

No. 1160

110.11 DU/5-1253: Telegram

*The Ambassador in Egypt (Caffery) to the Department of State*¹

SECRET PRIORITY

CAIRO, May 12, 1953—5 p. m.

2417. From Secretary.

1. Secretary and Stassen spent more than three hours yesterday (May 11) afternoon discussing with General Naguib and Foreign Minister Fawzi Egyptian ideas Suez base. Conversation continued at dinner with Nasir and other principal lieutenants of Naguib.

2. During call at Foreign Office Fawzi first gave recital of Egyptian case. Since we were to meet subsequently with Naguib, Secretary did not attempt to expand United States thinking regarding base, but confined himself largely to asking questions.

3. Fawzi touched briefly upon other matters: meeting of Arab League Finance Ministers soon to study cooperative economic developments; Arab-Israel border difficulties; Arab refugees; and threat of Israel which "partitioned" Arab world. Fawzi mentioned that Arab leaders disturbed by Secretary's visit Jerusalem and Secretary replied they should not attach political significance to his visit to Jerusalem.

4. Two hour conference with Naguib had more substance. After Secretary gave him President's gift (it was evident he was very pleased), Naguib launched into exposition Egyptian case saying he would speak with complete frankness.

5. His government seeking effect economic, social and political reforms so that peaceful Egypt can play useful part in modern world.

These reforms are hindered by "aggression" of United Kingdom in Egypt. Only social and economic advancement, by rectifying differences between rich and poor, by democratic processes, and by liberty could living standards of people be raised, and thus strength achieved. British occupation and "stubbornness" has aroused everybody. Arabs have always considered United States as country of freedom, friend of weak nations and sympathizer with national aspirations. Emergence Israel weakened United States position and now considerable Arab bitterness (previously reserved for United Kingdom) has now shifted to shoulders United States. Arabs see miserable refugees and feel United States always supports Israel. Egypt (and Arabs generally) have had bad experience with agreements not kept by United Kingdom. Only week after Sudan agree-

¹ Repeated to London as telegram 778.