appearance of a concession by the General, whose insistence that the C.R.C. should withdraw while he himself maintained power was open to criticism. If Nahas presents himself as a candidate for the presidency General Neguib's re-election may well be in doubt.

4. Whether or not the faction within the C.R.C. which is opposed to an immediate return to full parliamentary government, is merely biding its time is a matter for speculation. Secret sources state that this is the deliberate policy of Colonel Nasser and his supporters and this seems on the whole to be likely. When these officers agreed to the lifting of press censorship on March 6, they possibly hoped that a situation would develop which would permit intervention on their part. The present decision to allow the immediate formation of political parties may be similarly interpreted but it is a risky game. The old politicians however appear to be well aware of this possibility and may be wise enough to show some restraint and be avoiding disorderly demonstrations withholding from the free officers the opportunity for which they may be waiting. Both the Wafd and the Moslem Brotherhood are probably still well disciplined and the leaders may be able to control their followers, at least until the electoral campaign gets under way. Communist and left wing elements on the other hand will certainly exploit every opportunity for troublemaking and the supporters of the other parties will almost inevitably become involved. (The Liberation Rally and the National Guard have already staged minor demonstrations in favour of the C.R.C.). Unless they are firmly directed the police could then hardly be relied on in such circumstances and public security is consequently somewhat precarious.

5. The future action of the free officers and their supporters in the C.R.C. will very largely depend on the feeling in the army as a whole. Colonel Nasser is clearly anxious to avoid bloodshed in the army and, in view of the probable swing among the general run of the officers away from the C.R.C., he is on the whole unlikely to countenance the use of force unless and until the position so deteriorates as to make this inevitable. It is of course conceivable that his hand will be forced or that a more ruthless figure will emerge.

/6. In the

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SECRET

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Cairo telegram No. 426 to Foreign Office

- 3 -

6. In the meantime the politicians are pressing for the abolition of martial law and for the appointment of a civilian Cabinet. The old game of spotting the next Prime Minister is being freely indulged in and the names of Ali Maher, Sanhoury and Badawi have been mentioned. A civilian government with the support of the President could be expected to sap the powers of the C.R.C. long before they are formally handed over on July 24.

7. Latest developments have so far been accepted quietly. Political leaders have publicly and enthusiastically welcomed them. In Cairo yesterday the Friday crowds were much as usual and although there were minor demonstrations in some parts of the town and a few arrests were made no serious incidents have been reported.

8. I will telegraph further when popular reactions can be assessed with greater accuracy. In conversation with Her Majesty's Minister yesterday, Dr. Fawzy said that he did not anticipate a major outbreak of trouble but agreed that the last chapter of events started on February 25 had not yet been reached.

Foreign Office please pass to UKTC Khartoum as my telegram No. 71 and Tel Aviv, Paris and Washington as my Saving telegrams Nos. 21, 118 and 5 respectively.

[Repeated to UKTC Khartoum and Saving to Tel Aviv, Paris and Washington].

B B B
bbbbb
4444

Egypt. H. A. in file, ...

*25
Copy on Operation Radio
Egypt (Nov. 1951).*

SECRET

GEN. (S) 460 / 1st. Meeting Conclusions. Minute 2. 29.3.54.

2. EGYPT

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY said that a dangerous situation was developing in Egypt. Strikes might lead to a breakdown in the distribution of food and this would possibly be followed by serious riots. At present there was no sign that disturbances would be directed against foreign residents in Egypt, but there was nevertheless a danger that this might occur. He therefore proposed that the British troops in the Canal Zone should be put at 72 hours' notice so that they would be ready to undertake rescue operations in Egyptian towns affected by anti-foreign rioting. He hoped that, if it became necessary for British troops to intervene, they would be able to rescue not only British subjects but all white nationals of foreign countries resident in Egypt. He did not intend that there should be any intervention by British troops unless the situation made it evidently and urgently necessary.

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The Meeting -

Agreed that the Commanders in Chief Middle East should be instructed to bring troops in the Canal Zone to 72 hours' notice and to report what operations they could undertake, if the eventuality arose, for the rescue of British subjects and white nationals of other foreign countries resident in Egypt.

EGYPT (Main file)
 Amb (Part 5)
 24

File.

