

# **الملف الوثائقي أزمة مارس ١٩٥٤ فى الوثائق البريطانية**

**إعداد وتقديم**

**أ. د. محمد صابر عرب**

**أستاذ التاريخ الحديث**

**ورئيس دار الوثائق القومية**



## أزمة مارس ١٩٥٤

لعل من أكثر القضايا الداخلية تعقيداً ، التي واجهت عبد الناصر ورفاقه ، ما عرف بأزمة مارس ١٩٥٤ ، حيث شعر محمد نجيب ولم يكن قد مضى على قيام الثورة أكثر من عام ، أنه يتمتع بشعبية كبيرة تؤهله لكي يكون حاكماً دستورياً من خلال إعادة الحياة النيابية كوسيلة للخلاص من هيمنة أعضاء مجلس قيادة الثورة وهم في مجملهم من الشباب فاقدى الخبرة ، وكثيراً ما كان يصفهم نجيب بالتهور وصلابة الرأي .

وبينما كان جمال عبد الناصر يشعر بحساسية تجاه حزب الوفد ، الذي راح يتطلع إلى إعادة الحياة النيابية كوسيلة لإعادة هيمنته على الحياة المصرية ، كان محمد نجيب على اتصال دائم بالنحاس وأخذ رأيه في إمكانية إجراء انتخابات قبل نهاية الفترة الانتقالية المحددة بثلاث سنوات والسماح للوفد خلال هذه الفترة بمزاولة نشاطه السياسي .

وفي الوقت الذي كان فيه محمد نجيب يشعر بتعاطف مع جماعة الإخوان المسلمين كان عبد الناصر يعتبرهم رجعيين وانتهازيين ، إضافة إلى ما كان يشعر به من خوف على مصير الثورة ، باعتباره قائدها الحقيقي ، لذا أخذ يتدخل في السياسة العامة للوزراء وانتابه قدر من الشك في أن محمد نجيب وبعض الوزراء المدنيين يعملون للإجهاد على أهداف الثورة ، تلك الأهداف التي كان يعتقد أنه ورفاقه من أعضاء مجلس قيادة الثورة مسئولون عنها ومطالبون بحمايتها .

والحقيقة أن ثمة تبايناً واضحاً بين فكر محمد نجيب وفكر عبد الناصر ورفاقه ، فالأول كان أقرب إلى فكر الوفد منه إلى فكر الثوريين ، حيث كان أكثر ميلاً إلى المحافظة والاعتدال بينما كان معظم أعضاء مجلس قيادة الثورة ينهجون سلوكاً ثورياً رغبة منهم في إحداث تحول اجتماعي وسياسي في أقرب وقت . وذهب من اعتدال نجيب إلى درجة أنه راح يقنع عبد الناصر ورفاقه بأن ليست ثمة ضرورة إلى التعجيل بحمل بريطانيا على سحب قواتها ، والأهم من ذلك تحسين الوضع الاقتصادي والإجتماعي في البلاد كمرحلة أولى ثم التفكير في جلاء القوات البريطانية .

وبمرور الوقت كانت لحظة التصادم تقترب وخصوصاً حينما وقع الخلاف بين هيئة التحرير وجماعة الإخوان المسلمين وأقدم عبد الناصر الذى كان يتولى وزارة الداخلية على حل جماعة الإخوان والزج بالهضيبى وبعدد من رفاقة فى السجون ، ولجأ الإخوان إلى محمد نجيب لكى يتدخل لحل الأزمة وساعتها شعر الرجل بأنه مكبل ، لا يستطيع أن يمارس سلطاته ، وهكذا تضاعفت أزمة الثقة بين نجيب وجمال عبد الناصر وتعقدت الأمور لدرجة التفكير من جانب عبد الناصر ورفاقه فى تقديم استقالة جماعية من مجلس قيادة الثورة إلا أن هذا رأى ووجه باعتراض منطقى ، على اعتبار أن نجيب يحظى بشعبية هائلة والاستقالة الجماعية لا تحرك الشارع المصرى . أما إذا طلب نجيب أن يستقيل فإن الأمر يبدو أكثر تعقيداً ، حيث سيظهر أمام الشعب بمثابة شهيد وضحية لديكتاتورية الأغلبية العسكرية مما قد يضر بأهداف الثورة ومستقبلها ، وكان البديل المناسب هو محاولة التقرب من الشعب والعمل على إشاعة فكرة ديكتاتورية نجيب ورغبته فى الإنفراد بالحكم ثم يعقب ذلك الضغط عليه لكى يقدم استقالته وهو ما حدث (٢٤ فبراير) إلا أنه حرص على أن يكتب فى الاستقالة ما يشير إلى التعقيدات التى يواجهها فى أداء مهامه على النحو الذى لا يحقق الأهداف الوطنية .

وعلى الرغم مما أعلنه صلاح سالم (وزير الإرشاد القومى) من أن محمد نجيب يود أن تكون له كل السلطات المطلقة المستبدة وهو ما يتعارض مع أهداف الثورة ، إلا أن هذه المبررات لم يتقبلها الشارع المصرى الذى كان يشعر للوهلة الأولى بأن نجيب قد هزمه العسكريون وأجبروه على الاستقالة لكى ينفردوا بالحكم وخرجت الجماهير التى تدفقت على القاهرة من كافة الأقاليم ، رافضة المبررات الواهية ، التى أعلنها صلاح سالم والتى تستهدف سيادة حكم العسكر على حساب الديمقراطية . ولا يمكن أن ننحى جانباً مسئولية الوفد وجماعة الإخوان المسلمين ، اللذين وجداها فرصة مناسبة للنيل من الثورة وهو ما شعر به بعض أعضاء مجلس قيادة الثورة وفى مقدمتهم صلاح سالم .



لقد تجاوزت ردود الفعل مصر إلى السودان ، حيث شعر الحزب الاتحادي الوطني الذي يمثل الأغلبية السودانية أن الديمقراطية ، التي روج لها محمد نجيب على وشك أن تهزم أمام جحافل العسكر . وامتدت الأزمة إلى الجيش وسلاح الفرسان ، حيث رفض معظمهم معالجة الموقف بالشكل الذي أقره مجلس قيادة الثورة .

لقد بدا الموقف وكأنه خيار بين الديكتاتورية والديمقراطية . وساد هذا الاعتقاد كل الأوساط المصرية واستبدت الدهشة بخصوم محمد نجيب الذين شعروا بخطر شعبية الهائلة ، لذا كان من الضروري إعادة تقييم الموقف من خلال خطة تعد بعناية .

لم تكن السفارة البريطانية في القاهرة بعيدة عن الأحداث ، حيث كانت ترقبها بعناية شديدة وفي أول رسالة بعث بها السفير البريطاني إلى حكومته لخص الأزمة في جملة معبرة : «لأول مرة يشعر مجلس قيادة الثورة بأنه في أزمة حقيقة» . وراحت السفارة البريطانية ترقب الموقف لحظة بلحظة وقد سجلت واحدة من الرسائل الأسباب الحقيقية للأزمة ، حيث يعتقد محمد نجيب أن من ضمن مهامه الحصول على صلاحيات ابتداء من عزل الوزراء وانتهاء بفصل وتعيين كبار الموظفين ، وهي مطالب رفضها مجلس قيادة الثورة واعتبرها بمثابة عودة إلى الديكتاتورية ، وهكذا لم يكن نجيب راغبا في أن يزاحمه أحد .

وفي الوقت الذي أصر فيه معظم أعضاء مجلس قيادة الثورة على المضي في الطريق إلى نهايته وحسم الموقف لصالحهم كان عبد الناصر في مقدمة من قدروا خطورة الموقف ، الذي قد يترتب عليه فوزى تتيح للآخرين (الوفد والإخوان) العودة بالبلاد إلى ما قبل الثورة ، ولذا كان على الضباط أن يحسموا الموقف بشكل هادئ ، مستخدمين لعبة المناورة .

لقد أمكن التوصل إلى حل يقضى بعودة محمد نجيب رئيساً للجمهورية وأن يبقى عبد الناصر رئيساً للوزراء .

لقد سجلت الوثائق البريطانية برنامج الوفاق الجديد ، الذى أعلنه عبد الناصر فى ٦ مارس عقب اجتماع لمجلس قيادة الثورة ، حيث تقرر اتخاذ خطوات عاجلة لإقامة جمعية تأسيسية تنتخب بالاقتراع الحر المباشر على أن تعقد أول اجتماع لها فى ٢٣ يوليو ١٩٥٤ ، وهى الذكرى الثانية لقيام الثورة . وتحددت مهام الجمعية على النحو التالى :

- مراجعة مشروع الدستور الجديد والتصديق عليه .
- القيام بمهام البرلمان حتى تجرى الانتخابات فى ظل الدستور الجديد .
- يخول للجمعية أن تتخذ القرارات المناسبة بشأن مستقبل الأحزاب السياسية فى مصر .

وهكذا ظلت قضية مجلس قيادة الثورة دون حل ولم يتطرق إليها البيان الذى ألقاه عبد الناصر وما هى علاقته بمجلس الوزراء؟ ، وهل مجلس قيادة الثورة يعد مسئولاً أمام الحكومة أم أن الحكومة هى المسئولة أمام مجلس قيادة الثورة؟ ، وما هى مهام المجلس تحديداً؟ .

لم يعبر الوفاق الجديد عن طبيعة العلاقات الحقيقية بين نجيب وأعضاء مجلس قيادة الثورة ولعلها كانت مواقف تكتيكية للتخلص من نجيب بطريقة سلسة . وبينما كان محمد نجيب فى الخرطوم لحضور افتتاح البرلمان السودانى ، أقدم عبد الناصر على اعتقال المثات ممن اعتقد أنهم شاركوا فى الاضطرابات احتجاجاً على إقاله محمد نجيب الذى اشترط عند عودته إلى القاهرة أن يسند إليه منصبه السابق كرئيس للوزراء ووافق أعضاء مجلس قيادة الثورة على مفض وأسند إلى عبد الناصر منصب نائب رئيس الوزراء .

