

to get clear negative and exploration Nasr's views regional defense."

No. 1374

Editorial Note

The document in this editorial note is located in Department of State file 774.5 MSP. It is not a ribbon copy. It was typed on a plain sheet of paper. Colonel Gerhardt in Cairo sent this document on November 29, 1954, to Vice Admiral Arthur C. Davis, USN, who was Director of the Office of Foreign Military Affairs, Department of Defense. It reads as follows:

"1. On 23 November, Gerhardt, Eveland . . . met with Abdul Nasr, Amer, and a member of the Prime Minister's personal secretariat in a four hour night session, which followed a previous run-down with a member of the personal secretariat of the night before. Atmosphere was cordial and relaxed. General discussion of regional defense arrangement problem provoked expression by Nasr of two major considerations:

"a. People of Egypt are not conditioned to think in strategic terms and this remains a major problem for Nasr and the RCC to overcome in the future.

"b. He recognizes and admits the inadequacies of the Arab League Security Pact as a vehicle for regional defense. However, Nasr nevertheless believes that with a revision of the present Security Pact an adequate basis for RDA can be obtained although he has not worked out the details of such a revision.

"2. One point on which he laid emphasis was command structure from which it could be inferred that the basis for the defense arrangement must be indigenous and the commander from the area. (Later exploration of this showed clearly that they have not thought the problem through in terms of personnel or organization.)

"3. He left the impression that the RCC considered that during the period in which they were building up internal strength they would develop the revisions to the Pact required to strengthen it. He felt that the U.S. could help this program by using its influence with the Arab Nations at the appropriate time that they support a revised Arab Security Pact.

"4. Nasr displays a keen understanding of the strategic importance of the area and the critical role which Egypt plays in it. He also is keenly aware of the vacuum that exists between the northern tier of defense and the Egyptian base. In a brief strategic estimate he considered that the Soviets would strike first at the oil fields and as a second priority the Egyptian base crossroads. (He promised to submit a more detailed estimate before the departure