

No. 1103

774.5/2-2053: Telegram

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

TOP SECRET

LONDON, February 20, 1953—8 p. m.

4688. We have been inquiring frequently re Her Majesty's Government's position with respect "package proposals" for Egyptian defense negotiations and have again been informed today no decision yet reached by Cabinet. Both Eden and Churchill are now informed "US approval (Deptel 5460, February 17)"² and Foreign Office working levels hope this will precipitate early decision.

Embassy increasingly of opinion that unhappiness within Conservative Party over relations with Egypt is main reason for delay. We have had several indications recently from Parliamentary sources that mood is such among backbenchers that they are likely be more exacting in their requirements re acceptability defense arrangements than in case Sudan agreement. What this means to us in practical terms is that government may find it impossible in present situation to give any indication of intention to evacuate unless it is accompanied by announcement of satisfactory alternative arrangements for defense of base.

In light foregoing it would be at least premature and probably entirely unwarranted for Egyptians to gain impression that they might be able exchange secret assurances re participation system mutual defense for actual evacuation or even announcement intention evacuate. Secret Egyptian assurances re MEDO were never envisaged, so far as Embassy aware, to make it "much easier" for US and UK to aid Egypt (Cairo's 1892, February 19).³ They were regarded as essential *quid pro quo* for secret British assurances re evacuation and other elements of package in US-UK agreed paper No. 3.⁴

ALDRICH

¹ Repeated to Cairo as telegram 250.

² Not printed; see footnote 6, Document 1082.

³ Not printed.

⁴ Not printed; see footnotes 2 and 3, Document 1082.