لقد شعر عبد الناصر بأن أهداف الثورة تتلاشى وأن إجراء الانتخابات تعنى عودة الوفد وإعادة العبث بالحياة المصرية ، لذا فقد راح يتحدث مع زملائه مؤكداً أن الوضع يَمْضى نحو طريق محفوف بالمخاطر وأن الحلول الوسط جميعها سوف تسلم

البلاد إلى هاوية سحيقة ، لذا فلم يكن أمامه على حد تعبير «أنتوني ناتنج» سوى طريقين :

أما أن يعود الضباط إلى ثكناتهم ، ويصارحوا الجماهير بأن الثورة قد انتهت ، أو أن يتراجعوا عن فكرة الانتخابات ويلجأوا إلى الأحكام العسكرية ، حتى يتخلصوا تماما من الرجعية وكل أعوانها .

إلا أن خالد محي الدين قد طرح حلا بديلا يتمثل في إجراء انتخابات مع استبعاد جميع الزعماء السابقين من الترشيح ، وعدم اشتراك أية أحزاب سياسية في الانتخابات إذا اقتضت الضرورة ذلك ، وأن يتقدم المرشحون كأفراد ولم يساند هذا الرأي غير محمد نجيب .

وعند الاقتراع على هذه الآراء من جانب مجلس قيادة الثورة حسم الموقف لصالح الانتخابات الحرة ، بينما كان هناك سيناريو يتم إعداده في الخلف بمهارة شديدة .

وبمجرد الإعلان عن أن الأحزاب السياسية التي تم حلها سوف تعاود نشاطها من جديد ، وأن مجلس قيادة الثورة لن يشارك في الانتخابات ، وصاحب ذلك الإفراج عن الهضبي والنحاس ، خرجت المظاهرات في الوقت الذي دعت فيه نقابات العمال إلى إضراب عام احتجاجا على برنامج الحكومة وهاجم العمال مبنى مجلس الدولة ، ونشر مصطفى وعلى أمين تسجيلات لمحادثات تليفونية بين مصطفى النحاس ومحمد نجيب توحى بالتنسيق بين الرجلين تمهيدا لعودة الوفد .

وهكذا نجح عبد الناصر في الإيحاء للجماهير بأن الثورة قد انتهت وعليهم أن يتحركوا دفاعا عن مصالحهم ، وهي عملية تكتيكية لم تكن خافية على أحد .

لقد واصل عبد الناصر هجومه على محمد نجيب واتهم مدير مكتبه (أمين شاكر) بأنه أصبح أداة لسياسة النظام القديم . وأدرك محمد نجيب على حد تعبيره «أن عبد الناصر ورفاقه الصغار قد تفوقوا على في المناورات» . وفي ٢٢ مارس أعلن

علاقة نجيب بالقوى المناوئة للثورة ، وهى مسألة لا يمكن الحكم عليها فى إطار أخلاقى لأنها قضية أساسية تتعلق بالثورة ومستقبلها ، ولم يكن الصراع بين الديمقراطية والديكتاتورية كما راح يروج له البعض ، وإنما كان صراعا حول مسيرة الثورة وأهدافها .

لقد سجلت الوثائق البريطانية أحداث الأزمة أولا بأول ويلاحظ أن التقارير اليومية كانت تعبر عن درجة من التخوف فيما لو تفاقمت الأزمة ، مما قد ينجم عنها حالة من الفوضى التى تضر بالمصالح البريطانية ، ثم أبدت التقارير عناية خاصة بالسودان وخصوصا حينما زاره محمد نجيب وحظى باستقبال كبير ، وقد انعكس ذلك بشكل ملحوظ على تقارير السفارة التى أبدت تخوفاً من هذه الشعبية .

ومن الصعب أن نتلمس فى هذه الوثائق ما يشير إلى أن نجيب كان على علاقة خاصة بالسفارة البريطانية - رغبة فى مساندته - كما أشيع وإنما التزم الدبلوماسيون البريطانيون الحياد ، حيث كانوا على معرفة دقيقة بحساسية عبد الناصر من مثل هذا التدخل ، لذا فقد حرصوا على أن يقفوا على الحياد على الرغم من تعاطفهم الواضح مع نجيب ، وخصوصا حينما جرد من كل مهامه وعومل معاملة قاسية .

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51

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Cypher/OTP

FOREIGN OFFICE AND WHITEHALL  
DISTRIBUTION

Sir R. Stevenson

No. 265

D: 1.26 p.m. February 25, 1954

February 25, 1954

R: 1.58 p.m. February 25, 1954

IMMEDIATECONFIDENTIAL

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 265 of February 25,  
Repeated for information to U.K.C. Khartoum B.H.E.O.  
and Saving to Washington  
Paris  
Beirut (for Mardiv).

My telegram No. 261: Resignation of General Neguib.

Although it was well known that relations between General Neguib and the C.R.C. were often strained, it was not until mid-day yesterday that there was any indication that trouble was brewing. Foreign journalists, who had been invited to accompany General Neguib to the Sudan, were then informed that the arrangements had been cancelled. Even so there was no hint that the General was about to resign.

2. According to the communiqué it was on February 21 that General Neguib offered his resignation. On the previous day Colonel Nasser had returned from what purported to be a week's holiday in Alexandria. It is possible that the trouble had started before he left and even that he absented himself in the hope that it would blow over. The meeting of the C.R.C. prior to his departure is known to have been a stormy one.

3. It is not clear why, or on what issue, matters were brought to a head now. It may be that Neguib felt that his position on the eve of his visit to the Sudan was a strong one, and that the C.R.C., who were aware of his popularity with the Sudanese, would not dare to accept his resignation. On their side Nasser and the C.R.C. may have felt they could not afford to let him strengthen his position by a successful visit.

