

No. 1249

641.74/12-953: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Egypt*¹

SECRET PRIORITY WASHINGTON, December 9, 1953--1:50 p. m.

638. For Caffery. Egyptian problem discussed informally with Eden as opportunities presented themselves at Bermuda. Time required for scheduled tripartite items did not allow formal bipartite meetings. Matter was raised only briefly in formal Tripartite Heads of Govt conference with inconclusive results. Minutes that meeting will be air pouched.

Eden informed Secy they could not politically make any further concessions. This all the more binding in view of results Sudanese elections. He had assumed whichever side won out in elections could afford to move a bit farther on Suez problem. Reaction Parliament to elections would now make it difficult even go thru with their present positions. Nevertheless they would do so if Egyptians could agree. Problem complicated in London by success Zionists with Labor Party, who now demand guarantees for Israel, and revolt within Conservative Party. Eden felt some slight flexibility on availability formula might be possible but could do nothing on uniforms.

Secy informed Eden we could not stall much longer on extension of economic aid to Egypt. He used date of Jan 1 as date by which we would have to act. Eden felt this extremely serious as regards US-UK relations and hoped we could support their positions with such vigor that agreement could be obtained prior to extension of US aid. Robertson felt agreement possible with our help. Regretted our reporting led us to different conclusion. Eden stated if Conservatives fell on this issue this could not benefit Egyptians as under those conditions Egypt could only be offered less by new government. He personally knew Sudan agreement had been right and present British position base talks have not conceded more than British should to get agreement but large body of opinion in Parliament was of opposite view. Secy stated we would do what we could but were pessimistic re outcome and repeated his view on extension economic aid.

In conversation subsequent Secy departure Byroade asked Eden could we agree on (1) concession on availability formula (2) public UK support extension economic aid and (3) we inform Egyptians question of uniforms political fact of life which would prevent

¹ Repeated priority to London for Ambassador Aldrich as telegram 3041. Drafted and approved by Byroade.