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DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Division of Biographic Information

RAGAB, Haseen Fawzi

EGYPT

Appointed first Egyptian Ambassador to the Chinese People's Republic in May 1956, Maj. Gen. Ragab is a competent electrical engineer and has been considered one of the most outstanding officers in the Egyptian Army. The greater part of his military career has been devoted to improving and increasing armaments and equipment of the Egyptian Army. He is a former Military Attache to the Egyptian Embassy in Washington, was at one time an intelligence officer, and was awarded the US Legion of Merit during World War II. Prior to his diplomatic appointment he was Under Secretary of State in the Ministry of War.

Ragab was born in 1911. He studied at the Faculty of Engineering in Cairo University, obtaining his B.Sc. degree with honors in 1933. During the following year he studied electrical engineering and mathematics at the Ecole Supérieure d'Electricité in Paris. About 1934 he was employed as electrical engineer for the Ramieh Tramway Company in Alexandria. When he left that company in 1939, he was chief engineer of its maintenance department. In 1939 he joined the Egyptian Army with the rank of captain and for three years he served in the desert where he acquired special experience in desert navigation and survey. At the completion of this service Ragab was placed in charge of maintenance shops for the Egyptian Army. During this period he invented a sun compass which reportedly was very accurate and of unusual design.

In 1943 he was graduated from the Royal Staff College and in 1944 became Director of the Geographic Section of the Army. In November of the following year, Haseen Ragab, then Colonel, was appointed Military Attache to the United States. At that time an Egyptian government official is reported to have stated that Col. Ragab had been selected due to the fact that technical qualifications and a knowledge of American military equipment were needed by Egypt's Military Attache in Washington. During his tenure in the United States, Ragab was military adviser to the Egyptian delegation to the UN General Assembly, an Egyptian delegate to the UN Atomic Control Commission, and a member of the team of observers of the atomic experiment in the Pacific in 1946.

In August 1947 he returned to Egypt to assume the position of Deputy Director of Intelligence in the Egyptian Army. As Deputy Director, Col. Ragab was in charge of the Research and Development Section in 1948. The purpose of this section was to study all types of equipment in the hands of the Egyptian Army, to determine which was the most suitable for use, and to investigate the possibility of local production and/or purchase from foreign sources. By 1949 it was reported that Col. Ragab, "an excellent engineer, imbued with advanced ideas" had established a research and development laboratory in Abbasia. The laboratory was experimenting with explosives, mechanical sound devices and other weapons. In 1951 Ragab reportedly invented a tracking device for jet planes.

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RAGAB, Hasan Fahmi (continued)

Late in 1952 or January 1953 Ragab was appointed Under Secretary of State in the Ministry of War in charge of military procurement, factories and research. In 1953 he headed a military mission to Turkey. Later in the same year he led a 16-man economic mission to Eastern Europe. The mission was gone for almost four months, two of which were spent in Russia. Apparently Ragab was much impressed with Russia's progress in industrialization, food production and hydroelectric development. One report issued shortly after his return to Egypt shows that Ragab may have favored increased trade with the Soviet orbit and that he seems to have felt that Russia and her satellites might prove to be good friends of Egypt and the Arab states. Nevertheless he was also reported to have been critical of the roles to which the population of the satellite countries had been relegated.

On July 1, 1954 Ragab was promoted to the rank of Major General. In October and November 1955 he headed a military mission to Czechoslovakia to work out arrangements for the cotton barter for armaments.

At the time of his appointment as Ambassador to Communist China, Ragab was also a member of the Supreme Youth Welfare Council and the Higher Council of Sciences and President of the Sea Scout Organization.

Ragab is married and has at least two children. In addition to Arabic he speaks excellent English and French.

GLI:BI:VHMacLean:iv

August 2, 1956

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