

641.74/12-3053: Telegram

*The Chargé in Egypt (Jones) to the Department of State*<sup>1</sup>

SECRET

CAIRO, December 30, 1953—3 p. m.

720. Stevenson today gave Embassy following account informal get-together December 29 (Embtel 716 December 28) at which Egypt side was augmented by Boghdadi; British represented as before:

1. Principal achievement was that both sides were able to "fix some points of detail". British offered some comments in writing re Egypt comments on base organization paper including title principal Britisher in base and uniforms (Embtel 452 October 17).<sup>2</sup> Egyptians insisted on their need to emphasize civilian character technicians. Stevenson pointed out that technicians in base would be referred to in British Parliament as military and stressed danger conflicting interpretations. Egyptians said that they were prepared to admit publicly that British in base were British military, but that their work is strictly civilian; therefore, they must dress as civilians and have civilian titles. Stevenson said that while Egyptians yielded nothing re uniforms he was relieved by Egyptian assertion that they would not attempt to disguise fact personal status technicians would be that of members Britain Armed Forces.

2. British gave Egyptians a "compromised draft" re air arrangements which Egyptians promised study. Stevenson does not think Egyptians will accept this in its entirety, but discussion showed that primary fear of Egyptians is of being accused of granting UK permanent "air base". Egyptians said that staging and terminal facilities on most-favored-nation basis would be available and that RAF technicians could be employed. They would prefer air arrangements not be given prominence but incorporated in agreement annex. Stevenson indicated what Egyptians seem prepared to offer on this score is substantially what UK is seeking.

3. Discussion then ensued re availability. Egyptians reiterated neutralist public opinion very strong and government already taking big risk in extending automatic availability to attack ALCSP states. Nasir said candidly that "not even India can be neutral in global war and certainly neutrality is not possible for Egypt". He did not see why UK could not accept "consultation". Stevenson said that in order to be acceptable to UK there must be automatic availability on broader basis than Arab states; since

<sup>1</sup> Repeated to London as telegram 251.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed.