

No. 1253

641.74/12-1453: Telegram

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

SECRET NIACT

CAIRO, December 14, 1953—8 p. m.

675. As I reported in my telegram 666, December 12² on Saturday last I endeavored to influence Egyptians to accept British proposals on availability and uniforms. As yet Egyptians have made no direct comment. Indirectly their reactions are not encouraging. (My telegram 664, December 12).³

Following are my comments as requested on Deptel 656.

1. No draft agreement on principles (even with exception availability and uniforms) exists. Embtel 488, October 22 sets out extent verbal agreement reached at last Anglo-Egypt meeting. Egyptians have always hesitated commit themselves to drafts in absence agreement on "important" matters of principle.

2. Only extensive written proposal which Egyptians have made is one they have under heavy pressure from US prior to Washington talks (Embtels 35, July 10 and 44, July 11). Egyptians have since made important concessions under pressure from us (e.g. 7 years duration). On my urging they also agreed to substance British paper on base training which Robertson and Hankey said might "go far to alter British cabinet attitude re availability and uniforms". (My telegrams 437, October 11 and 462, October 17).⁴

3. In absence any substantial British concessions on these points Egyptians have maintained that large measure of agreement apparently reached is conditional upon satisfactory resolution remaining issues of principle. Also as Department points out in Deptel 656 Egyptians frequently assert that "British do not really want agreement and if they make concessions on two remaining outstanding points British will thereafter raise other obstacles. Suggestion Deptel 656 thus appears have little prospect of acceptance by Egypt although there is possibility its acceptance if British prepared make even slight concession on availability and compromise on uniform question:

4. Egyptians have always argued for prompt agreement on principles and subsequent working out of details but British have heretofore declined accept this.

CAFFERY

¹ Repeated to London as telegram 288 and niact to Paris as telegram 36 for the Secretary of State.

² In telegram 666 from Cairo, Dec. 12, not printed; Caffery reported that he conveyed the substance of telegram 649 to Cairo, Document 1250, to Fawzi, the Egyptian Foreign Minister. Caffery reported that Fawzi did not commit himself to the American proposals (641.74/12-1253).

³ Not printed.

⁴ Neither printed.