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FEB 25 1987

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Date: 15OCT2024

ROUTINE
R 231632Z FEB 87
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4074
INFO USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL

ZYUW RUEHGA4380 0641033

EGYPTIAN NATIONALIST IMPULSES, SHARP RECENT AND
UNHAPPY MEMORIES OF THE BRITISH AND SOVIET
EXPERIENCES, AND CONFLICTING US & EGYPTIAN NATIONAL
INTERESTS IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD. NOT ONCE IN THE
SIX MONTHS I HAVE BEEN IN CAIRO HAS ANY SENIOR
EGYPTIAN OFFICIAL RAISED THE SUBJECT WITH ME, SENIOR
OFFICERS IN THIS MISSION, OR VISITORS FROM WASHINGTON.

SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 04380

TAGS: EG, US, PREL, MARR

SUBJECT: THE US BASE DEBATE CONTINUES

1. ~~*****~~ - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. OVER THE PAST TWO MONTHS WE HAVE PICKED UP
SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF INTELLIGENCE REPORTS OF RENEVED
DISCUSSION WITHIN EGYPTIAN MILITARY AND GOVERNMENT
CIRCLES ABOUT THE WISDOM OF OFFERING THE UNITED STATES
BASE RIGHTS. THE NOTION IS HARDLY NEW AS THOSE
INVOLVED WITH RAS BANAS WILL RECALL. BEFORE ANYONE
TAKES THESE REPORTS SERIOUSLY AS A BASIS FOR US
SECURITY POLICY PLANNING TOWARD EGYPT AND THE REGION,
IT IS WORTH RECALLING WHAT LIES BEHIND THE CURRENT
DEBATE AND WHERE OUR INTERESTS LIE.

3. EGYPTIANS, WHO TODAY ADVANCE THE POSSIBILITY OF
OFFERING THE UNITED STATES BASE RIGHTS, ARE GENERALLY
JUNIOR PERSONNEL OUTSIDE THE POLICY ARENA WHO HAVE
SEVERAL MOTIVES. MANY SYMPATHETIC PROPONENTS,
ESPECIALLY WITHIN THE EGYPTIAN OFFICER CORPS, REGARD
THE NOTION AS A WAY OF CEMENTING SECURITY TIES TO THE
UNITED STATES AND THE WEST, THEREBY LIMITING THE
POSSIBILITY OF EGYPT EVER RETURNING TO AN EAST BLOC
FOLD. PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF EVENTS IN THE GULF AND
IRANGATE, OTHERS SEE BASE RIGHTS AS THE KEY TO A US
SECURITY COMMITMENT TO EGYPT AND MODERATE ARABS. SOME
PROPONENTS, PARTICULARLY CIVILIAN ONES, BELIEVE A BASE
RIGHTS AGREEMENT CAN BE BARTERED FOR SUBSTANTIALLY
INCREASED US ASSISTANCE - HELP WHICH CAN BE USED IN
SETTLING EGYPT'S FMS OBLIGATION, REDUCING THE
COUNTRY'S DEBT BURDEN IN GENERAL, AND IN FINANCING
DOMESTIC INVESTMENT. ALMOST ALL EGYPTIANS ARE
CONVINCED THAT WE ARE EAGER FOR BASE RIGHTS AND ARE
PREPARED TO PAY A VERY HIGH PRICE FOR THEM.

4. HOWEVER FREQUENTLY WE RECEIVE REPORTS OF THE
EGYPTIAN DEBATE, WE WOULD BE WIKING TO CONCLUDE THAT
THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT IS PREPARED TO CONSIDER THE
ISSUE SERIOUSLY OR THAT IT WOULD BE IN OUR INTEREST TO
DO SO. STATED FLATLY, NEITHER MUBARAK NOR THE GREAT
MAJORITY OF EGYPT'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IS INTERESTED
IN GRANTING BASE RIGHTS TO THE UNITED STATES. THEY
KNOW A MOVE IN THE DIRECTION WOULD BE BITTERLY
CONTESTED ACROSS THE EGYPTIAN POLITICAL SPECTRUM AND
EVEN IF THE DAY WERE CARRIED, OPPOSITION TO THE
DECISION WOULD CONTINUE FOR YEARS. MUBARAK ALMOST
CERTAINLY BELIEVES LOCAL INTEREST IN A US BASE
PRESENCE WOULD PROVE TRANSITORY IN THE FACE OF STRONG

