

No. 102

790 5/10-2452: Telegram

*The Ambassador in Turkey (McGhee) to the Department of State*¹

SECRET

ANKARA, October 24, 1952—10 p. m.

543. In course conversation Oct 23 (Embtel 542 Oct 24² to Dept rptd London 55 Cairo 9) FonMin stated he was able advise me in strictest confidence of results recent talk between Turk Amb Cairo and Gen Naguib. Latter had specifically requested this conversation be kept secret and Turks proposed tell only Brits and US. Conversation resulted from instructions to Turk Amb on Oct 9 to obtain personal reaction Naguib to Egyptian participation MEDO. Specified this should not appear be official approach or in behalf other powers but made appear spontaneous.

First conversation was with Egyptian FonMin who stated in his judgment it would not be possible for Egypt to become member MEDO as long as Canal Zone occupied by Brits. Egyptian FonMin then suggested Amb ask Naguib personally what his own views were and arranged rendezvous.

Amb's report this conversation Oct 16 states that Naguib said in his opinion it was in Egypt's interest enter organization such as MEDO but this not possible until Canal Zone evacuated. He made number of complaints against Brit Egyptian policy, including fact Egypt helped UK during war but received nothing as result; Brit owed Egypt 300 million pounds unpaid; recently deblocked five million pounds in manner which appeared place UK in light performing generous act. Notwithstanding this, however, Naguib strongly favored reaching understanding with Brits and will try to do so. He is however not hopeful. Commented he was not so foolish as Wafd to fight Brits, but could not agree to any course other than evacuation canal.

When Turk Amb attempted present advantages Egypt membership in MEDO, Naguib said he thought there would also be disadvantages. If Egypt joined, other Arab states would follow suit. If later MEDO did not prove satisfactory Egypt could withdraw, but other countries, particularly Syria and Iraq, who do not have great differences with UK, might find MEDO to their advantage and stay in. Egypt would then be left isolated.

Naguib stated Arabs ready assume obligation defend their own soil if provided with arms. Canal Zone must be defended by Egypt. Turk Amb pointed out Egypt not able defend canal, which impor-

¹ Repeated to Cairo and London.² *Supra*.