

APPENDIX C

CORRESPONDENCE ON THE ARMY QUESTION

Lord Lloyd to Sarwat Pasha

29th May 1927

1. I HAVE the honour under instructions from His Majesty's Government to invite your Excellency to examine question of Egyptian Army in the light of the following considerations: Great Britain is always looking forward to a friendly settlement with Egypt of various points outstanding between our two countries.

2. In any such settlement it is clear to His Majesty's Government that Egypt must assist Great Britain in preservation of Egypt from foreign aggression and in protection of British Imperial communications.

3. His Majesty's Government earnestly desire that an efficient Egyptian army should be ready to take part in the country's defence, and are prepared to give Egypt every assistance in creation of such a force subject to condition that as it will be called upon to co-operate with British troops in Egypt it must be trained on British lines; that is to say by minimum of British personnel that may be found necessary.

4. Lately a definite and disquieting tendency to introduce political influence with Egyptian Army has been noticeable.

5. This tendency has manifested itself in a number of ways to which I have repeatedly called your Excellency's attention as I did that of your predecessor.

6. The fact that my representations on the subject have hitherto been informal and verbal has, I need not remind your Excellency, been due solely to anxiety of His Majesty's Govern-

most even where, their responsibilities are in danger of being directly involved, to intervene as little as possible in Egyptian affairs.

7. The tendency, however, referred to above, which has, it is relevant to observe, proved the ruin of many armies in the past elsewhere, has latterly been accompanied by determined efforts to diminish the functions and authority of the present Inspector-General and of the few British officers serving in the various departments which fall under Ministry of War. These efforts have lately found support in part in recommendations of Parliamentary War Committee recently published and shortly to be discussed in Parliament.

8. In the opinion of His Majesty's Government the approval of such recommendations could not but gravely detract from chances of a friendly settlement of this important question between Egypt and Great Britain; and sincerely anxious to lay foundations of a solution satisfactory to both countries His Majesty's Government invite Egyptian Government to review their position without further delay.

9. For the sake of reaching a friendly agreement and in deference to legitimate Egyptian susceptibilities, His Majesty's Government would be prepared to acquiesce in two proposals to which she had previously found it her duty to take exception; firstly, that to reduce military service from five to three years, although this project has as its declared object augmentation of the country's trained reserve; secondly, that to raise nine battalions from lower to higher establishment, an immediate increase in effective rifle strength of Egypt of more than 1600 men. The assistance which His Majesty's Government is lending to Egypt in formation of an air force is already within your Excellency's knowledge and would be continued and as far as possible expedited.

10. Egypt will realise that friendship prompts these concessions. His Majesty's Government would for their part require:

- a. That Inspector-General of Egyptian Army should be able freely and properly to discharge his functions as delegated to him by Huddleston Pasha in January 1925 and never abrogated; that he should for the purpose be given the rank of Ferik with pay proportionate to his

EGYPT SINCE CROMER

- duties; and that he should be given a contract at least of three years in the first instance.
- b. That Minister of War, if Officers' Committee is retained in its existing form, should not arrest passage to His Majesty the King of Egypt of recommendations of that Committee in respect of appointments, promotions, decorations and matters of discipline generally.
 - c. That a senior British officer of rank of Lewa should be nominated to serve as second-in-command to Inspector-General and to replace him in his absence. This officer would normally discharge duties inherent in the Inspector-General proper (the Inspector-General having full employment in senior duties originally assigned to him by Huddleston Pasha) and be replaced in his absence or when acting for Inspector-General by next senior British officer available.
 - d. That frontier administration (and coastguard service also if effect is given to amalgamation recently decided upon) should be placed under British Inspector-General, and, in his absence, of his deputy; or in alternative that Director-General of this administration should be a British officer as was the case until April 1925.
 - e. That few posts in departments falling under Minister of War (including coastguard service if amalgamated with frontier administration) at present held by British officers or men should be retained in British hands so long as this *modus vivendi* remains in force, it being understood that functions of such British personnel should be neither directly nor indirectly impaired.
 - f. That in respect of jurisdiction this *status quo* in the areas for which frontier administration is responsible should remain intact.

Sarwat Pasha to Lord Lloyd

3rd June 1927

I have the honour to inform your Excellency that the Egyptian Government have taken cognisance of the communication that you were kind enough to address to me on 29th May

in accordance with the instructions of His Majesty's Government. The Egyptian Government thank His Majesty's Government for cordial tone of this communication and for the friendly assurance contained in it. If His Britannic Majesty's Government envisage a friendly settlement of these questions still outstanding between the two countries, the Egyptian Government for their part desire nothing better than to see approach of day on which a pact of alliance shall be concluded between Great Britain and Egypt, a pact which will mark opening of an era of co-operation fruitful in result and in mutual profit.

His Britannic Majesty's Government, envisaging eventual co-operation between the two countries for assurance of realisation of objects which will be assigned to them in contemplated agreement, propose to Egyptian Government initiation of negotiations with a view to arrangements calculated to facilitate this co-operation.

They express at the same time anxiety in respect of a tendency which they appear to have observed to introduce political influences into the Army and of efforts designed, in their view, to diminish authority of British officers, and, they state, partially consecrated by recent public recommendations of Parliamentary War Commission—a tendency and efforts which His Britannic Majesty's Government consider as extremely prejudicial to chances of friendly agreement between the two countries.

Egyptian Government are glad to state that they entirely share your Excellency's point of view in regard to danger of introducing politics into armies.

