

No. 1145

741.13/4-1553

*Prime Minister Churchill to the Under Secretary of State (Smith)*<sup>1</sup>

PRIVATE AND PERSONAL

LONDON, 15 April, 1953.

MY DEAR BEDELL: Now that in Anthony's unfortunate illness I have had to take over the Foreign Office, I shall look forward to corresponding with you and your chief, Foster Dulles. I like the news which Makins conveys me of his talks with you about the Persian tangle, and have cabled you to this effect officially.

2. I hope you will give real help in our attempt to solve the Canal Zone problem on the lines we have agreed with you. This gives far the best chance of an agreement meeting our joint strategic needs. But I hope if you do come in, you will act as a reinforcement on major points, and not as a mediator, remembering that we went a long way in our joint talks to reach agreement with you. I do not feel like being whittled on substance.

3. There is a point of detail on which I shall have to insist, namely that the British military personnel left to guard or look after the base shall be in uniform and carry personal arms. If not, they would simply be hostages and could be arrested at any time by the Egyptian police. On the other hand, if armed, such an aggression and breach of the agreement would amount to an act of war, and would therefore in all probability not occur. There are sure to be disagreements in the future about Sudan, and they cannot remain defenceless yet charged with great inter-allied responsibilities, at the mercy and good faith of any Egyptian dictator who may jump or crawl into office overnight. I am sure you will think of these points in a realistic way.

4. It is very nice to be working with you again.

5. I am very glad you will look at the excerpts from my final Volume<sup>2</sup> which the President tells me he will entrust to you. I will have them sent you shortly.

Yours sincerely,

WINSTON S. CHURCHILL

<sup>1</sup> According to a memorandum from Ambassador Makins to Under Secretary of State Smith dated Apr. 15, Smith received the Prime Minister's signed letter on Apr. 16. Makins, however, provided an advance draft of the Prime Minister's message to Smith on Apr. 15 as an attachment to his memorandum. (741.13/4-1553)

<sup>2</sup> Presumably the reference is to volume VI of the Prime Minister's *History of the Second World War*.