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

En Clair

FOREIGN OFFICE AND
 WHITEHALL DISTRIBUTION

Sir R. Stevenson
 No. 438
 March 29, 1954

D. 7.25 p.m. March 29, 1954
 R. 9.11 p.m. March 29, 1954

PRIORITY

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 438 of March 29
 Repeated for information to B.M.E.O. U.K.T.C. Khartoum
 and Saving to Bagdad Jedda
 Beirut Tel Aviv
 Damascus Paris
 Amman Washington

The following are the main points of a statement issued by the Minister of National Guidance this evening after the meeting of the Joint Congress.

- (a) The decisions of March 5 and 25 have been rescinded. (My telegrams 325 and 414).
- (b) An advisory National Assembly will be set up. It will represent all sections of the nation but the manner of its establishment has not yet been decided. It will advise the C.R.C., and its powers will be defined by law.
- (c) General Neguib will continue as president of the Republic, Prime Minister and Chairman of the C.R.C.

Foreign Office please pass to Paris and Washington as my Saving telegrams Nos. 121 and 98 respectively.

[Repeated Saving to Paris and Washington]

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SECRET

17

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Cypher/OTP

DEPARTMENTAL
DISTRIBUTION

Sir H. Trevelyan
No. 1137
October 13, 1955.

D: U/T October 13, 1955.
R: 9.47 p.m. October 13, 1955.

IMMEDIATE
SECRET

Your telegram No. 2220: Nasser's Position.

Following is my assessment of Nasser's present position.

2. There are at present no reliable signs of the régime losing its grip of the situation, or of its opponents gaining ground. The acceptance of Soviet bloc arms has added to Nasser's prestige and has, perhaps, given him to some extent, at least temporarily, what he has always lacked, a measure of personal popularity. It has served to offset the fall in the régime's credit that resulted from the Bagdad Pact and the failure of Major Salem's Sudan policy. The politically conscious Egyptians, particularly the Moslems, like the idea of scoring off the British and Americans.
3. Nasser's standing with the armed forces has certainly been improved. The trade unions can still be counted upon to give the régime useful support. Left-wing intellectuals are gratified and can be expected to maintain their support, for what it is worth. The fellaheen are, as usual, apathetic. Though they have not had a good year, they are unlikely to cause trouble. On the other hand, the uneasiness of the propertied and professional classes in the country has greatly increased. The Copts have become more uneasy, particularly since the decision to abolish religious courts and many of them would welcome a change of régime.
4. There are no signs that Nasser's predominance in the CRC is seriously challenged and the popular applause for the arms deal will have further strengthened his position in it. Although his relations with Salah Salem's brother, Gamal Salem, are bad and the latter can probably count on some support from the other two Air Force members of the CRC, Gamal Salem apparently made no trouble about Salah Salem's dismissal.

/ Moreover,

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SECRET

18

Cairo telegram No. 1437 to Foreign Office

- 2 -

Moreover, the decision to abolish the CRC in January of next year and to allow Nasser and colleagues of his choice to carry on the Government as a more or less normal Cabinet is believed to have been unanimous. This arrangement is apparently intended to allow Nasser to drop some of his more difficult colleagues without loss of face to them and to carry on with his closest collaborators, including General Karia Mohieddin. There are reports that Nasser is also working for the elimination of the latter. I regard those reports as improbable, although some reorganization of the Intelligence Service, of which Mohieddin is head, is going on and some of Nasser's supporters, e.g., Wing-Commander Aly Sabry, are being put into it. Nasser and Mohieddin have for some time been drawing more closely together. They and General Amer appear to be the inner triumvirate.

5. Little has been heard for some time of any of Nasser's potential rivals. General Neguib is generally considered to be a broken reed and his name is now rarely mentioned, even when the question of an alternative to Nasser crops up. He still has some appeal in the army and with the masses and might, therefore, conceivably be again used as a figurehead. We do not hear the Independents such as Aly Maher, mentioned in a political context. The Moslem Brotherhood is unlikely to throw up a leader or to reorganize itself in the near future, though it is showing some activity on a low level. Nahas and Serag-ed-Din are lying low, though their supporters claim, (probably rightly), that they would sweep the Board in any fairly held election. They have no clear idea how the Wafd could come back to power without such an election. As far as is known, they have no organized following in the army capable of overthrowing the present régime. But if the régime broke down as a result of the assassination of Nasser, disunity in the armed forces or defeat by an outside Power, it is probably only the Wafd which has the organization and popular appeal necessary to take over. Whether the army can throw up another military leader cannot even be guessed, but if it did, his policy might well be similar to that of the present régime.

