

bear in mind constantly the impact of knowledge of the meeting upon negotiations with Egypt.

6. In summary the U.S. suggests that:

a. The U.K. should proceed at once to inform the Turks of its ideas just as it has informed the U.S. and France.

b. The U.K. inaugurate discussions with Egypt as rapidly as circumstances permit.

c. That without attempting to decide now the time, place, or manner of announcement of a working level meeting to consider the embryo MECO; the U.K., U.S., France, Turkey, and the Commonwealth countries should collect their thoughts with a view to a prospective early meeting on this subject. In this connection the U.K. views set forth in its memorandum will be most helpful to the U.S.

d. Following the Lisbon meeting, and in the light of the status of Anglo-Egyptian negotiations at that time, the representatives of the U.S., U.K., France and Turkey (if Turkey is willing) should consult together and decide:

(1) Whether a planning meeting re MECO is now desirable, and

(2) If such a meeting is agreed upon, where, when and at what level it should take place. In the event of (2) the same representatives would decide what, if any, publicity is called for and the time of such publicity.

7. Essentially the U.S. fear is that if we move too far, too fast without Egypt while there remains a reasonable prospect of securing Egyptian cooperation, we may lessen our chances of arriving at a settlement with Egypt. Obviously, this idea cannot be carried too far, but we believe that at least between now and the Lisbon meeting we should retain the utmost flexibility.

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The Secretary of Defense (Lovett) to the Secretary of State

TOP SECRET

WASHINGTON, February 11, 1952.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: I refer to your letter of December 29, 1951 with regard to Organizing and Establishing the Middle East Command.¹

I am in general agreement with your suggestions for the early establishment of a Middle East Command Headquarters. In this regard, it is desired to emphasize that it is the position of the De-

¹ For the Dec. 29 letter, see *Foreign Relations*, 1951, vol. v, p. 265.