

There is one point in Ambassador Gaffery's telegram on which I would appreciate clarification. I am not clear what Egyptians mean by their offer to assure "instant availability of the base", to which I have also noted Naguib and Fawzi agreed in their conversation with Secretary reported Cairo's 2417, May 12. It has been my understanding that, in course discussions with British, Egyptians were not prepared recognize any right of re-access (see Embtel 5875 and Cairo's 2379)<sup>2</sup> and I have therefore assumed that they mean "instant availability" to Egyptian forces. If, however, they mean phrase to apply to British or Western forces, this appears to me to constitute significant new development which, if specified in Secretary's draft terms of reference contained Deptel 7551,<sup>3</sup> would have salutary effect here.

ALDRICH

<sup>2</sup> Not printed.<sup>3</sup> See footnote 5, Document 1170.

## No. 1174

641.74/5-2853: Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy in Egypt*<sup>1</sup>

TOP SECRET

WASHINGTON, May 28, 1953—7:19 p. m.

2278. Request clarification certain points Amman's 999, May 25 from Gaffery:

1. Does procedure suggested last two paragraphs reftel contemplate that attempt to get written Egyptian commitment on defense arrangements will have to await conclusion of negotiations re British evacuation and base maintenance, or do you think it possible restore necessary minimum of confidence and trust during course of negotiations and prior to conclusion firm agreement?

2. Would appreciate elaboration of statement that US request for written commitment at this stage would "utterly destroy" existing Egyptian confidence in US and cause repudiation by RCC of present offer to assure continued functioning and instant availability of base.

3. Do you believe a commitment phrased in more general language than was suggested Deptel 2251<sup>2</sup> but clearly making base available to West in wartime or imminent threat of war would have chance of Egyptian acceptance or are Egyptians allergic to written commitment of any kind at this time?

<sup>1</sup> Repeated to London as telegram 7639. Drafted and approved by Jernegan.<sup>2</sup> Printed as telegram 1665 to Karachi, Document 1170.