

## Part 1



# Out of Egypt and Pharaoh's Revenge

Tragically, Anwar Sadat was assassinated October 6, 1981. Does this tragic event have any significance in light of Biblical prophecy? What does the future hold for Egypt? And what is the significance of this when considering the present day peace between Egypt and Israel. Apparent differences of opinion exist between contemporary Bible prophecy speaker Bill Sallus and Israeli prophecy speaker Amir Tsarfati with regard to the Psalm 83 War. Anyone listening to these two soon conclude they are not in agreement. That said, it seems to me that Amir Tsarfati discounts, perhaps too much, the centuries-old conflict between Egypt and Israel.

The Old Testament has over 700 references to the land of Egypt. Of these, there are about 250 prophecies specifically concerning Egypt. Many of these predictions deal with the present day situation. God's Word has the answers as to what is going to happen in the future. God has said that He, **"Declares the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done"** -(Isaiah 46:10). Why does God reveal the future to us? One of the reasons is to validate the Word of God. God says, **"Before it came to pass I showed it thee. Because I knew that thou are obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass"** -(Isaiah 48:4-5).

The world powers today are all falling in line with the Biblical prophecies. Four basic power blocks are mentioned in God's Word that will be involved in Armageddon. The world will come to war over the Middle East. Russia and her allies (Iran, Ethiopia, Libya, and Turkey) are to invade the Middle East in the latter days. (These nations are mentioned by name in Ezekiel 38). China with her allies will move 200 million soldiers into the Middle East. Ten nations out of the West will be headed up by the Antichrist. The fourth power that is mentioned called the **"King of the South"** is Egypt.

According to Daniel 11:40, Egypt will lead an invasion against the State of Israel during the tribulation (after the rapture). Most likely, this invasion will occur in the middle of the seven-year tribulation period. Egypt, **"the King of the South"**, will lead most of the Arab nations in the attack. The Antichrist and his forces will defeat Egypt and these countries. **"He (the Antichrist-leader of Western nations) shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape"** -(Daniel 11:42). This will happen to Egypt in response to Egypt's invasion -(vs. 40). The Antichrist will be ready to invade Libya and Ethiopia which are allied with Russia, but the threat of war with Russia (King of the North) and China (King of the East) will prevent this. Read these Scriptures:

***"But he (Antichrist) shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his (Antichrist's) steps. But tidings out of the East (China) and out of the North (Russia) trouble him (Antichrist)..."*** -(Daniel 11:43, 44). Daniel 11:45 tells us that at this time the Antichrist will establish his rule and put his palace in Jerusalem. ***"And he (Antichrist) shall plant the tabernacle of his palace between the seas*** -(Mediterranean and Dead Seas) ***in the glorious holy mountain*** (Jerusalem)." So we learn from this passage of Scripture that the Antichrist (the leader of the ten Western nations) will rule over Jerusalem and rule over a conquered Egypt.

This matches up exactly with a prophecy given by the prophet Isaiah warning of a powerful dictator who will invade Egypt and take over. ***"And the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel Lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them."*** -(Isaiah 19:4) This is a reference to the Antichrist.

Egypt will, therefore, become a leader of Arab nations against Israel. The policies of Anwar Sadat and the Camp David peace accord will fail, perhaps in the very near future. Although the assassination of Sadat was a terrible tragedy, Egypt will now change course to fit these Scriptural predictions. This could happen much sooner than believed.

Egypt is to become a desolation! The prophet Ezekiel tells us in Ezekiel 29:10-12. ***"Behold, therefore, I am against thee, and against thy rivers, and I will make the land of Egypt utterly waste and desolate, from the tower of Syene even unto the border of Ethiopia. No foot of man shall pass through it, nor foot of beast shall pass through it, neither shall it be inhabited 40 years. And I will make the land of Egypt desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities that are laid waste shall be desolate forty years; and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse, them through the countries."*** This is a vivid description of Egypt being made desolate, perhaps, by an atomic explosion. No form of life will be able to exist in the land. According to scientists, a nuclear holocaust could render an area uninhabitable for forty years. Evidently, Egypt will be radioactive for forty years and not even a dog will be able to walk across Egypt.

