

**July 27, 1953**

**Report from the Czechoslovak Ambassador to Rome,  
Oldzhich Kaiser, on the Egyptian government's  
interest in Czech military and agricultural  
equipment**

**Citation:**

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<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/112254>

**Summary:**

Czechoslovak ambassador reports on contact with the new Egyptian ambassador to Rome. The Egyptian ambassador criticizes British imperialism in Egypt and American foreign policy. He then asks if Egypt could buy small arms from Czechoslovakia for use in the Egyptian war for independence against the British.

**Original Language:**

Czech

**Contents:**

Translation - English

In May of this year a new Egyptian ambassador<sup>[1]</sup> who used to be the foreign minister in General Naguib's government, arrived in Rome. Immediately upon the commencement of his activity in Rome he paid his first obligatory visit to me... This should be seen as an extraordinary gesture of friendship... According to custom I paid him a visit seven days later... In both formal visits the Egyptian ambassador spoke very amicably to me about international problems, and he strongly criticized British imperialism in Egypt and in the rest of the world. He also criticized US policy. He spoke favorably of the 'peace camp states' policy and explained that their policy dovetailed with the existential interest of his country in radical economic and social transformation of all of the slowly developing countries (due to colonial repression and the exploitation by foreign capitalists). He declared that his country wanted to establish reciprocal and friendly relations with all of the world's countries - including the USSR and the rest of the people's democracies - and to do so indiscriminately and unconditionally. As he emphasized, that meant intensive relations, mainly in the economic sphere, without any discriminations. Referring to relations with Czechoslovakia, he said that it should be noted that, after a long absence, an Egyptian ambassador was again being sent to Prague, and that this was happening while diplomatic missions were closing down all over the world, as part of the austerity measures that were adopted by the new government. Egypt has preserved its diplomatic missions in two places in the 'peace camp' - Moscow and Prague. He further announced that the new Egyptian government was interested in preserving and strengthening economic relations with Czechoslovakia. Egypt was interested in rifles, machine guns and ammunition (allegedly to equip their guerilla forces who were fighting against the British occupation), and in agricultural machinery. Our last meeting took place on 27 June 1953, during a reception at the Brazilian embassy. He asked to talk to me in private. At that conversation he asked me to convey to the Czechoslovak government the importance of the following request, which came from the Egyptian president personally: that our government would sell to Egypt about a hundred small tanks as quickly as possible. To this he added that his government knew that the USSR and the people's democracies were averse to dispatching weapons to countries which might use them against the 'peace camp' once an armed conflict, provoked by imperialism, erupted. Nevertheless, he asked that this position would be reconsidered, bearing in mind that Egypt would never become an ally of the imperialists... and that Egypt had a very small amount of weapons by any international criteria, and that weapons would be used only to defend a country which was now fighting for independence and against colonialism. I, of course, responded evasively and said that I knew very little on the issue of arms exports and that Czechoslovakia did not engage in arms deals. When the ambassador had insisted, I said that I could only pass on the message to my government... At the end of our conversation the Egyptian ambassador said that he would inform the Soviet military attaché in Rome, [Mikhail Alekseevich] Kostylev [who was actually the Soviet ambassador to Rome]<sup>[2]</sup>, and that he would be happy if he could have the opportunity to discuss this matter with an appropriate official in Prague. He added that he could do so with the pretext of visiting the Egyptian ambassador in Prague who was a good friend of his. He intends to carry out his visit in Prague during his upcoming official visit to Vienna. In Prague, 15 July 1953, Kaiser

NOTES<sup>[1]</sup> The name of the Egyptian ambassador is not mentioned.<sup>[2]</sup> On Kostylev's identity see: [<http://www.knowbysight.info/KKK/03571.asp>; accessed 22.2.07]