

No. 1207

441.74/7-1853: Telegram

*The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Aldrich) to the
Department of State*¹

SECRET NIACT

LONDON, July 18, 1953—3 p. m.

291. Allen, head African Department Foreign Office today informed us Robertson will arrive Cairo tomorrow evening. He will be available for informal exploratory conversations with Egyptians, but is under instructions take no initiative in resuming contact. In response Embassy official's expression of hope that opportunity for resumption of contact will not become bogged down in question of who assumes initiative, Allen explained Cabinet has strong views against giving my [any?] impression that UK is running after Egyptians. We gathered, however, that Allen hopeful Ambassador Caffery will find means of stimulating Egyptians to take initiative in getting in touch with Robertson but without in any way suggesting approach if British inspired.

Pending Salisbury's return and Cabinet discussion on July 21 of points raised during Washington conversations, Robertson will be generally guided by memo contained Deptel 203, July 12. Within this general framework, however, he will have wide flexibility to explore British and Egyptian ideas. He will not put forward any "plan" or "proposals." We gather both from Allen and from Robertson himself that latter is conscious of need for flexibility and for keeping conversations going.

Allen said government feels it is risking rebuff in sending Robertson back under foregoing circumstances and that, if Egyptians should fail to establish contact, government will feel compelled to bring him back home again. Further factor bearing on situation is Commons Foreign Affairs debate scheduled for July 21, in which some reference will have to be made to Robertson's departure. Allen hoped government statement can be so worded that it will not run risk of prejudicing any Egyptian initiative in resuming contact. Biggest risk arises from uncontrollable statements and questions of Conservative backbenchers and opposition. Ideal development would therefore be for contact to be made before debate opens, in which event Allen thought it would be possible for government avoid any reference to fact it came about on Egyptian initiative.

Embassy official expressed strong hope that public reference can be avoided altogether to question of initiative, particularly further

¹ Repeated niact to Cairo as telegram 9.