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African Department

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Sir I. Kirkpatrick
Mr. Shuckburgh
Head of African Department

44444

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Telegram to:

Sir H. Trevelyan
 Cairo.

No.

(Date)

And to:—

Repeat to:—

En Clair.
 Code
 Cypher

Distribution:—

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That Nasser is in Cairo

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

45371 P.O.F. (4)

* Date and time (G.M.T.) telegram should reach addressee(s).....

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 without }
 DEFERRED }

(Date)

Despatched.....

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 —if any

[Codeword—if any].....

Addressed to..... Sir H. Trevelyan, Cairo.

telegram No..... (date).....

repeated for information to.....

Following from Prime Minister:—

I am disturbed at the gradual deterioration of Anglo-Egyptian relations and consider that the time has come to confront Nasser with a request to declare his intentions.

2. Please seek an interview with him and speak to him on the following lines, making it clear that you are conveying a personal message from myself.

3. You should say that it has been my constant endeavour to put Anglo-Egyptian relations on a footing of mutual confidence and friendship.

When we concluded the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty, Nasser took my hands in his and assured me that a new chapter had opened in our relations and that henceforth I could rely on Egypt's friendship. The outcome has been a source of deep disappointment to me and to many friends of Egypt. We regretfully note that despite his promises, Egypt has never ceased, from the day of the signature of the agreement, to attack

/Great

Great Britain and to oppose her on every conceivable issue.

4. The Egyptian press terms this country "the enemy" and abuses her in and out of season. Press attacks may not mean much, but they hamper the healthy development of good relations. They have been accompanied by the manifest resolution of the Egyptian Government to oppose British policy whenever the opportunity presents itself. For example, every country is entitled to take what measures it deems advisable to safeguard its security. Egypt has elected to adopt a neutralist policy and I have never attacked Egypt on this account or brought pressure on Nasser to abandon it. But Egypt is not prepared to show similar forbearance, and with a violence reminiscent of Kremlin propaganda denounces and opposes the alliances which Britain has seen fit to conclude.

5. In the Sudan, Egypt has consistently sought to exacerbate Sudanese relations with Britain. This policy has, in effect, damaged Egyptian interests and prestige in the Sudan, but it nevertheless causes me to doubt whether Egypt was sincere in professing the intention to bring about with the Signature of the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement a new and happy phase in our relations. It seems to me on the contrary that Egypt is determined that it should not.

6. The arms deal with Russia disturbs me less than the accompanying manifestations of anti-Western sentiment. It is all very well claiming that Egypt was driven to this deal by the refusal of Britain to supply her with arms. But Nasser must be aware of our

/situation

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situation, and cannot have expected a country whom his press describes and whom he treats as "the enemy" to supply him with arms on a massive scale.

7. It seems to me that Anglo-Egyptian relations have reached a crucial point. Russia has put us on notice that she intends to open a third front in the cold war, this time in the Middle East. In the face of this threat we intend to defend our interests in the Middle East as energetically as we have done in Europe and in the Far East; and it is essential to know where we stand.

8. We are still prepared to make an effort to be friends with Egypt. In particular, we sincerely wish Egypt's breach with the Sudan and with Iraq to be repaired; and we are ready to use such influence as we possess in these countries to that end. But we feel entitled to ask Egypt to declare herself. If Nasser wishes to continue to denounce Britain and to oppose British policy on every occasion, let him say so. If not, let him make a demonstrable effort to carry out the promises which he made to me; and he will not find me backward in coming to meet him half way.

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

3

CONFIDENTIAL

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Cypher/OTP

FOREIGN OFFICE SECRET AND
WHITEHALL SECRET DISTRIBUTION

Sir H. Trevelyan
No. 1609
November 2, 1955

D. 2.50 a.m. November 3, 1955
R. 3.50 a.m. November 3, 1955

CONFIDENTIAL

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 1609 of November 2,

Repeated for information to: Amman Bagdad Beirut
Damascus Jedda Tel Aviv
And Saving to: Washington Paris

Egyptian Policy.