***** FOR J5 *****
REVIEW FOR DISTRIBUTION TO CINCS
SUMMIT JCS-DSS FORM 30 IF REQUIRED

ACTION

INFO CPCS(5) DJS(1) J3:NMCC(0) J3(3) J6(1)
SECDEF(0) USDP(11) ASD:AM(1) ASD:PA(2) DR(1) DO(1)
ED(1) DI-1(1) DTS-202(1) JSD-1(1) NCS(1) VP(1)
DIO(1) DE(1) DB(4) DT(1) DIA(1) OR-A(1)
+OCSA WASHINGTON DC
+CNO WASHINGTON DC
+CSAF WASHINGTON DC
+CNC CC WASHINGTON DC

SECTIONAL(1)

TOTAL COPIES REQUIRED 50

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5. WE MUST ALSO KEEP IN MIND THAT OUR CONCEPT OF AN
ACCEPTABLE PRICE BEARS NO RELATIONSHIP TO EGYPTIAN
EXPECTATIONS. WRITING OFF EGYPT'S FMS OBLIGATION
WOULD CONSTITUTE ONLY AN OPENING BID. BEFORE EGYPT'S
POLITICAL LEADERS WOULD TAKE THE POLITICAL PLUNGE,
THEY WOULD WANT TO BE CERTAIN THAT THE SIZE OF THE US
CONTRIBUTION WOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO HELP THEM TO
MANAGE THEIR ECONOMY WITHOUT HAVING TO MAKE THE
DIFFICULT AND POTENTIALLY DESTABILIZING DECISIONS
WHICH THEY ARE FACED WITH TODAY. FURTHERMORE, ONCE
HAVING EXACTED THE INITIAL PAYMENTS AND OPENING
ITSELF TO NATIONALIST CRITICISM, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD
BE TEMPTED TO FEINT AND STALL, GIVING LESS THAN FULL
COOPERATION IN CARRYING OUT THE CONTROVERSIAL
PROJECT. IN A WORD, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE CURRENT
POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IS DISPOSED TO GO THE BASE
ROUTE, AND DOUBT THAT IT COULD CARRY OUT THE VENTURE
EVEN IF IT WERE.

6. FINALLY, SHOULD WE INDULGE OURSELVES BY EXPLORING
THE POSSIBILITY OF BASE FACILITIES, WE WOULD RUN THE
RISK OF COMPLICATING OUR DELICATE ELABORATION OF
PREPOSITIONING AND OTHER ACCESS AND TRANSIT
ARRANGEMENTS.

7. IN SHORT, WE SHOULD READ OUR REPORTS, KEEP TRACK
OF THE EGYPTIAN DEBATE, BUT TAKE NO ACTION IN
WASHINGTON OR CAIRO WHICH WOULD INDICATE AMERICAN
INTEREST IN PURSUING BASE RIGHTS. BT

*I disagree
strongly with this
I think we
should see how things
develop via Ambassador
Chazelle
Bears for deep interest
this seems to be a
good idea & we*

Egypt

23 FEB 87

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

THE SENIOR MILITARY ASSISTANT

25 Feb 87

NOTE FOR ASD(ISA)

Please take for action. SecDef's
marginal on the attached reads—

"I disagree rather strongly
with this. I think we should
seek authoritative views on
this via Mubarak and Abu
Ghazala. Bases for debt
interest still seems to be
a very good idea to me."

4/2 July

Gordon E. Farnell
Major General, USAF
Senior Military Assistant
to the Secretary of Defense