

It must also be borne in mind that if agreement is not reached with the present regime, the UK will have no alternative but to maintain its position by force. Although the Egyptians have not the capability of expelling the British, they can tie up 80,000 of the best British troops indefinitely and can make life difficult for any Britisher or even any Westerner in Egypt. If matters drag on as at present, no Egyptian leader will dare raise his voice in favor of cooperation with the West. The probable impact of such a development on the Western position in the other Arab states can be surmised.

In short, we are playing for big stakes in Egypt. By playing too cautious a game we are sure to lose. The problem is not only to convince the British of that but to help them find a graceful way out of the impasse.

CAFFERY

No. 1178

64174/6-563: Telegram

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Department of State*¹

TOP SECRET

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6419. While appreciating aspects of situation in Egypt which prompted Cairo's thoughtful telegrams 2512 and 2513, I see no prospect that suggested procedure would be acceptable here. Whatever confidence we may have in RCC's good intentions, British do not share it to an extent which would lead them to concede unconditional evacuation, depending on an improvement in atmosphere to secure wider Western defense requirements. Nor are they likely to be impressed by argument that they are protected by phased evacuation, which they could halt if Egyptians proved intransigent. They are almost certain feel that such action would in circumstances place them in impossible moral and legal position.

In reviewing this problem, I feel I should reaffirm certain observations from this vantage point:

1. Psychologically, British are not adjusted under present circumstances to act on trust alone (Embtel 6261).
2. Practically, minimum program British likely find acceptable is that outlined Department telegram 7550.²

¹ Repeated to Cairo as telegram 335.

² Printed as telegram 1665 to Karachi, Document 1170.