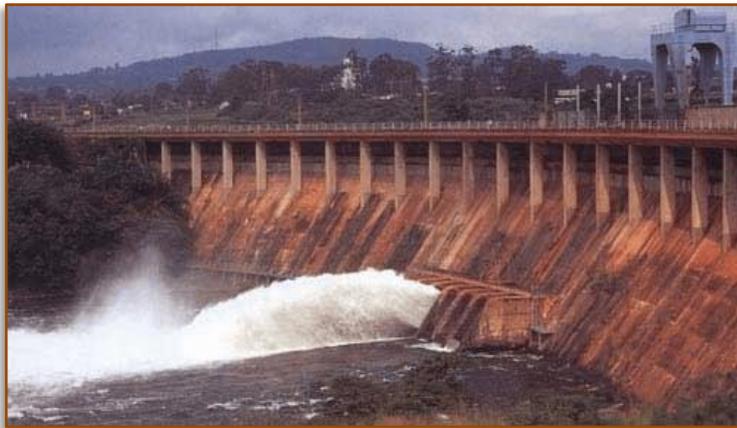
What is truly significant about this passage above from Ezekiel is that ***"the tower of Syene"*** did not even exist when Ezekiel 29:10-12 was written! This passage is "predictive prophecy". This Bible prophecy is speaking about the Aswan High Dam. Aswan (referred to in the KJV as the "tower of Syene") is located on the first cataract of the Nile. It is a source of red granite for building materials, and was a southern base for military ventures into deeper Africa, such as Cush (ancient Ethiopia, a region around the upper Nile in modern Sudan).

There are many prophecies in the Bible about Egypt, which is a near neighbor to Israel. Some of these relate to the present time. The prophecies concerning Egypt recorded in the books of Ezekiel and Isaiah, have turned out to be amazingly accurate. As we will see, some are being fulfilled through the efforts of the Egyptians themselves to modernise their nation. The accuracy of their description of the unhappy course of events that has overtaken that country is

indeed one of many proofs of God's inspiration of Scripture. One such example refers to the River Nile, and has been brought about by the mighty Aswan High Dam project.

The building of the Aswan High Dam, was a project promoted by Colonel Nasser, the soldier turned politician, who helped to oust King Farouk in a military coup in 1952. He became Prime Minister of Egypt in 1954. Because he accepted military support from the Communist Bloc of nations in 1956, the USA and Great Britain withdrew offers made the previous year to build the dam.

Nasser then nationalized the Suez Canal and blocked Israeli ships from using it. Israel invaded Egypt, and Great Britain and France sent troops in to "protect the Canal Zone." But pressure from both the UN and the USA forced them to withdraw leaving Nasser triumphant and in charge of the Canal.



Because of the tensions, the World Bank refused to fund the dam and the USSR provided the money and know-how for the dam, which Nasser claimed would revolutionize and enrich Egyptian society. To repay the loan from the USSR, Egypt was required to turn over all revenues from the Suez Canal to the USSR. The High Dam is up-river from another smaller dam, the Aswan

Dam, completed in 1902. The High Dam is a massive earth and rockfill structure, 3 miles long and 350 feet high. Lake Nasser, formed by the dam, is 300 miles long and 6 miles wide. The Temples of Abu Simbel, built by Pharaoh Ramses II in the 1200's BC near the river bank, had to be moved to higher ground during the construction.

A special feature entitled "*Dam Dream Turns Sour*" was published in the Melbourne 'Herald' a number of years ago. It included the following statement:

*"The Egyptians have at last acknowledged that something is very wrong with the Aswan High Dam. The gigantic project which brought the world to the brink of atomic war in the 1950's is now the subject of a million-dollar survey into its environmental effects on the Nile. The dam has created grave problems."*

Ironically, among the thousands engaged on the Nile survey are many American biologists and chemists.

