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C A B I N E T.

DRAFT TREATY OF ALLIANCE BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN
AND EGYPT.

Memorandum by the Secretary of State for War.

1. We have at present a commanding position depending upon force exercised by virtue of our continuing in Egypt the status of a British Protectorate. So far as Empire communications and defence are concerned the maintenance of a commanding position is necessary if we are to safeguard our communications with the East.
2. If we can maintain control by a treaty, let us make the treaty, but it is wrong for the sake of making a treaty and perhaps of making friends with one political leader, to jeopardise the essential control and give up our position under the status of a Protectorate.
3. For control we require (1) the British Forces stationed for all time where we can dominate Cairo and Alexandria, and (2) a limited Egyptian Army without too powerful armament.
4. If the limit is taken off the numbers of the Egyptian Army and the power to limit armaments is lost either we cease to have control, or to retain control, we have to increase the British forces.
5. It is argued that it is better to secure for 10 years the right by Treaty to have the troops in Cairo and Alexandria at the risk of the League of Nations ordering them to vacate their present stations and concentrate on the Canal (at a cost to the British taxpayer of some £3,000,000) than to maintain our present rights; it seems to be suggested that our present rights might not

upheld if challenged.

6. The declaration to Egypt in 1922 ends with the following words -

"Pending the conclusion of such agreements the status quo in all these matters shall remain intact"

The "status quo" was a British Protectorate and "these matters" include "the security of the communication of the British Empire in Egypt" and the "Defence of Egypt".

7. Can there be any doubt that our occupation of Egypt can legally continue until the contemplated agreements are made? So far as Security and Defence questions are concerned, the position is that of a British Protectorate and so long as we maintain the British forces, I cannot see who can successfully challenge the position.

8. If we ask for abolition of conscription in Egypt and we offer a mutual limitation of the size of the British and Egyptian forces and armaments (subject to any emergency, rendering an increase of the British Force necessary) we should, I think, be in a strong political position if the negotiations were discontinued by the Egyptians on that ground.

9. If the Egyptians refuse to limit armies and armaments it is not unreasonable to suggest that it is because they hope to use them to defeat the control we consider essential to maintain Empire communications.

10. Under the declaration, Empire communication and defence of Egypt are "absolutely reserved to the discretion of His Majesty's Government".

The Egyptians are notoriously difficult and elusive in negotiation, but when confronted with a refusal to exchange the substance for the shadow, it may be that a reasonable mutual clause, while saving their faces, may be devised to give us as good protection as we have at present.