4. By getting rid of General Neguib, the C.R.C. has clearly weakened itself both at home and abroad. Though his popularity has waned he was still a much respected figure and confidence / in the régime .....

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CONFIDENTIALCairo telegram No. 265 to Foreign Office

- 2 -

in the régime must have been shaken.

5. Cairo has taken these developments quietly. Only limited additional security measures appear to have been taken. General Neguib is at his home. He has declined to make any statement to journalists.

6. I have no information yet as to the reactions in the armed forces or in the country generally.

Foreign Office pass Priority to UKTC Khartoum as my telegram No. 29 and Saving to Washington and Paris as my telegrams Nos 39 and 63 respectively.

[Repeated to Trade Commissioner Khartoum and Saving to Washington and Paris].

ADVANCE COPIES TO:

Sir I. Kirkpatrick  
Private Secretary  
Mr. R. Allen  
Head African Department  
Head News Department

11111

Ref: PRCM 13	037	87873
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FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

En Clair

FOREIGN OFFICE AND  
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Sir R. Stevenson

No. 261

February 25, 1954.

D. 12.05 p.m. February 25, 1954.

R. 12.31 p.m. February 25, 1954.

IMMEDIATEAddressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 261 ofFebruary 25Repeated for information to: Washington Beirut (for Mardiv)  
Paris U.K.T.C. Khartoum.

and Saving to B.M.E.O.

Resignation of General Neguib.

In a communiqué issued at 4 a.m. on February 25 Council for the Revolutionary Command announced the resignation of General Neguib and the appointment of Lieutenant Colonel Gamal Abdul Nasser as Prime Minister.

2. After rehearsing the history and aims of the revolutionary movement the communiqué described the "psychological crisis" from which General Neguib suffered as a result of the Council's attempt to present him to the world as the leader of the revolutionary movement, when he was, in fact, no more than the president of a committee of equals. Within six months of the revolution he had begun to demand for himself powers exceeding those of an ordinary member. The Council had refused categorically to deviate from its established procedure, which was one vote for each member and a casting vote for the chairman. Finally, General Neguib had made specific demands for the power to veto a unanimous decision of the Council, the authority to appoint and dismiss Cabinet Ministers and the power to approve promotion, the dismissal and even the posting of officers. The Council tried for ten months to persuade him to withdraw demands which would have meant a return to the autocratic rule from which the country had just been delivered. The General had attempted, by increasingly frequent confinements to his house, to force the Council's hand, and finally three days ago had presented his resignation. Despite the crisis political, economic and

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Cairo telegram No. 261 to Foreign Office

- 2 -

Council had no alternative but to accept.

3. At its meeting on the night of February 24/25 the Council unanimously adopted the following decisions -

- (i) to accept the resignation of General Neguib from all the posts which he had occupied,
- (ii) that the C.R.C. under the leadership of Lieutenant Colonel Gamal Abdul Nasser would continue to exercise all its existing powers until the revolution achieved its principal aim to drive out the imperialists from Egyptian territory,
- (iii) the appointment of Lieutenant Colonel Nasser as Prime Minister.

4. Answering questions, Major Salen said that the post of President of the Republic would remain vacant until elections had been held after the restoration of the parliamentary system. Egypt would be represented at the opening of the Sudanese Parliament by the Minister of Wakfs, Sheikh Bakoury, and Major Salen himself would not go. There would be no Cabinet reshuffle.

5. It had been announced earlier that the Minister for Foreign Affairs would also be going to Khartoum. It is not clear whether this still stands or not.

Foreign Office please pass Washington as my telegram No. 42.

[Repeated to Washington].

ADVANCE COPIES TO:

Sir I. Kirkpatrick.  
Private Secretary.  
Mr. R. Allen.  
Head of African Department.  
Head of News Department.

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FROM C.A.I.R.C. TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Cypher/CTP

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WHITEHALL DISTRIBUTION

Sir R. Stevenson

No: 287

February 27, 1954.

D: 11.12 a.m. February 27, 1954.

R: 11.23 a.m. February 27, 1954.

EMERGENCY

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Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No: 287 of February 27

Repeated for information to: B.E.E.C., Washington.

B.T.E., Gov. Gen.

U.K.T.C. Khartoum. Khartoum.

It is now clear that there is a serious split in the Egyptian army over the issue of Neguib.

2. The cavalry officers last night made a declaration to Gamal Nasser in favour of Neguib and in consequence there have been a number of arrests this morning.

3. The early resignation of the C.R.C. is a possibility.

See my immediately following telegram.

Foreign Office please pass above to Service Ministries for Directors of Intelligence from Service Attaches.

Foreign Office please pass Governor General Khartoum (emergency) and U.K.T.C. Khartoum and Washington as my telegrams Nos: 31, [grp. undec.] and 45 respectively.

[Repeated to Governor General Khartoum, U.K.T.C. Khartoum and Washington]

[Extra copy sent Admiralty, War Office and Air Ministry for Ds. of I.]

ADVANCE COPIES:

Sir I. Kirkpatrick.

Private Secretary.

Mr. R. Allen.

Head African Department.

Head News Department.

JJJJJ

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SECRET

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FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

A 13

Cypher/CTP.