What went wrong? The flooding of the Nile used to bring millions of tonnes of silt on to the arable land along the banks of the Nile and into the Nile Delta area where the river discharged into the Mediterranean Sea. Today most of this is trapped in the dam at Aswan,

while the Mediterranean which used to be kept at bay by the full force of the river, and the fresh silt deposits every year, is eating up the coastline around the delta.

The loss of a nutrient supply from the river has killed the sardine industry in the South East Mediterranean Sea. The stagnant waters in the Nile Delta area at the entrance to the Sea have encouraged a plague of disease-bearing snails called "bilharzia" here and in the irrigation canals. The dam has halted the yearly supply of silt that farmers relied upon to fertilize their crops and brick-builders used to make their bricks. It has hastened the flow of peasants from the countryside to the towns, where their sprawling shanty towns compete with valuable agricultural land. The sardine industry, cotton industry and agriculture of the Nile valley have all been damaged by the damming of the water, and there have been no great advantages to offset these losses.

The prophet Ezekiel, writing about 2,600 years ago, made the following predictions: "Egypt, from Migdol in the north to Syene (Aswan) in the south would become **"desolate and waste"** -(Ezekiel 29:10). Wealthy Egyptians like the Fayed family that owns Harrods in London have fled the country. -(Ezekiel 29:12). God said: **"I will make the rivers (of Egypt) dry... and I will make the land waste, and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers"** (Ezekiel 30:12-13). **"I will also destroy the idols,** (Abu Simbel?... the entire "god-worship" of idols) **and I will cause their images to cease out of the land of Noph... and I will put a fear in the land of Egypt"** - (Ezekiel 30:13).

Isaiah wrote as follows: **"And the waters shall fail from the sea, and the river (of Egypt) shall be wasted and dried up... the reeds and flags shall wither... The fishers also shall mourn... they that work in fine flax... they that weave networks shall be confounded... Neither shall there be any work for Egypt... In that day shall Egypt... be afraid and fear because of the shaking by the hand of the Lord of hosts"** -(Isaiah 19:5-16).

For centuries the Nile has been the lifeline of the once powerful Egyptian civilization. With the failure of its productive potential Egypt certainly has much to fear!

Although this project has become a tragedy for Egypt, it is a source of encouragement and even excitement for believers in the Bible. Here is another prophecy which has been fulfilled. As the Bible says, against all odds, one of the world's great rivers has ceased to flow as before, bringing devastation to many people. With completion of the Aswan Dam, flooding of the once great river ceased; however, it virtually wiped out the rice farming of past centuries. This is one less prophecy to be completed before Jesus returns! Perhaps His Coming is closer than we imagine.

These predictions will likely be fulfilled at some point during the seven-year tribulation, after the rapture, when Russia, China, and the Western Nations engage in a nuclear holocaust called Armageddon. One third of all the people on the planet earth will be wiped out. Certainly we can see the possibility of these events happening in the near future! As we appear to be on the threshold of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> Week, we see the emergence of ominous signs that might suggest the war with the Kings of the South. We see Russian-Egyptian military cooperation on the rise.

A few hours before Russian President Vladimir Putin arrived in Cairo to meet with his Egyptian counterpart Abdel Fattah al-Sisi on Dec. 11, 2017 he ordered the Hmeimim air base in Syria's Latakia province to begin withdrawing the bulk of Russian troops stationed in Syria, while maintaining a presence at Hmeimim and the Russian naval facility in Tartus.

Putin went to Cairo to hold a joint summit with Sisi, which resulted in the signing of the final contracts for the construction of the Dabaa nuclear plant in northern Egypt. Putin also revealed Moscow's readiness to resume Russian flights over Egypt, as all flights had been suspended after a Russian aircraft was downed in the Sinai on Oct. 31, 2015. In addition, both presidents discussed ways of countering terrorism. This visit followed the signing of a draft agreement between Egypt and Russia on Nov. 30, allowing the military aircraft of the two countries to share airspace and air bases.

