

No. 1254

641.74/12-1453: Telegram

*The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Butterworth) to the
Department of State*¹

SECRET

LONDON, December 14, 1953—4 p. m.

2603. Deptel 3133 December 12² and Embtel 2585.³ Embassy officers discussed Suez negotiations with R. Allen today in attempt elicit as much information as possible without specifically mentioning plan outlined Department reference telegram. Following is substance Allen's comments.

British envisage present talks as concluding in agreed written heads of agreement which would immediately be made public and would be followed promptly by formal negotiations on definitive agreement. Sole important subjects, in addition to those covered in heads of agreement, that would be included in definitive agreement are status of forces and financial arrangements. British have no intention introducing these topics into present heads of agreement discussions as they fully realize negotiations on definitive agreement for them would be extended and difficult. Allen, however, volunteered comment that it would be easy for UK to raise status of forces or some such other question if it should decide not to attempt reach immediate agreement. He was disturbed over Bevan's articles in Egyptian paper which he said were stimulating renewed labor agitation to "stay in Egypt". Allen appeared to be concerned that Churchill might suddenly decide to reverse government policy and side with Tory rebels.

Allen said following heads of agreement topics not fully agreed, in addition to availability and uniforms: (1) British have offered troop withdrawal within 15 months from signature definitive agreement, Egyptians are asking that 15 month period start with signature heads of agreement; (2) run down schedule for technicians not fully agreed; (3) definitive agreement to be of seven year

¹ Repeated to Cairo as telegram 66 and to Paris as telegram 390 for the Secretary of State.

² Printed as telegram 656 to Cairo, Document 1252.

³ In telegram 2585 from London, Dec. 13, not printed, Ambassador Aldrich reported that the British position was that the negotiations had not reached an impasse, and that they hoped the United States would not give aid to the Egyptians until they had another opportunity to come to a final agreement with the Egyptians. Moreover, Aldrich expressed doubt about the feasibility of the procedure outlined in telegram 656 to Cairo, Document 1252, but suggested that it could be explored further by the Secretary of State with Eden in Paris. Aldrich hoped, however, that no definite action would be taken until he had an opportunity to discuss the question with Byroade and the Secretary of State. (641.74/12-1353)