

Commenting on bilateral talk between Secretary and Eden, Foreign Office official said confidentially he was "very glad" Secretary had put case re uniforms so strongly since Secretary's views corresponded exactly with those of Foreign Office. When Embassy officer expressed fear Egyptians might not accept proposals on uniforms outlined by Eden to Secretary, Foreign Office official stated "that event we should probably have another look at it", adding that in re-examining matter, British would want be very sure what Egyptian intentions actually were. He indicated CIGS taking very strong line on uniform question but Foreign Office still hopeful talks will not break on this point.

ALDRICH

No. 1233

641.34/10-2253: Telegram

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

SECRET PRIORITY

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488. Following British Embassy account Anglo-Egyptian meeting yesterday.

1. In carefully worded opening statement Robertson outlined British position as follows and tabled four formulae on key points.

a. Suez. As part general settlement UK accepts reference in preamble already discussed with Egyptians. (Formula: "Egypt and UK recognize Suez maritime canal is integral part of Egypt and a waterway economically, commercially and strategically of international importance; and being determined to uphold the 1888 convention guaranteeing freedom of navigation of canal").

b. Duration. Seven years.

c. Withdrawal. As "new concession" 15 months from day agreement comes into force. Robertson informed Egyptians that as soon as agreement on principles reached UK planned on own initiative start important withdrawals.

d. Number technicians: 4000 for 4½ years (Phase one); prepared discuss members [numbers] Phase 2.

e. Uniforms. Robertson said this problem has received exaggerated public attention; it was obviously one susceptible solution by application common sense. UK prepared have technicians off duty wear normal civilian clothes; on duty wear working dress similar to that civilian firms. However, because British public would not understand UK could not accept formal denial right British soldiers wear British uniform. Robertson pointed out problem does not arise until after British forces withdraw by which time Egyptians had said popular attitude toward British would have materi-

¹ Repeated to London as telegram 197.