The text of the Nov. 30 agreement was included in a decree issued by the Russian government, which ordered Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu to conduct direct negotiations with Egyptian officials and sign the document once the two parties reached an agreement. According to the draft agreement, Russian and Egyptian warplanes would be able to use each other's airspace and air bases after five days' notice. This renewable agreement is expected to be valid for five years. Egypt and Russia signed the draft agreement on the sidelines of Shoigu's visit to Cairo on Nov. 29, during which he participated in Russian-Egyptian joint military-technical cooperation sessions.

The agreement is expected to include more joint training between the two sides and would make it easier for Egyptian pilots to fly Russian planes. Russia and Egypt also would be able to carry out bilateral anti-terrorism measures in the Sinai Peninsula, where terrorist operations are on the rise, according to the Russian news website RBC.

The Egyptian-Russian military cooperation to combat terrorism was demonstrated during the joint exercise known as "Protectors of Friendship 2" on Sept. 14, carried out by Egyptian paratroopers and Russian air-landing forces in the Russian city of Novorossiysk. The training aims to regain control of vital locations by leading an eradication of terrorists in Sinai.

During the joint press conference between Sisi and Putin in Cairo on Dec. 11, Putin hinted at the role of the Russian air force in the fight against terrorism, saying, *"I revealed to President Sisi the results of my visit to Syria today. Thanks to the Russian air force, all of the Syrian territories have been liberated from terrorists, and I believe that the objectives for which the Russian army intervened have been achieved."*

Egypt has been suffering from an increase in terrorist attacks since July 2013, the latest of which was the attack on Al-Rawda Mosque in North Sinai on Nov. 24, which killed about 310 worshippers. In a meeting with foreign journalists in Sharm el-Sheikh on Nov. 9, Sisi expressed his concerns about the Islamic State (IS) terrorists relocating to Sinai and western Egypt after being defeated in both Iraq and Syria.

Nurhan al-Sheikh, a Russian affairs expert and a professor of political science at Cairo University, told Al-Monitor over the phone, *"It is in Egypt's best interest to cooperate with Russia when it comes to countering terrorism, especially after Russia's unprecedented success in liberating all Syrian territories from IS."* Sheikh said, *"Cooperation with Russia in the fight against terrorism is not a matter of choice but a necessity imposed by the need to protect Egypt's national security, especially since large numbers of armed militants are expected to arrive in Egypt and defeating them requires Moscow's expertise."*

For his part, Russian political analyst Taimour Dwidar, who works with several Arabic channels, told Al-Monitor, *"Russia needs bases in Africa to fight terrorism in the region and play a role in the Libyan crisis,"* noting that Russia expressed a desire to use the Sidi Barrani base in March on the northern coast near the Libyan border, a request that Egypt denied.

Russia supports the Libyan army forces led by Khalifa Hifter. Russian Ambassador to Libya Evan Molotkov had announced in May Russia's readiness to lift the ban on arming the Libyan armed forces. Hifter met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Shoigu in August. In May 2017, the Russian naval forces conducted maneuvers near the Libyan coast. The agreement between Egypt and Russia to use each other's air bases seems to be of more convenience to Egypt, which opposes foreign parties building their own bases on its territory or renting Egyptian military bases.

On Oct.16, 2016, Sisi told the Egyptian press that the building of air bases by foreign parties in Egypt was out of the question, saying, *"Egypt is not like that. It never was and it never will be."* Hussein Haridi, former Egyptian ambassador to Washington and former assistant Egyptian foreign minister, told Al-Monitor over the phone, *"This agreement will be a very strong addition to the Egyptian army in terms of modernizing the troops and providing equipment and advanced weapons."*

Haridi, saying Egypt's relationship with Russia is no less than Turkey's, said he expects Russia to provide Egypt with the S-400 surface-to-air missile system; Russia is in the final stages of talks with Turkey on supplying the system. Haridi added that Russia would soon supply Egypt with MiG-29 fighter jets and has won a tender to sell Egypt Ka-52 helicopters for French-built Mistral ships.

