



June 15, 1954

**Memorandum of a conversation between Soviet
Ambassador to Egypt D.S. Solod and Egyptian Prime
Minister G. Nasser**

Citation:

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Summary:

In a meeting with Soviet Ambassador Solod, President Nasser discusses Egypt's lack of sufficient arms to fight the British and discusses attempts to negotiate for the sale of arms from other European countries.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

When I came to visit Nasser he introduced me to Lieutenant Colonel Gamal Salem, a member of the Revolutionary Council and minister of communications, and said that Salem was involved in the implementation of all the economic projects in Egypt's seven-year plan, including the projects which were discussed during the stay in Moscow of the Egyptian economic delegation, headed by Brigadier Hassan Ragab. Salem, on his part, said that because the Egyptian government had had a lot of important commitments it had not been able to study in detail the offers made to the Egyptian delegation while in Moscow. However, he would like to meet with Soviet delegates in Cairo to discuss a variety of issues, such as the construction of a dam in the upper Nile, a pipeline, and a nitrogen factory. Salem explained that he wanted to meet with me rather than our commercial attaché, so that the discussion would not revolve solely on economic issues but on political ones as well. Since I did not object to such a meeting, he asked us to come to the Ministry of Communication at 6 o'clock on 21 June. Nasser started complaining that Egypt was still an occupied country and under the current conditions nothing could be done to liberate it because the army did not have the necessary equipment [for this task]. In the past, Egypt had received weapons, mainly light ones, from Britain. But, lately, Britain had stopped the arms shipments and tried to prevent the supply of weapons to Egypt from other European countries. That was the reason why Egypt had to turn to several European countries through secret channels in order to obtain arms, since it was unable to supply even a hundredth of its army's needs. He gave the impression that the US was offering military help but that the stipulations were of a kind that Egypt could not accept. I remarked that Egypt might manufacture weapons by developing its industry, in particular electronics and metal works, and that the Soviet Union had already announced its willingness to help, but Nasser said that the Egyptian government had already discussed the subject and the conclusion reached was that the development of heavy industry would take a long time, and the development of arms factories even longer. Moreover, this step required huge resources, which Egypt did not have, and the weapons were needed immediately. Without further ado, he asked me, what was the Soviet government's position on selling arms to Egypt. I said I knew very little about this matter, and Nasser asked me to submit this request to the Soviet government. Nasser explained that Egypt did not approach the Soviet government directly because it was apprehensive that it might receive a negative response. I asked whether this was an official request on behalf of the Egyptian government. After talking in Arabic with Gamal Salem, Nasser replied in the affirmative...