

No. 1302

641.74/3-1754: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom*¹

TOP SECRET NIACT WASHINGTON, March 20, 1954—1:04 p. m.

4863. Limit distribution. For Ambassador from Secretary. Urtel 3991 please tell Eden we are in principle prepared to cooperate in working out Suez Base solution along lines he suggests. I believe HMG has adopted farseeing and constructive attitude in this plan, which should hold good hopes for settlement unless Egyptian political situation has deteriorated too far.

We assume of course that our association would not involve us in any new military commitment and that any participation by us in negotiations with Egyptians would be subject to Egyptian invitation.

We would want prompt consultation with HMG re details of plan and tactics for presenting it to Egyptians. However we would first want to have Caffery's suggestions re tactics. Would be glad to have now whatever ideas this subject British have worked out so far. We are especially anxious avoid situation such as developed last Spring when Egyptians rejected proposal that US be associated in negotiations.

We do not see any present objection in principle to use American civil contractors if that seems desirable element in package but believe many technical and other aspects should be considered before attempting final decision.²

DULLES

¹ Repeated niact to Cairo as telegram 1126. Drafted and approved by Jernegan after being cleared with the Secretary of State, Merchant, MacArthur, and Murphy.

² Ambassador Aldrich reported in telegram 4056, Mar. 20, not printed, that he had conveyed the contents of telegram 4863 to Eden, who wished to thank Secretary Dulles for his support; Eden wished also to say that this matter would be given top precedence in the following week in London. (641.74/3-2054)