As for the U.S. response to the Egyptian-Russian military rapprochement, Haridi said Egypt has a special vision regarding the changes taking place in the region, stressing that Washington has no right to dictate to Egypt the sources of its weapons.

For her part, Sheikh said that the United States is one of Egypt's key partners, that both countries cooperate within the partnership program with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and that Russia has not interfered in the Egyptian-US relationship. Sheikh also said that Turkey is a member of NATO but still enjoys good military relations with Moscow, ruling out the possibility that the military rapprochement between Egypt and Russia will affect Egypt's relationship with the United States.

President Trump in reaction to the improved relations between Egypt and Russia reacted quickly. On Tuesday in August of 2017, the Trump administration cut nearly \$100 million in military and economic aid to Egypt and delayed almost \$200 million more in military financing to Egypt, pending human rights improvements and action to ease harsh restrictions on civic and other non-governmental groups. The moves underscore the administration's delicate diplomacy with Egypt, which has been widely criticized for its civil-rights record and yet is a staunch counterterrorism partner.

Officials said Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson had decided to withhold \$65.7 million in military assistance and \$30 million in economic aid to Egypt that has been on hold since fiscal 2014, the officials said. That money will be reprogrammed, meaning it will now be sent to other countries, they said. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because Congress had not been formally notified of the decision.

Trump tells Egyptian president "you have a great ally in the U.S. and in me". At the same time, the officials said Rex Tillerson had signed a waiver saying that \$195 million in military assistance to Egypt is in the U.S. national interest but had decided to hold off on spending it. Under federal law, Tillerson had until Sept. 30, the end of this fiscal year to either sign the waiver, certify that Egypt is meeting the human-rights conditions or return the money to the Treasury. The waiver gives Egypt additional time to meet the requirements for the \$195 million, which Congress appropriated for fiscal year 2016.

The officials stressed that the U.S. continues to consider Egypt a key strategic partner but that it remains seriously concerned about a lack of progress on the human-rights front, including the passage of the new law on non-governmental organizations that has been widely criticized for being excessive and used to crackdown on opposition. The \$195 million will be held in reserve until Egypt makes progress in those areas, the officials said.

Egypt is the second largest recipient of military aid from the United States after Israel, receiving about \$1.3 billion annually and the officials noted that the U.S. has provided nearly \$80 billion in military and economic assistance to Egypt over the past 30 years. They said the U.S. would continue to support Egypt's efforts to defeat extremists and terrorism as well as the country's economic development.

Tillerson's dual decisions reflect a difficult balancing act that the administration is playing with Egypt. President Trump has signaled his approval of Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi's tough stance against terrorism yet many members of the administration, including Tillerson, and numerous lawmakers harbor serious doubts about his human-rights record and commitment to democratic reform.

When Mr. Trump met with el-Sissi in the White House in April he made no mention of Egypt's human rights record in the post-meeting statement, an omission that many took as a sign that the issue was not a priority for the administration. Yet, two months later, two senators from Mr. Trump's Republican Party slammed the law as "draconian" claiming that it effectively bans the work of non-governmental organizations and urged that it be repealed.

The law has triggered wide international backlash and raised concerns over human rights conditions in Egypt. But Egypt has defended the law, saying it was drafted and passed in accordance with constitutional provisions. The Foreign Ministry said the law "supports and empowers civil society."

El-Sissi is grappling with an insurgency by Islamic militants in the northern part of the Sinai Peninsula, an economy struggling to keep up with demands and employment needs of Egypt's surging population, and a sustained campaign of violence against the country's Christian minority.

President Trump, known for his *'Art of the Deal'* has his hands full in dealing with Egypt's El-Sissi, who now sees Egypt in a perfect position in Middle East geo-politics. He apparently is not hesitant at all about extorting military armaments from the two super powers which he needs to restore Egypt's once powerful state. Egypt is the world's fourth largest military in the world and he has an appetite for acquiring even more military hardware and weaponry. Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi has asked Russia to supply Egypt with high-tech fighter jets, attack helicopters, and anti-tank missile systems, according to regional reports. Sisi made the request in Moscow during a meeting with his counterpart, Russian President Vladimir Putin, who met with the Egyptian leader to discuss expanding arms exports.

