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P #38



THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

29 APR 1981

Lt. Gen. Mohamed Abdel Halem Abou Ghazala  
Minister of Defense and Military Production  
Arab Republic of Egypt  
Ministry of Defense  
Cairo, Egypt

Dear Minister Ghazala:

(N) We would like to begin immediately to work with you to develop a five year modernization program for Egypt. Accordingly, Secretary Weinberger has directed his staff to take action with yours to set up a working arrangement for this purpose. We believe that the requests you have made are reasonable in the context of modernization of the Egyptian Armed Forces.

(N) We fully understand the difficult defense problems that Egypt is currently facing and, as the Secretary told you when we met, Egypt's security is enormously important to the United States. This commitment to plan and work with you to improve the capabilities of the Egyptian Armed Forces is undertaken by both of us with the full knowledge that it will not be easy and that the Congress must, in the final analysis, authorize sufficient resources to meet our goals. As a result of your request for the acceleration of tank deliveries this year we have carefully reexamined all available production. As we discussed, there is no additional production available but by diverting tanks intended for the US Army we will be able to provide sufficient numbers to allow the equipping of a brigade before the end of 1981.

(N) We were pleased to be able to inform you that the munitions (GBU 8/15 Glide Bombs, MK 20 Anti-Armor Bombs), Laser Designating System and Electronic Countermeasures Pod (ALQ-131) you had earlier requested are now releasable to the Government of Egypt. Additionally, the AIM-9L air-to-air missile, will be made available to Egypt. We will have to work closely together to insure the protection of this system, which has been released to only our closest allies.

(N) With regard to the E2-C (HAWKEYE) aircraft, we will work closely with your staff to analyze the specific threats that you face and to define a program that will adequately meet this threat. I would propose to you that we study this problem together, and we will make such data bases, as are necessary, available to develop the overall program. We are prepared to dispatch a group of experts to work with your staff toward this end.

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(S) While we have made considerable strides toward the modernization of Egyptian defense forces since 1979, Secretary Weinberger and I share your conviction that we must improve our efforts at every opportunity. Secretary Weinberger has recently stressed to the Secretaries of our three Military Departments the criticality of your program.

(S) I have asked Mr. Francis West, our Assistant Secretary of International Security Affairs, to take the next steps in this dialogue with you when he visits Cairo next month.

(S) As we move into this next and even more important phase of our commitment to Egypt's well being, let me say what a great pleasure it was to meet you and discuss our many points of mutual interest. Let us hope that this was just the first of many fruitful meetings, as we work to build the military relationship between our two nations, and move toward the difficult goal of comprehensive peace in the region.

Sincerely,



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