

Believe pressure from us will not cause British make substantial change their intent proposals. Desire you do utmost assist them unless you perceive part of package which you convinced not obtainable even with your support, and which will inevitably lead to break. Impossible judge here extent of Egyptian reaction Suez Canal clause which in itself fairly logical and innocuous. Request your earliest views including recommendations as to how Suez Canal issue might be handled. ²

SMITH

² The Department informed the Embassy in Cairo in telegram 328 on Sept. 21, not printed, that Lord Salisbury wished to clarify two points that arose during the Smith-Makins talks reported in telegram 324. The first was that the article in the Base Agreement itself regarding freedom of transit of the Suez Canal was not really a sticking point, and that General Robertson was to try to obtain agreement for the article, but if he could not, he could accept merely the clause in the preamble. The second point was that General Robertson had considerable latitude in his handling of the rest of the base negotiations. (641.74/9-2153)

No. 1222

641.74/9-2253: Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy in Egypt ¹

SECRET NIACT WASHINGTON, September 22, 1953—6:44 p. m.

336. On instructions from Col Nasir, Egyptian Ambassador called Sept 22 to request Department urge British accept six-year duration clause including twelve months for evacuation. He discussed only duration aspects problem (Cairo's 353). ²

We replied that in our opinion additional concessions from British on major points not obtainable. We stated US made maximum effort induce British reduce duration period down to seven years; that question considered in detail by Cabinet; and that in our opinion this minimum British position. Amb told our advice as friends was to accept present offer. After consultation top level in Dept Ambassador informed we believed further approach to British by US would be fruitless. He was also told it was our hope that negotiations on the base problem could come to early and successful conclusion so that we could begin discussions more constructive matters such as assisting Egypt play her new role.

¹ Repeated privately in London as telegram 1532. Drafted by Burdett and Byroade.

² Not printed.