FOREIGN OFFICE AND  
WHITEHALL DISTRIBUTION

Sir R. Stevenson

D: 4.03 p.m. March 1, 1954.

No: 298

R: 4.06 p.m. March 1, 1954.

March 1, 1954.

IMMEDIATESECRETAddressed to Foreign Office telegram No: 298 of March 1Repeated for information to: B.M.E.C., Governor-General  
Khartoum.

U.K.T.C. Khartoum.

B.T.E..

Washington.

Beirut (for Herdiv).

My telegrams Nos: 284, 287 and 288.

Reports now received make it clear that the confusion on February 26 and 27 was even greater than appeared at the time. Not only was the army split into two violently hostile factions, but several members of the C.R.C. were not fully in agreement with the decision to dismiss Neguib and there were strong demands in the provinces (particularly in upper Egypt) for Neguib's reinstatement.

2. Open hostilities nearly started at Abbassia on February 27 between the cavalry who were in favour of Neguib, and the so-called "free officers" and elements of the artillery who supported the C.R.C. decision. The Commander-in-Chief at one moment threw in his hand altogether. The cavalry officers were only partly placated by the reinstatement of Neguib and continued to refuse to take orders until the morning of February 28.

3. The terms on which the apparent "reconciliation" was effected were vague in the extreme, amounting to little more than acceptance of a demand by Neguib that parliamentary life should be re-established and that he, as President, should have greater powers. Nobody has apparently thought out what these powers should be or how the constituent assembly announced last night (but given no respect no) prominence in Arabic Press) shall be appointed and shall get to work. Neguib is thought to have in mind a nominated body of about 100-120 members. Ali Maher, Suliman Hafez and Sanhoury are being consulted about

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SECRETCairo telegram No: 298 to Foreign Office

- 2 -

4. The basic problem of the future status and powers of the C.R.C. appears to be still unresolved. Neguib has told both his own supporters and also Gamal Nasr to keep things quiet until his return from Khartoum; the situation will then be sorted out, but it is unlikely that Neguib's supporters will be easily persuaded to agree to continuation of Gamal Nasr and Salah Salom in their present appointments. There is some talk of the establishment of a civilian Government and the relegation of the C.R.C. to the advisory position which it held in August 1952.

5. Meanwhile the loss of face undergone by the C.R.C., the personal behaviour of certain of its members, and the general feeling of uncertainty may give a chance to disorderly elements such as the Ikhwan to make trouble. The wording of Government statements and appeals for order this morning give the impression of weakness. The security forces are however showing determination to keep order and numerous arrests are being made of "Communists" and other potential trouble-makers.

Foreign Office please pass Washington, Governor-General Khartoum, U.K.T.C. Khartoum and Beirut as my telegrams Nos: 49, 38, 41 and 47 respectively. B.M.E.C. please pass BTE as my telegram No: 28.

[Repeated to Washington, Governor-General Khartoum,  
U.K.T.C. Khartoum, and Beirut]

ADVANCE COPIES:

Sir I. Kirkpatrick.  
Private Secretary.  
Mr. Do'as Parker.  
Mr. R. Allen.  
Head African Department,  
Head News Department.

JJJJJ

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FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

45

En Clair

FOREIGN OFFICE ANDWHITEHALL DISTRIBUTION

Sir R. Stevenson  
No. 292  
 February 27, 1954.

D. 5.26 p.m. February 27, 1954.  
 R. 5.37 p.m. February 27, 1954.

IMMEDIATE

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 292 of February 27  
 Repeated for information to B.M.E.O.

B.T.E.

Governor General Khartoum  
 Washington

My telegram No. 288.

It became generally known this afternoon that Neguib has been reinstated as President.

2. An official announcement has just been made over the ESB as follows:-

"To safeguard the unity of the nation the Revolutionary Council announces the return of General Neguib to the Presidency. General Neguib has agreed to this."

Foreign Office please pass Washington as my telegram No. 47

[Repeated to Washington].

ADVANCE COPIES TO:

Private Secretary  
 Sir I. Kirkpatrick  
 Mr. R. Allen  
 Head of African Department  
 Head of News Department

SECRET

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Egypt (Foreign Office)  
Part 5  
(1) 37

SECRET

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Cypher/OTP

Sir R. Stevenson

No.310

March 3, 1954.

D.11.34 p.m. March 3, 1954.

R.11.59 p.m. March 3, 1954.

PRIORITY

SECRET

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No.310 of March 3

Repeated for information to

B.M.E.O.

Governor General Khartoum

Beirut (for Merdin)

Egyptfor

Washington

My telegrams Nos.298 and 304.

The situation is still completely unresolved. In spite of repeated announcements of solidarity between Neguib and the C.R.C. (which are clearly window-dressing) relations are still strained between him and those members of the C.R.C. who engineered his resignation.

2. Statement referred to in my telegram No.304 has proved to be completely untrue. The officers concerned were arrested on February 27 but their release was ordered after Neguib's comeback on February 28 and they were set free on March 1. They have not been re-arrested.

3. According to secret sources the C.R.C. have been making soundings in the army and find that there is widespread feeling against them, particularly against the Salem brothers; and the idea of a civilian Government is thought to be gaining strength. Neguib is probably biding his time, but the outcome is still quite uncertain.

4. Cairo is completely calm and considerable numbers of Police are still in evidence. Arrests in last few days are reported to have been very numerous.

