

No. 1158

714.56/5-953

Memorandum by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Bonbright) to the Director of the Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs (Raynor)

SECRET

WASHINGTON, May 9, 1953.

You will have seen the Department's 7292 to London giving the text of a message from Mr. Churchill to the President on the subject of arms for the Egyptians and text of President's reply.

With regard to the latter, the first sentence of the President's reply was discussed by Jernegan and myself with Mr. Matthews and Mr. Matthews recommended it to the Secretary. The portion which I have marked in brackets must have been put in by the Secretary himself after, as indicated in the message, his discussion with the President.¹

I discussed this problem with Mr. MacArthur this morning prior to his departure and expressed the view to him that this issue contains more dangers for our relations with the British than any other single thing I could think of. If the base negotiations break down and guerrilla warfare starts with Egyptians shooting British soldiers with American ammunition, the results could be catastrophic. Mr. MacArthur entirely agreed and he is going to take the position with the Secretary that the delivering of arms to any country should be tied directly to that country's willingness to participate and contribute to mutual defense. If the Secretary will buy this position, it will mean that the arms program for Egypt will not go forward unless there is agreement between Egypt and the UK on the evacuation and some security tie-in with the West.

In view of the pressures to which the Secretary will be subjected in the next three weeks not only from the foreign representatives he will be meeting but from our own representative in the area, I also gave Mr. MacArthur a hastily drawn up list of the major issues between the British and ourselves at this time² together

¹ The copy of the cable which Bonbright had presumably attached to this memorandum with marked brackets was not attached to the record copy in the Department of State files.

² The list was not attached to the source text.