The request for these advanced weapons comes just months after the Saudi Arabian government donated \$2 billion to Egypt to finance the purchase of Russian-made weapons. Sisi's reliance on Moscow for these arms is another sign that the Egyptian government is growing more distant from Washington which, under the Obama administration, has slashed aid to Cairo and cut back on key weapons shipments that help the country combat terrorism.

Sisi is likely seeking to cement a weapons gap left by the United States' abrupt refusal to fulfill its arms deals with Cairo following the ousting of former Muslim Brotherhood-backed President Mohamed Morsi. During the pow-wow with Putin, Sisi reportedly asked for top-line equipment, including MiG29 fighter jets, Kornet anti-tank missile systems, Kamoc Ka-25 attack helicopters, Mil Mi-28 attack helicopters, and various transport helicopters, according to an Arabic report on the meeting published by Youm7.

While the State Department did not respond to requests for comment on the meeting, regional experts told the *Free Beacon* that the weapons request is no surprise given the Obama administration's efforts to distance itself from Cairo.

*"Putting aside how disconcerting it is that Saudi Arabia—which is so angry with Putin's support to Assad—is earmarking funding for Russian weapons, a potential deal comes as little surprise,"* David Schenker, director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy's Program on Arab Politics, told the *'Free Beacon'*.

*"The Egyptians have a lot of Russian legacy systems in their current arsenal,"* Schenker explained. *"Washington was hoping to phase it out, and fully standardize on U.S. equipment,"*

*but that's not going to happen anytime soon."* Egyptian leaders in the new secular government are still fuming over the Obama administration's efforts to chill relations, Schenker said. *"The Egyptians were stung by the hold on U.S. weapons transfers [which were] related to Human Rights concerns,"* Schenker explained.

At least 10 U.S. planes earmarked for Egypt are still docked at Fort Hood in Texas following moves by Sen. Patrick Leahy (D., VT) to block the transfer as punishment for Sisi's crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood and its news organ, Al Jazeera.

The cutoff in U.S. arms came at a critical juncture for Egypt, which has had trouble combatting terrorists affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood and other extremist groups in the Sinai region near Israel. *"In the midst of a serious counterinsurgency campaign in the Sinai, and with a growing threat on the Libyan border, Egypt has not surprisingly come to the conclusion that it needs to diversify,"* Schenker said. *"The U.S. is no longer viewed as a reliable supporter."* Schenker and his WINEP colleague Eric Trager warned in March that Egyptian *"mistrust of Washington"* was forcing a turn to Russia, which has foreign policy goals different than that of the U.S.

Sisi's request for Russia's Kornet anti-tank weaponry is perhaps the most significant. This is the same system Russia gave to embattled Syrian President Bashar al Assad, who, in turn, has allowed Hezbollah to access the system. *"Hezbollah, which had received these from Assad's Syria, used these to great effect in 2006 against Israeli armor in Lebanon,"* said Schenker.

*"It's unclear why Egypt needs these systems"* and it could lead Israel to *"complain, quietly, that this constitutes an erosion of"* its qualitative military edge over its regional neighbors, which the United States has always promised to ensure. However, Israel is not likely to press the case given its warmer relations with Egypt since the secular government took hold. Questions also remain about how exactly the Egyptian military would integrate Russia's MiG planes into its fleet of American-made F16 jets. *"This will prove both costly and a logistical mess,"* Schenker warned.

Reaction from Israel does not mean that Israel is asleep at the switch. To the contrary, while Israel is content with the existing peace treaty it has with Egypt, it does not mean that it pays little attention to what the Egyptian government is doing. Why are two Russian Il-78 Midas tankers deployed to Egypt?

The presence of two Il-78M Midas tankers in Egypt fuels theories about past and future Russian Air Force missions across the world. A photo taken at Cairo International airport on Oct. 29, 2017 proves the Russians have deployed two Il-78M Midas tankers to Egypt. The reason behind their presence in North Africa is still unclear.

