

there that RCC had their full backing. RCC then sought to get in touch with RCC member Khaled Muhieddin for background on action of cavalry officers. When they reached him, he announced he was taking over the government, and was going to enlist Naguib's support. Muhieddin then alerted cavalry tank units. At about 1 a. m., Muhieddin saw Naguib and it was quickly agreed that Naguib would resume Presidency and Muhieddin would be Prime Minister, with program to restore Constitutional government.

When Muhieddin returned to cavalry barracks, he and 41 cavalry officers were arrested by free officers, who also took Naguib to artillery mess, Abassia barracks.

Artillery, air force and infantry reported to have fully supported RCC at this stage.

Subsequently, Nasir reported to have talked with cavalry officers and reached some agreement.

Situation still extremely confused, but reports continue persistently that Naguib is coming back. Rumors to this effect current in the streets have produced evidence of popular election at prospect. Embassy reliably informed, however, RCC meeting has just been suspended for a few hours and that no decision has been reached regarding Naguib.

At 6 p. m., security measures markedly reduced from high level of this morning.

CAFFERY

No. 1293

77486/2-2854: Telegram

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

CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY CAIRO, February 28, 1954--8 p. m.

1002. Following roundup my preliminary impressions re events past 48 hours.

1. RCC appears to have badly underestimated Naguib's nationwide popularity and overestimated extent their own supporters not only among general public but also within army. RCC belief that it had full control of latter through free officers has not been justified by events and it seems clear that at this moment there are factions not only among free officers but also among RCC members whose

¹ Repeated to London as telegram 327, as 37 to Baghdad, as 71 to Beirut, as 28 to Damascus, as 66 to Amman, as 24 to Jidda, as 49 to Tel Aviv, and unnumbered to Paris and Rome.