

The Ambassador closed with an expression of his belief that they were very close to an agreement with the Egyptians.

No. 1261

Presidential Correspondence. lot 66 D 204. "Churchill Correspondence with Eisenhower"

Prime Minister Churchill to President Eisenhower

LONDON, December 22, 1953.

MY DEAR FRIEND: Thank you for all the thought you have given to my message.¹ It is always difficult to explain the internal politics of one to another and I have not succeeded this time. I did not say or mean the Socialists would be bitterly resentful of American economic aid to Egypt at this juncture. Indeed given the narrow issue they might be more favourably inclined to your proposal than we are. They would however be able to press their strong views and feelings about China in an atmosphere much less favourable to the United States than now exists. If the Egyptians accept our present terms we shall certainly abide by them. But we do not think you ought to give them moral and material support while they threaten and assault our troops and conduct a campaign of hatred against us. No doubt the Egyptian issue seems petty to you in comparison to other great questions, including China, confronting us both. It is nevertheless one which might well cause a deep and serious setback to relations between America and Great Britain. That would certainly be a disaster for all.

Whether you take sides against us in Egypt or not will not affect the support which we have thought it right to give you over China. It will however make it more difficult for Anthony and me to help you in the Far East if we have to do it in face, not only of Socialist opinion, but of general feelings of indignation throughout the country. I earnestly hope that the United States Government will not so act as to let it be said that their intervention has wrecked any chances of agreement in Egypt and possibly has even caused bloodshed.

There are however few things we cannot do together. 50,000 British graves lie in Egypt and its approaches. We were virtually agreed together on detailed proposals about bases and had we put them jointly to Naguib, all might well have been settled six months ago. Our being on opposite sides in the Mediterranean will gird on every enemy we have in common throughout the world.

¹ For Churchill's message of Dec. 19 and Eisenhower's reply of Dec. 20, see Documents 1257 and 1258.