

commitments with the West. For the US to attempt to push them into written commitments at this juncture would drive the RCC rapidly to a neutralist position.

On the other hand, the officials point out that by agreeing to maintain the base they are effectively putting Egypt on the side of the West. They reiterate their offer to initiate joint staff planning with the US and UK and have said that many practical questions could be settled at that level with avoidance of publicity.

CAFFERY

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No. 1177

641.74/6-153: Telegram

*The Ambassador in Egypt (Caffery) to the Department of State*<sup>1</sup>

TOP SECRET      NIACT

CAIRO, June 1, 1953—7 p. m.

2513. Further to my telegram 2512 I should like to add by way of general observation that the hour is far later for the West in the ME than would seem to be realized. The sentiment of the people in this area is more especially anti-Western and more prepared to be sympathetic to the enemies of the West than we like to believe. The officials of the RCC are Egyptian Nationalists of middle class background brought up during a generation of continuous anti-British agitation. They are closely attuned to, and themselves largely reflect, the attitudes of the Egyptian people. They are, at the same time sincerely anti-Communist and desirous of leading Egypt into a firm association with the West. Being honest men and realistic as regards their own internal capabilities, they have consistently rejected and will continue to reject proposals which do not take into sufficient account the complexes created by three-quarters of a century of British occupation.

We have an opportunity to do business with a group of men who will not easily give commitments because they believe in keeping their word. If we are going to do business with them, we shall have to take this into account and we shall have to move quickly. Admittedly such a course of action will involve a considerable gamble and a large measure of trust. Nothing breeds confidence like a display of confidence, however, and the vicious circle of Anglo-Egyptian recrimination and distrust must be broken. (Churchill's gratuitous pro-Zionist remarks, for example, unquestionably set back the prospects of any Arab-Israel settlement.)

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<sup>1</sup> Repeated to London as telegram 810.