My American colleague saw Nasser soon after his return from Paris. He was quite pleased with the interview and thought that Nasser showed a better understanding of the Western position.

2. He told me of the following points in the interview:

(a) Nasser said (as he has for some time) that he was ready to discuss the Palestine question on a strictly confidential basis. Byroade believes that it will be necessary to get Nasser's agreement to some proposition about the frontier, which can be put to the Israelis, and indicated this to Nasser.

(b) Nasser said that Syria was not economically in a position to negotiate barter deals for arms with the Communist countries. The Syrian Government wanted Egypt to give them Communist arms free, but Egypt could not afford it. No arrangement had therefore been made.

(c) The Saudis were going through roughly the same position as the Egyptians had in the spring. They wanted arms from the Americans, including heavy arms

/which the

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2

CONFIDENTIAL

Cairo telegram No. 1609 to Foreign Office

-2-

which the Americans would probably think they could not use. If they could get nothing from the West, they would be likely to ask Egypt to procure them Communist arms on payment. It would be done like this because of the fuss which the West would make if there was a new arms deal between the Communists and another Arab country. If they offered Egypt dollars for Communist arms it would be very difficult for the Egyptians to refuse to negotiate the deal which would amount to their getting dollars for their cotton.

(d) Byroade had been under the impression that a Saudi military contingent was to be stationed in Egypt. Nasser said that this was not correct. He would have no troops from another country, including an Arab country, in peacetime except for joint manoeuvres. Saudi troops would come to Egypt only in time of war.

(e) Nasser thought that United States-Saudi relations were reaching a critical stage. He said that the Saudis were nervous of Iraq and strongly opposed to American arms going there. Nasser said little on Buraimi, but agreed with Byroade's remark that it was the result of Saudi attempts to swallow up their small neighbours. He said that he was afraid that a "North African situation" would develop in the Persian Gulf.

(f) Nasser said that he was not now asking for United States arms but he wanted wheat under United States Law 480. The Egyptian Ambassador in Washington had asked for this in Washington without his authority. He did not want to make any formal request unless he knew first that it would be granted.

(g) Nasser said that he would not interfere with the Northern Tier if nothing new happened, meaning if neither the United States nor any other Arab States should join it. Byroade told Nasser that whether there were to be any new members or not might well depend on whether Nasser cooperated

/with the

Draft Letter to Mr. Tam Dalyell, M.P. from
the Prime Minister

Thank you for letting me have, in your letter of November 23, your thoughts about the possibility of inviting President Nasser to this country.

As you know, we are seeking an improvement in our relations with the United Arab Republic, but this is bound to take time. Egyptian hostility to our interests in the Middle East, particularly in the South Arabian Federation, have shown little abatement so far, and we have to proceed cautiously. Patrick Gordon Walker has been talking to the United Arab Republic Ambassador about all this, as has our Ambassador in Cairo with Nasser. The latter has said that he would welcome a British Minister in Cairo before long, but it is too early for us to start taking decisions about timing. The possibility of a visit by Nasser would have to be considered later on, but you can be sure that it is one which we shall not lose sight of.

Thank you for saying that you will keep your letter confidential; and perhaps you will treat this one on the same basis.

[Handwritten signature]
3/1

House of Commons,
London, S.W.1

R 23/XI/64

F.O. to advise a reply.

Dear Prime Minister, ^{political filming with Mrs Williams.}
In January I sent you a report of my private meeting with President Nasser at his house on the outskirts of Cairo at the New Year.

Subsequently, over lunch one day I suggested to you that President Nasser would welcome an invitation to visit Britain. You commented that such a gesture would involve issues, which were not quite as simple as they might appear on the surface.

This morning's press tells us of President Nasser's proposed visit to Western Germany next year. Would you care to consider whether it might be opportune

to invite him to come to Britain
on the same journey?

It goes without saying,
that I do not propose to
tell anyone that I have written
to you along these lines.

Yours sincerely
Tam Dalyell