Foreign Office please pass Governor-General Khartoum, Beirut and Washington as my telegrams Nos.42, 53 and 51 respectively.

[Repeated to Governor-General Khartoum, Beirut and Washington].

~~Egypt (Paris 1871)~~

38

## FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

FOREIGN OFFICE AND  
WHITE HALL DISTRIBUTION

R. 3.21 p. m. March 2, 1954

PRIORITY  
CONFIDENTIAL

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 304 of March 2  
Repeated for information to B. M. E. O. Beirut (for Merdiv)  
Washington and BTE Governor General  
Khartoum

My telegram No. 298, paragraph 4.

You will have seen official account given last night by spokesman of Revolutionary Command Council (Major Amin Shaker) to Arab News Agency of events leading to resignation and subsequent restoration of Neguib. Spokesman repeated reasons previously given for the former and alleged that whole of subsequent trouble was due to Communist plot. He said that 8 Communist cavalry officers would be court martialled and severely punished for their part in it notwithstanding Neguib's announcement on February 28 that no-one would be punished for the events of last week.

2. This is clearly the C.R.C. party line. It seems significant that it was put out after news had been received here of the disturbances at Khartoum and therefore probably in anticipation of Neguib's return. The tone suggests that the "reconciliation" between Neguib and the C.R.C. is even more bogus than it had previously appeared. The United States Embassy, however, apparently accept the C.R.C. version. To us it seems that the struggle for power between Neguib and the Council is far from settled.

3. There is no mention of the spokesman's statement in today's Arabic press; this, however, is not remarkable since it was given to A. N. A. for outward transmission only. It remains to be seen whether the local press will be allowed to reproduce quotations from abroad.

Foreign Office please pass to Governor General Khartoum, Beirut, and Washington as my telegrams Nos. 41, 49 and 50.

[Repeated to Khartoum, Beirut and Washington]

pppp

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*Egypt (from file. Part 5)*

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

En Clair

FOREIGN OFFICE AND  
WHITEHALL DISTRIBUTION

33

Sir R. Stevenson

No. 325

March 6, 1954.

D. 11.55 a.m. March 7, 1954.

R. 12.34 p.m. March 7, 1954.

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 325 of March 6

Repeated for information to: U.K.T.O. Khartoum  
Beirut (for Merdiv)

and Saving to: Paris  
Washington  
B.M.E.O.

Return to Parliamentary Government.

A statement read by Colonel Nasser early on the morning of March 6 following a lengthy meeting of the Council for the Revolutionary Command, announced the council's decision to take immediate steps for the creation of a Constituent Assembly to be elected by general direct poll and to meet on July 23, 1954. The assembly's tasks would be

- (a) to examine and ratify the new Draft Constitution and
- (b) to perform the functions of parliament until a parliament could be elected under the new constitution.

Martiallaw would be abolished before elections were held and press censorship, except for defence matters, would be abolished at once.

2. Colonel Nasser said that these decisions had been taken by the C.R.C. at its meeting on Thursday. Discussions were then held on Friday with President Neguib, Ali Maher (President of the Constitution Committee) and Al Sanhoury (President of the State Council) at which the date for the convening of the assembly was fixed.

3. Answering questions, Colonel Nasser said the assembly itself would decide about the future of political parties in Egypt. The members of the assembly could be elected as individuals not as representatives of any political party or organisation. There would be about 250 members which was the number proposed by the Constitution Committee for the future Chamber of Deputies. The C.R.C. would continue to exercise /sovereignty

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Cairo telegram No. 325 to Foreign Office

- 2 -

sovereignty and its status would remain unchanged until the election of the new parliament. The date for the parliamentary election would be fixed by the Constituent Assembly. The question of whether the Cabinet would be responsible to the C.R.C. or to the Constituent Assembly was under study. The Constituent Assembly would consider all the laws passed since the revolution. The respective powers of the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, the C.R.C. and the Cabinet would be announced after the next joint conference of the C.R.C. and the Cabinet on Monday next. Members of the C.R.C. might stand as candidates in the new parliament if they wished, but they would have to give up their army posts. Akhbar el Yom quoted Colonel Nasser as saying that he, personally, would leave the army and take up politics, and Al Misri represented him as speaking for all his colleagues in this sense. The date and the manner of election of the President of the Republic would be covered by the new constitution.

4. The future of the Revolution Tribunal would be decided after the completion of the case now before it.

5. The future of the political detainees would be considered by the Military Governor in the light of public security. Speedy action would be taken to settle their cases and release any against whom no charges were made.

6. The position of the Liberation Rally would remain unchanged.

7. If the British made a good offer for the evacuation of the Canal Zone, the present régime would consider it.

8. Akhbar el Yom reported that Soliman Hafez had tendered his resignation as Legal Adviser to the President of the Republic.

9. Al Gomhouria and Akhbar el Yom have editorials entitled respectively "The Peoples Revolution" and "The Peoples Sovereignty" in which the theme is developed that the revolution had done everything "with the people and for the people". Akhbar el Yom says: "the fact that Egypt's revolution voluntarily hands the people their authority, should be a matter for rejoicing for it proves conclusively that rulers who spring from the ranks of the people are different from those imposed on them".



