

No. 1108

774.5/2-2753: Telegram

The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Holmes) to the Department of State

SECRET

LONDON, February 27, 1953—7 p. m.

4840. Eyes only Secretary. Re final paragraph Embtel 4774,¹ February 25 to Department and Deptel 1694 to Cairo.

There has been much confusion in Foreign Office as to whether Churchill messages constitute Her Majesty's Government's approval *ad referendum* agreement on Egypt reached here in January. We have just ascertained that prior his departure last night, Eden left note for his officials which indicates that pending outcome discussions between Eden and you, no final decision will be taken by Her Majesty's Government on January agreement. Foreign Office, in informing us of foregoing admits there may on face be inconsistency between this statement and Churchill's allusions to "lines on which we have agreed" and "our agreed plan" in paragraph 4, Embtel 4780, February 26, but regards Eden's statement of position as definitive.

I feel you should know for your own personal and confidential background in connection any talks you may have on this subject that there is some evidence that Eden and Churchill have had serious disagreement on handling defense negotiations, that Slim announcement was Churchill's own brainchild and that Eden not aware of first Churchill letter to President until after President's reply (Deptel 5647, February 24)² was delivered to Prime Minister. It is difficult confirm these points but recent announcement that Eden will remain in charge of Foreign Office while in US rather than Churchill assuming charge as formerly custom, may indicate Eden has put his foot down.

If it would be proper, I would be grateful if you could transmit to me the text of Churchill's first message to the President.³ As indicated Embtel 4774, Churchill showed this to Aldrich but did not give him copy and I do not consider it appropriate to ask for one here.

I would be grateful if none of this message (with exception actual position re January agreement referred to in first paragraph) were

¹ Not printed.

² Not printed; see footnote 5, Document 1105.

³ The Department complied with this request by transmitting the substance of Churchill's letter of Feb. 18 to the Embassy in London on Mar. 3 in telegram 5834, not printed. (774.5/2-2753)