

Telegram from the United Kingdom Embassy to Cairo on the question of Sudanese independence (Cairo, 2 October 1955)

Caption: On 2 October 1955, the United Kingdom Embassy to Cairo informs the British Foreign Office that the Egyptian President, Gamal Abdel Nasser, accepts the holding of a referendum on the independence of Sudan.

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FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Cypher/OTP

FOREIGN OFFICE SECRET AND
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Sir H. Trevelyan

No. 1366

D. 2.34 p.m. October 2, 1955.

October 2, 1955.

R. 3.45 p.m. October 2, 1955.

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Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 1366 of October 2.

Repeated for information to Governor General Khartoum

U.K.T.C. Khartoum

B.M.E.O.

My telegram No. 1362: Sudan.

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The situation foreseen in paragraph 3 of your telegram No. 1988 has happily not arisen. Nasser has accepted the plebiscite. He also recognizes the inevitability of Sudanese independence, although, for understandable reasons, he will not take the initiative in declaring it. In the circumstances I recommend that the Co-dominium now reply to the Sudanese accepting their proposals for a plebiscite and International Commission, and that we and the Egyptians should get to work on the changes necessary in the Sudan Agreement and the commission's terms of reference.

2. Although I do not much like the commission as at present constituted, I do not see how we can get out of having it, though it may be advisable to prevent it having too much power. I shall telegraph proposals.

3. Meanwhile, we can press Nasser to agree to the present Parliament, after the conclusion of the plebiscite, being empowered to draw up the constitution and turn itself into the first parliament of the independent State. If he does not agree, then a plebiscite and an election for a Parliament Assembly can presumably be held simultaneously and we can then aim at avoiding a second election.

4. If meanwhile the Sudanese Parliament propose something else, we can consider it.

5. From the point of view of this post, I should see a number of disadvantages in a decision to tell the Sudanese or publish

/elsewhere that

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Cairo telegram No. 1366 to Foreign Office

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elsewhere that we have made the proposal for a declaration of independence and that Nasser has turned it down. I hope, therefore, that if you consider that there would be advantages in such a course, I may have an opportunity to express my views before the decision is taken.

Foreign Office please pass Priority Governor General and U.K.T.C. Khartoum as my telegrams Nos. 172 and 183 respectively.

[Repeated to Governor General and United Kingdom Trade Commission Khartoum].

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