

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D. C. 20505

25X1

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

19 February 1985

Egypt's Air Defense Program Ending in Sudan

Summary

Egypt's decision to terminate air defense assistance to Sudan and to withdraw its men and equipment from Khartoum in late February will not significantly alter Egyptian-Sudanese bilateral relations. Shared security concerns will continue to drive the Cairo-Khartoum relationship, overriding even the misperceptions and lack of understanding that caused the air defense effort to founder. Egypt, however, is unlikely to attempt again a similarly ambitious program with Sudan. We believe Cairo will seek instead to convince both Washington and Khartoum that a strengthened Egyptian military is Sudan's best protection against Libyan aggression. [redacted]

25X1

* * * * *

This memorandum was prepared by [redacted] the Egypt-Sudan Branch, Arab-Israeli Division, Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis. Information as of 18 February 1985 was used in preparation of this paper. Comments and queries are welcome and should be addressed to Chief, Arab-Israeli Division, [redacted]

25X1

25X1

NESA M# 85-10042

25X1

~~SECRET~~

25X1

The Egyptian Effort

Egyptian Defense Minister Abu Ghazala arrived in Khartoum the day after the Libyan bombing of Omdurman on 16 March 1984. He made an apparently unsolicited offer of an air defense system to protect the Sudanese capital. Within a week, two Egyptian SA-7 platoons of about 50 men arrived to protect Khartoum International Airport and the Wadi Seidna airbase, and Abu Ghazala had requested US assistance to airlift an entire SA-2 brigade to Khartoum by 24 March. He confidently predicted that the Egyptian brigade would be operational within a month of arrival and that its equipment could be turned over to the Sudanese after about eight months of training.

25X1

The first Egyptian radar arrived in Khartoum in early April, along with support personnel and a site selection team. In May, a complete engineer battalion (500 men) with its equipment arrived in Khartoum to prepare quarters for the SA-2 brigade. Construction of this support facility proceeded slowly, and it was less than a quarter complete when Egypt withdrew the first SA-7 platoon in August. No further progress was evident at either the support site or the SA-2 site by the time the second SA-7 platoon was withdrawn in December. Last month Khartoum was notified that all Egyptian personnel and equipment (including the radars) would be removed from Sudan by the end of February.

25X1

The Sudanese Reaction

We doubt the Sudanese were surprised by either the delays in the Egyptian program or its cancellation. We believe Egypt's unwillingness to actively support Sudan's anti-insurgent campaign in the south and its usual cash-only policy for arms transactions with Khartoum probably led Sudanese military officials to question Egypt's motives and depth of commitment from the start. The Sudanese Acting Director of Military Intelligence, for example, complained shortly after Abu Ghazala's visit that Egypt's assistance was simply an effort to foist old equipment on Sudan. The Director of Military Intelligence (DMI) later told [redacted] that he had always doubted the Egyptians would supply the equipment for the SA-2 brigade, particularly since they had failed to provide other promised training, equipment, or weapons. In response to Egyptian complaints about inadequate Sudanese support and lax military discipline, the DMI commented that "Egyptians simply do not get

25X1

SECRET

25X1

along well with Sudanese." According to the Egyptians, in December the Sudanese even accused them of repairing Egyptian radars with parts they had removed from Sudanese radars. [REDACTED]

25X1

Reasons for Failure

[REDACTED] Defense Minister Abu Ghazala and Egyptian Armed Forces Chief of Staff El-Orabi offered the following reasons for withdrawing the units sent to Sudan:

25X1

- The Sudanese had made no effort to deploy any of their own air defense equipment from Port Sudan to Khartoum.
- Sudan did not receive the \$150 million it expected from Saudi Arabia to purchase Egyptian equipment and to maintain Egyptian personnel in Khartoum.
- The Egyptian radars in Sudan were of little use without the SA-2 missiles.
- Sudanese vacillation and indecision delayed Egyptian planning and assistance.
- Sudan's depressed economy forced Egypt to expend its resources on supporting Egyptian troops in Khartoum rather than on constructing missile sites.

