

No. 1151

774.5675-553: Telegram

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

SECRET PRIORITY

LONDON, May 5, 1953—noon.

5928. Last evening Selwyn Lloyd called me to Foreign Office and, at Churchill's request, gave me Her Majesty's Government's comments, as outlined in my immediately following telegram, re latest United States arms list for Egypt. (Embtel 5899, May 2.)² In emphasizing to me Her Majesty's Government's concern re United States supply of arms at this time, Lloyd also showed me partial list of incidents in Canal Zone since April 1, involving attacks on British service vehicles. I am also transmitting this list in second following telegram.

Lloyd emphasized that Her Majesty's Government has been most anxious avoid publicity re these incidents, because of effect which they might have on British public opinion during present delicate state of negotiations in Cairo. Nevertheless, April 27 incident, involving death of British sergeant, has received some press attention and is subject of Parliamentary question which Minister of War will answer in Commons this afternoon. It is possible further incidents will come to public attention and, in this atmosphere, it would be most difficult for British public to understand why United States furnishing military assistance to Egypt at time when latter is behaving in this manner. Lloyd added in this connection that UK cannot prove official Egyptian complicity in all these incidents, but at least Egyptian Government has obligation to take appropriate steps to prevent them.

Comment: I feel that I must emphasize in strongest terms my concern from Anglo-American standpoint of our proceeding with supply of arms to Egypt until such time as it is much clearer than at present that Anglo-Egyptian agreement is in sight. If situation were reversed and these were United States troops being subjected to attacks by nationals of another country, I cannot believe United States official or public opinion could look with equanimity on British announcement re supply of arms to that country.

We have repeatedly assured British that we would withhold deliveries of arms if, at actual time of delivery, conditions are disturbed to degree which would render inadvisable delivery any type of equipment. It seems to me, however, that we have more immedi-

¹ Repeated priority to Cairo as telegram 312.

² Not printed.