

backing them. Difference is British conceal their disappointment and pretend greater degree of agreement than in fact exists.

DULLES

No. 1209

64174/8-253: Telegram

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

SECRET

CAIRO, August 2, 1953—2 p. m.

160. Noform. In lengthy conversation with Embassy officer Abdal Nasir confirmed that initial contact with British (mytels 152 and 159)² hardly touched on substantive matters but said that atmosphere of meeting was not bad.

Nasir in course of conversation frankly expressed his current views on Anglo-Egyptian question. He said resort to violence is Egypt's last resource and will be used only if all else fails in persuading British to evacuate. Nasir made clear his awareness of Egypt's need for constructive settlement as indispensable prelude to serious assault on Egypt's basic problem, i.e. expanding agricultural production through new Nile development.

He indicated his awareness that patience, persistence and restraint on part of Egyptians during forthcoming informal discussions are tactic most likely to promote agreement. Nasir expressed some concern lest British make mistake of thinking that Egyptians are bluffing and that they will make further substantial concessions in face of "tough" British stand. He agreed, however, that it is important that public atmosphere remain good and press speculation be held to minimum.

Nasir asked what role United States would play in matter. Embassy officer replied United States had repeatedly made clear its desire to see peaceful settlement which would fully respect Egypt's sovereignty while at same time maintaining canal base in good working order ready for immediate use by Egypt and her allies in case of future need.

It was pointed out that it is now squarely up to Egyptians and British to try to narrow differences between them. Reference was made to points in President's letter to Naguib, including assurances that United States, as part of over-all solution, would be pre-

¹ Repeated to London as telegram 50.

² Neither printed; the initial Anglo-Egyptian meeting occurred over dinner on July 30.