

entered into force on February 24, 1954. For the text, see TIAS No. 2986, 5 UST (pt. 1) 1029.

No. 1290

774.11/2-2554: Telegram

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

CONFIDENTIAL NIACT CAIRO, February 25, 1954—2 p. m.

954. Re urtel 953.² News of acceptance Naguib's resignation comes as surprise and shock here as it will abroad. Even those aware of periodic disputes between Naguib and RCC did not anticipate open rupture at this time. (As of 11 o'clock last night Nasir himself expected differences would be smoothed over as on previous occasions.)

Naguib's going will unquestionably be serious loss to regime (even more from international point of view than from domestic one). There is no one in sight to replace him in role of genial, winsome "father of the country". Development will also be widely interpreted as weakening present government and will lead to speculation over possibility further schisms in RCC.

On other hand, it has long been evident that Naguib was little more than figurehead while Nasir was real brains and spark-plug of revolutionary movement. Actual power structure remains unchanged, whereas accession to Naguib's demand for extraordinary powers including veto over RCC decisions would have placed government at mercy of man who actually not qualified exercise such powers.

Background to blow-up was increasing insistence of Naguib (spurred on, I am told, by his wife, presidential legal advisor Suliman Hafiz and officers of his bodyguard) that he be given real presidential powers. It appears Naguib sometime ago demanded same authority as United States President but was told regime temporary and definition presidential powers must await decision on new constitution. Naguib then proposed immediate abdicate on question presidency alone. When this refused and situation aggra-

¹ Repeated priority to London as telegram 311, as 19 to Rome, as 40 to Paris, as 62 to Amman, as 67 to Beirut, as 35 to Baghdad, as 24 to Damascus, as 21 to Jidda, and as 45 to Tel Aviv.

² In telegram 953 from Cairo, Feb. 25, not printed, Caffery reported that the RCC had issued a communiqué that said that three days earlier, Naguib had resigned from all posts that he occupied; that the RCC, under Nasir's leadership, would continue to govern the country; and that Nasir was appointed President of Council of Ministers. (774.11/2-2554)