

No. 1066

774.5 MSP/1-353: Telegram

*The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Gifford) to the
Department of State*¹

SECRET NIACT

LONDON, January 3, 1953—6 p. m.

3640. From Byroade. Greatly concerned at implication in Deptel 4374 (repeated Cairo 1318)² that United States official proceeding with Egyptian officers on list of military equipment totaling approximately \$30,000,000 and that list and cost thereof may already be in hands of Egyptians.

I had assumed one of primary objectives in talks here on Egypt was to make certain that talks ended with United States free to proceed immediately and prior to UK-Egyptian negotiations in Egypt with an interim program of military assistance totaling approximately \$10,000,000 to \$11,000,000. I explained our position to British yesterday and found them greatly disturbed that we would propose proceed with any commitment to Egyptians prior to United Kingdom-Egyptian negotiations. They have asked for a paper outlining our intentions in this regard which I will send by separate message.³ Although I presented matter in such a way that I did not specifically ask their agreement, I believe it is doubtful that on this level I can conclude Egyptian talks without an express objection on their part to our proposal.

Problem may well be considered at cabinet level and I would not be surprised that an appeal will be made to the Secretary asking that we not proceed with plans for interim military aid. I do not propose to change position I have presented (see Embassy telegram 3635) unless instructed to contrary.

In face of above, if we are now engaged in actual conversations with Egyptians on either \$30,000,000 or \$11,000,000 program, we shall have placed ourselves in position to be accused of bad faith by British. I had understood before leaving Washington that no discussions would be held with Nikbawy and Sadry on arms aid except re "police equipment" and regarding general technical questions arising from Naguib's list of November 10 until talks here completed and green light could be given for interim arms aid program. I consider it most important that no discussions on interim arms aid program be held with Egyptian officers until firm decision re such program has been taken.

¹ Repeated to Cairo as telegram 185.

² See footnote 2, *supra*.

³ See telegram 3642 from London, Document 1063.