Moreover, they have always been, and will always be, profoundly anxious to eliminate such a possibility in respect of Egyptian army. They would not have failed to institute enquiries if definite facts had been brought to their notice.

Without wishing to discuss reasons which prompted report to which your Excellency's communication alludes, I feel it my duty to draw attention to fact that this report is in no sense the work of Parliamentary War Council. A sub-Commission formed within it to examine decree of 1925 instituting War Council and Officers' Committee charged two of its members with the task of elaborating a report on the question. It is this

draft report which has been published without having been ever submitted either to War Commission or to Sub-Committee itself.

Egyptian Government are disposed to accord most favorable reception to proposal tending to establish by negotiation arrangements calculated to facilitate co-operation of which mention has been made. But, while awaiting opportune moment at which these negotiations can be undertaken, Egyptian Government consider that, until these arrangements have been adopted, situation, as far as it concerns exercise of attributes in Egyptian Army as it has hitherto existed, could be maintained without inconvenience. In fact, since promulgation of above-mentioned decree of 1925 admitting Inspector-General to membership of Army Council and Officers' Committee, the different army services have been functioning normally. Though certain differences of opinion have arisen concerning recommendations of Officers' Committee, they have only been rare and incidental; they arise more or less out of transitory period. But it may be considered that in the interests of discipline and good organization Minister will adopt, generally, views of committee formed to help him to fulfil his responsibilities and from which he obtains grounds for his decisions.

With regard to extension from two to three years of term of service of Inspector-General, Government consider that, as contract of Inspector-General has hardly started to run, question, which is of purely personal nature, is of no immediate interest. The same may be said of proposal to confer on him rank of Ferik and to increase his salary. On the other hand, Minister of War will examine question of appointment of a senior British officer to help Inspector-General in exercise of his duties or to replace him in his absence, and in so far as needs of service require it, will not, in virtue of his discretionary power to nominate a foreigner to a technical post, fail to give effect to this appointment. This officer would, in case of need, be replaced during his absence or while he himself is replacing Inspector-General by the most senior British officer.

As regards frontier administration, I venture to draw your Excellency's attention to fact that this administration, which deals only with questions of purely internal administration and

of contraband, was attached to Ministry of War by decree of 5th October, 1922. By decree of 1925 instituting Army Council the Director-General of this administration is an ex officio member of said council. Furthermore, since matters touching on defence of country fall within competence of Army Council, there is every reason to feel sure that those affairs of Frontier Administration relating to military questions will be despatched with every desirable safeguard and in accordance with service requirements.

Moreover, British officers holding posts in above administration have profited by advantages of Law 28 of 1923. Council of ministers had last January to consider question of these officials at time of expiry of contracts. It decided, in the interests of the service, to retain them in their posts. New contracts were granted to them for periods varying from one to two years; and these contracts have maintained them in duties which they were then carrying out, and which they still continue to discharge. It will only be at expiration of these contracts that question of whether these officers should be maintained in their positions will fall to be examined. In examining this question, Egyptian Government will of course be governed only by interest of service to the exclusion of any other consideration whatever.

Judicial organization in force in districts falling under authority of Frontier Administration is in reality no more than an extension to all such districts of principles already established in 1911 by Egyptian Government in Sinai districts before it was attached to that administration. The 1922 decree maintained this organization until such time as it could be replaced by one more appropriate. Since that time Egyptian Government has had no cause to consider the question of the establishment of the new organization; nevertheless, for reasons connected with special conditions and degree of development of El Arish region, which belongs to eastern frontier district, Government has been studying question of re-establishing with its original district of competence the first instance court, which existed at El Arish before creation of administration in question.

In conclusion, Egyptian Government is confident that above

assurances and explanations will dispel any misunderstanding between the two Governments on the subject of the status of Egyptian army. I am glad to add that Egyptian Government's most sincere desire is that friendly relations between the two countries may be strengthened day by day, that good understanding between them may be maintained and harmoniously developed and that success may crown mutual efforts tending to conclusion of an agreement which, while strengthening bonds of friendship uniting the two countries, shall safeguard their interest.

I avail, etc.

Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain

CAIRO, 12th June 1927

... This draft makes a very great advance from our point of view:—

- (a) It states in much clearer and more fluent language motives which dictated the first note, and gives effective and binding value to the somewhat timid and half-hearted acceptance which characterised the latter.
- (b) It states definitely that functions of the Sirdar as delegated by Huddleston Pasha in 1925 have been found in no way to conflict with the existing state of things; and that Egyptian Governments are therefore ready to maintain those functions unimpaired as attributes of Inspector-General.
- (c) As regards Inspector-General's deputy, it says clearly that Egyptian Government, now being convinced of the need for this appointment, have decided to make it without delay.
- (d) It requests that recommendations of Officers' Committee shall, save for very exceptional reasons, be submitted by Minister of War to the King as they stand.
- (e) With reference to Frontier Administration, it is strong in assurances that Egyptian Government will in respect of both civil and judicial matters pay immediate

attention to questions affecting defence of the country and any other objects which it may prove important to assure.

Prime Minister, in giving me this draft, gave me the following supplementary assurances in the most formal and categorical fashion, Minister of War and a member of my staff being present:—

- (a) That Inspector-General should be given the rank and pay of Ferik within a week.
- (b) That his deputy should be appointed within a week of our submission of his name.
- (c) That second post in the Frontier Administration vacant owing to recent death of Egyptian occupant should be filled by present British subdirector-general of coast guards on amalgamation of the two departments, already overdue. . . .