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EGYPT AND SUDAN

March 17, 1954

Section 1

JE 1017/73

### THE EFFECTS OF DEMONSTRATIONS IN THE SUDAN DURING GENERAL NEGUIB'S VISIT ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION

Mr. Riches to Mr. Eden. (Received March 17)

Office of the United Kingdom

Trade Commissioner,

(No. 19. Confidential) Khartoum,

Sir, March 12, 1954.

With reference to my despatch No. 14 of February 26, I have the honour briefly to assess the immediate effects of the bloodshed and tension of the past fortnight on the political situation in the Sudan.

2. The return to power of General Neguib and his visit to the Sudan led to demonstrations by Ansar tribesmen controlled by Sayed Abdul Rahman el Mahdi and his henchmen against Egyptian interference and the subservience to Egypt of the present Sudanese Government. These demonstrations turned to violence between the Ansar and the predominantly Khatmi police and many were killed and injured on both sides, together with a number of bystanders. A state of emergency in Khartoum province was declared, and the Government took effective action to maintain order. This action included a number of arrests by the police under their emergency powers which the political and other friends of those arrested state were effected with little evidence and much force.

3. These events and the circumstances in which they occurred, have resulted in a sharpening of the sectarian and political differences between Sudanese, a fall in Egyptian prestige, a renewal of suspicion of British motives and intentions and a general atmosphere of unease and even fear.

4. During the brief period of Neguib's absence from power the Prime Minister and his colleagues and the pro-Egyptians generally were manifestly unhappy; the National Unionist Party despatched a mission to Cairo to urge the General's restoration; and even the pro-unity press printed plainly and impolitely what they thought of the rest of the Egyptian Government. The restoration of Neguib restored

of the "Council of the Revolution" enjoyed in the Sudan is shattered. In particular Salah Salem was pointedly ignored when he arrived in Neguib's company on March 1, and is now something of a liability to Egypt in the Sudan. We should not, however, delude ourselves into thinking that this will necessarily be a lasting state of affairs: Egyptians are brazen, while the Sudanese have short memories in some matters and like a little flamboyance from time to time.

5. Suspicions of British intentions have been fanned by Egyptian propaganda to the effect that we were involved in organising the riots, and barely veiled insinuations by the Government of sabotage by British officials, by Mr. Selwyn Lloyd's continued stay in Khartoum (he was reported to be organising the transport of 12,000 British troops from the Canal Zone), and by bitter talk by British officials and especially their wives inflamed and perhaps frightened by the tragic death of Colonel McGuigan. The decision to bring into Khartoum the wives and children of British officials stationed in Ansar areas and to encourage others to advance the time of their leaves, and the typically irresponsible reporting of the correspondent of *The Daily Telegraph* have also had their effect. Measures, where possible, have been taken to counteract these impressions, and the Governor-General has taken effective action to induce the Cabinet to refrain from attacking British officials openly or by implication; but the fact remains that in the eyes of the northern Sudanese generally Britain is still responsible for anything that goes wrong.

6. The Umma Party and the Ansar, while frightened at the repressive steps, including arrests, which have been taken against them and which they fear may continue, are all the same quietly satisfied. They have lifted

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Salah Salem announced the intention of the C.R.C. ultimately to dissolve itself, and revealed its plans for the formation of a political party to carry the principles of the revolution into parliamentary life. Al Gumhuriya subsequently announced that General Neguib would be President and Colonel Nasser Secretary of the new party. Major Salem's reference to the possibility of some members of the Constituent Assembly being appointed, not elected, and reports that Agrarian Reform and the desirability of a Republican Regime would be made the subjects of a referendum at the forthcoming elections, suggested that the regime was seeking to safeguard the basic issues, and its own continuance in power, in advance of a limited return to constitutional life.

4. The former politicians were swift to see the threat to themselves inherent in such a course, and with the newly-freed press at their disposal launched a vigorous campaign for an

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March 29, 1954

FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

27

Cypher/OTP

FOREIGN OFFICE SECRET AND  
WHITEHALL SECRET (CABINET)  
DISTRIBUTION

Sir R. Stevenson

No. 426

March 27, 1954.

D.L. 5 p.m. March 27, 1954.

R.A. 55 p.m. March 27, 1954.

PRIORITYSECRETAddressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 426 of March 27

Repeated for information to

B.M.E.O. U.K.T.C. Khartoum

and Saving to

Bagdad

Beirut

Damascus

Amman

Jedda

Tel Aviv

Paris

Washington

My telegram No. 414.

These decisions were reached after a 5-hour meeting of the C.R.C. at which attempts to find a compromise, particularly on the question of General Neguib's powers, were resumed. It had previously been agreed that the issue should be left pending during King Saud's visit. It is possible that the pace was forced by General Neguib's statement on March 23 (c.f. my telegram No. 85(S)) which significantly was not carried in the régime's official newspaper Al Gumhuriya. Secret sources, however, state that it was Colonel Nasser who insisted on maintenance of authoritarian rule.

2. It was also reported from secret sources that a compromise providing for

(a) a civilian Cabinet

(b) the maintenance of the C.R.C. (to be renamed the Republican Council) with powers to appoint and dismiss Ministers, subject to the approval of the President of the Republic, and

(c) the elimination of undesirables from the elections for the Constituent Assembly, was rejected by Nasser at a private meeting between him and General Neguib on March 24.

