

Nasir agreed that they would talk that evening and remarked that Egypt is ready to put some teeth in the Arab League Collective Security Pact. He said, "We all want action."

The meeting broke up.

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## No. 6

Conference files, lot 59 D 95, CF 156; Telegram

### *The Ambassador in Egypt (Caffery) to the Department of State*

TOP SECRET

CAIRO, May 13, 1953—noon.

2421. Personal for Smith from the Secretary. Have found situation in Egypt more serious than Department generally has recognized. Negotiations between UK and Egypt are at present suspended with seemingly little possibility either party assuming initiative in reopening talks. The base negotiations are stymied on technical points but these assume great importance in an atmosphere of mutual distrust.

Our observers here are convinced and I share their view that possibility of open hostilities in near future is real. British representatives here agree. From talks with the Egyptians I believe that while they realize chaos and destruction of their regime would inevitably be an aftermath of open hostilities they will choose that alternative rather than make concessions to the British which they consider would publicly be looked upon as infringing Egyptian sovereignty. Their emotions are so great they would rather go down as martyrs than concede.

Conversation with Stevenson and General Robertson indicate they are under instructions to negotiate solely along bases case A. <sup>1</sup> They recently requested new instructions receiving in reply message from Churchill stating they had their instructions and to stick to them.

In analyzing the technical points of difference we find nothing that could not be solved but for a complete lack of trust and confidence among the parties. It is almost impossible to over-emphasize the intensity of this feeling. It may be pathological but it is a fact there just as sentiment is a fact in London. Attitude here in the short run cannot be changed.

In face of above we have outlined the President's conception of importance of Egypt and the role she can play in the future. Stassen and I have in a general way talked of US assistance to enhance

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<sup>1</sup> For documentation of this matter and further discussion of it as indicated in telegram 2423 from Cairo, May 13, *infra*, see Documents 947 ff.