25X1

We believe the following also probably affected Egypt's decision:

- Concern that this program would require constantly increasing resources with little likelihood it ever would provide an effective air defense for Khartoum.
- Doubt that the Sudanese ever would be capable of assuming control of this air defense system, thus requiring a near-permanent Egyptian military presence in Sudan.

SECRET

SECRET

25X1

-- Concern that Nimeiri would view a continuing Egyptian presence as tacit approval of his policies, including those regarding the southern insurgency. [REDACTED]

25X1

Outlook

Sudanese disappointment over the withdrawal of Egyptian forces is likely to be tempered by Khartoum's initially low expectations of the program's success and the realization that the program at least resulted in tangible--albeit mostly symbolic--evidence of Egypt's willingness to defend Sudan. In any event, the Sudanese recognize they have little alternative but to continue to rely on Egypt, given Sudan's geographic location and its relations with its neighbors. [REDACTED]

25X1

We believe Egypt's strategic interests in Sudan--the unhampered flow of the Nile River and the presence of a friendly regime in Khartoum--will continue to ensure Egyptian concern over security threats to Sudan. We believe, however, the Egyptian military now recognizes that any program as ambitious as the air defense effort would be impractical due to the amount of logistic and materiel support required to compensate for Sudan's lack of economic infrastructure. Egyptian military assistance to Sudan, therefore, is likely to remain at the levels that traditionally have permitted Cairo to minimally assist the Sudanese military while avoiding entanglement in Sudanese internal problems. In the meantime, we believe Egypt will continue to seek US assistance to strengthen its defenses, believing that a strong Egyptian military is the most effective way to deter Libyan aggression against Sudan. [REDACTED]

25X1

SECRET

SECRET

25X1

SUBJECT: Egypt's Air Defense Program Ending in Sudan

NESA M# 85-10042

DISTRIBUTION:

External

1 - Morton I. Abramowitz, INR, State
 1 - Robert Boggs, NEA/EGY, State
 1 - Richard Bogosian, State
 1 - RADM John L. Butts, Naval Intell. Pentagon
 1 - Commodore Robert J. Steele, Naval Oper., Pentagon
 1 - RADM Theodore Almstedt, Naval Oper., Pentagon
 1 - Patrick N. Theros, PM/RSA/NESA, State
 1 - Raymond Firehock, ACDA/VI/DI, 21st St. Wash.
 1 - Maj Gen William E. Odum, DAMI-FII, Pentagon.
 1 - Brig Gen L. A. Cooley, Jr., DAMO-SSA, Pentagon
 1 - Brig Gen L. W. Smith, HQMC/INTP, Hqs US Marine Corps
 1 - Maj. Gen James C. Pfautz, AF/INER, Pentagon
 1 - Brig Gen Thomas A. Baker, AF/PRIB, Pentagon
 1 - DIA, ATTN: DB-8C3 DIAAC Bolling, AFB
 1 - DIA, ATTN: DE-4 DIAAC, Bolling, AFB.
 1 - DIA, ATTN: JSI-5, Pentagon.
 1 - George R. Crossman, OPS-C, Pentagon
 1 - Lt. Col Glenn A. Lazarus, ISA, Pentagon.
 1 - Col. Kenneth McKim, DOD/ISA

1 - Jock Covey, NSC
 1 - Philip Ringdahl, NSC

25X1

25X1

Internal

1 - DDI	1 - C/PES	
1 - DDO/NE	1 - CPAS/ILS	25X1
1 - DDO/NE	4 - CPAS/IMD/CB	
1 - DDO/NE	1 - D/ALA	
1 - DDO/Africa	1 - ALA/AF	
1 - NIO/NESA	1 - ALA/AF/H	
1 - NIO/Africa	1 - D/NESA	
1 - NIC Analytic Group	2 - NESA/PPS	
1 - DDO/AF	1 - NESA/AI	25X1
1 - PDB Staff	1 - NESA/AI/M	
	3 - NESA/AI/E	

DDI/NESA/AI/E (19 Feb 85)

25X1

SECRET