The C.R.C.'s decisions were therefore almost inevitable. Al Gumhuriya reports today that they were not taken unanimously.

/3. The

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SECRET

Cairo telegram No. 426 to Foreign Office

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-2-

3. The provision that the constituent Assembly shall immediately elect a President of the Republic puts a term to General Neguib's present appointment and has the appearance of a concession by the General, whose insistence that the C.R.C. should withdraw while he himself maintained power was open to criticism. If Nahas presents himself as a candidate for the presidency General Neguib's re-election may well be in doubt.

4. Whether or not the faction within the C.R.C. which is opposed to an immediate return to full parliamentary government, is merely biding its time is a matter for speculation. Secret sources state that this is the deliberate policy of Colonel Nasser and his supporters and this seems on the whole to be likely. When these officers agreed to the lifting of press censorship on March 6, they possibly hoped that a situation would develop which would permit intervention on their part. The present decision to allow the immediate formation of political parties may be similarly interpreted but it is a risky game. The old politicians however appear to be well aware of this possibility and may be wise enough to show some restraint and be avoiding disorderly demonstrations withholding from the free officers the opportunity for which they may be waiting. Both the Wafd and the Moslem Brotherhood are probably still well disciplined and the leaders may be able to control their followers, at least until the electoral campaign gets under way. Communist and left wing elements on the other hand will certainly exploit every opportunity for troublemaking and the supporters of the other parties will almost inevitably become involved. (The Liberation Rally and the National Guard have already staged minor demonstrations in favour of the C.R.C.). Unless they are firmly directed the police could then hardly be relied on in such circumstances and public security is consequently somewhat precarious.

5. The future action of the free officers and their supporters in the C.R.C. will very largely depend on the feeling in the army as a whole. Colonel Nasser is clearly anxious to avoid bloodshed in the army and, in view of the probable swing among the general run of the officers away from the C.R.C., he is on the whole unlikely to countenance the use of force unless and until the position so deteriorates as to make this inevitable. It is of course conceivable that his hand will be forced or that a more ruthless figure will emerge.

/6. In the

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SECRET

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Cairo telegram No. 426 to Foreign Office

- 3 -

6. In the meantime the politicians are pressing for the abolition of martial law and for the appointment of a civilian Cabinet. The old game of spotting the next Prime Minister is being freely indulged in and the names of Ali Maher, Sanhoury and Badawi have been mentioned. A civilian government with the support of the President could be expected to sap the powers of the C.R.C. long before they are formally handed over on July 24.

7. Latest developments have so far been accepted quietly. Political leaders have publicly and enthusiastically welcomed them. In Cairo yesterday the Friday crowds were much as usual and although there were minor demonstrations in some parts of the town and a few arrests were made no serious incidents have been reported.

8. I will telegraph further when popular reactions can be assessed with greater accuracy. In conversation with Her Majesty's Minister yesterday, Dr. Favzy said that he did not anticipate a major outbreak of trouble but agreed that the last chapter of events started on February 25 had not yet been reached.

Foreign Office please pass to UKTC Khartoum as my telegram No. 71 and Tel Aviv, Paris and Washington as my Saving telegrams Nos. 21, 118 and 5 respectively.

[Repeated to UKTC Khartoum and Saving to Tel Aviv, Paris and Washington].

B B B

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FROM CAIRO TO FOREIGN OFFICE

En Clair

FOREIGN OFFICE AND  
WHITEHALL DISTRIBUTION

Sir R. Stevenson

No. 438

D. 7.25 p.m. March 29, 1954

March 29, 1954

R. 9.11 p.m. March 29, 1954

PRIORITY

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 438 of March 29

Repeated for information to B.M.E.O.	U.K.T.C. Khartoum
and Saving to Bagdad	Jedda
Beirut	Tel Aviv
Damascus	Paris
Amman	Washington

The following are the main points of a statement issued by the Minister of National Guidance this evening after the meeting of the Joint Congress.

- The decisions of March 5 and 25 have been rescinded. (My telegrams 325 and 414).
- An advisory National Assembly will be set up. It will represent all sections of the nation but the manner of its establishment has not yet been decided. It will advise the C.R.C., and its powers will be defined by law.
- General Neguib will continue as president of the Republic, Prime Minister and Chairman of the C.R.C.

Foreign Office please pass to Paris and Washington as my Saving telegrams Nos. 121 and 98 respectively.

[Repeated Saving to Paris and Washington]

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SECRET

25  
Copy on Operation Road  
Egypt (Apr. 1951).

GEN. (52) 460 / 1st. Meeting  
Conclusions, Minute 2. 29.3.54.

2. EGYPT

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY said that a dangerous situation was developing in Egypt. Strikes might lead to a breakdown in the distribution of food and this would possibly be followed by serious riots. At present there was no sign that disturbances would be directed against foreign residents in Egypt, but there was nevertheless a danger that this might occur. He therefore proposed that the British troops in the Canal Zone should be put at 72 hours' notice so that they would be ready to undertake rescue operations in Egyptian towns affected by anti-foreign rioting. He hoped that, if it became necessary for British troops to intervene, they would be able to rescue not only British subjects but all white nationals of foreign countries resident in Egypt. He did not intend that there should be any intervention by British troops unless the situation made it evidently and urgently necessary.