There are chances that the Russians deployed the tankers to Egypt in support of the long range missions flown across northern Europe as far as the Atlantic off Portugal on both Oct. 30 and 31. Most probably they were using the tankers to support the trip of the Tu-95

Bear strategic bombers, intercepted and escorted by several air forces including the Portuguese along their way, to the southern Atlantic.

One radio enthusiast on Twitter noted a message being relayed to Bort 94290 (IL-78M) and passing (Heading Easterly) waypoint EVIRA (East of Malta). Then, according to Tom Hill, a radio enthusiast and reader of *'The Aviationist'*, the Tu-95MS and IL-78Ms were active in Voice and Morse Code. The Russians still use quite a lot of Morse and especially for these extended out of area missions. They send the same short 3 figure tactical messages back to their control in Russia using Morse and Voice. Radio enthusiasts were busy logging the activity last week.

Even though at least one of the two IL-78Ms (RF-94920) was heard passing a waypoint in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea. It's still unclear whether it really refueled the Tu-95s that flew to the Atlantic Ocean in Portugal FIR (Flight Information Region), and back (remaining in international airspace).

Was it just a practice for future missions or perhaps the Russians are intending to route Tu-95MS Bear Hs into the Mediterranean? If so, maybe we are going to see some shots of the Russian bombers as those taken by the Italian air force pilots during their Cold War intercepts.

A puzzling question lingers: How did the IL-78Ms get to Egypt? Did they deploy through the Gibraltar Straits or did they take the Iran, Iraq and Syria route? Possibly the Iranians were a bit twitchy about combat aircraft such as Tu-95s deploying but they allowed the tanker support?

Recently the first shipment of MRAP (Mine Resistant Ambush Protected) vehicles from the United States arrived in the port of Alexandria for delivery to the Egyptian military. The heavily armored MRAP vehicles are specifically designed to protect soldiers from blasts from Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), landmines, and from other types of attacks. Today's delivery is the first batch of a total of 762 MRAP vehicles that the United States is transferring to Egypt. This new capability will be used to combat terrorism and promote stability in the region.

Originally designed to support United States military operations in Afghanistan, MRAPs provide enhanced levels of protection to soldiers, and are proven to save lives. The U.S. Embassy Senior Defense Official in Cairo, Major General Charles Hooper, stated, "The delivery of these MRAPs to Egypt provides a crucial capability needed during these times of regional instability and is part of the continuing strong relationship between the U.S. and Egypt."

This delivery of MRAPs is part of the U.S. Department of Defense's Excess Defense Articles grant program, in which the vehicles are transferred at no-cost to the Government of Egypt. This delivery is the most recent step taken by the U.S. government in support of Egypt's fight against terrorism and is part of a broad range of military cooperation initiatives between the two countries.

Russian and Egyptian relations are improving as both countries respond to changes in the Middle East and look for alternative partners to work with on multiple fronts. The countries' foreign and defense ministers met November 13-14, 2017, the highest-level meeting Moscow and Cairo have held in years. The conference was in preparation for a possible visit to Cairo by Russian President Vladimir Putin later this month, Putin's first such visit to Egypt. However, despite their common interests at the moment, both countries realize that a permanent alignment is not sustainable.

Russia and Egypt have a long and tumultuous history. Egypt was a staunch supporter of communist regimes around the world in the early part of the Cold War, and the Soviet Union supported Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser as he modernized the Arab nation. At the time, Egypt and the West were experiencing spats over Egypt's nationalizing the Suez Canal and expelling Western diplomats. However, when Anwar Sadat assumed the presidency in Cairo in 1970, the country began to turn toward the West and relations cooled with Moscow after Sadat expelled thousands of Soviet military advisers.

Today, changes in the Middle East are undermining the positions of Egypt and Russia. Russia is now seeking a new advantage in the Middle East, both to anchor itself in the region and to counter the United States. This also comes as Russia is attempting to propel itself onto the international stage as an alternative power to the United States.

U.S.-Egyptian relations have dropped off substantially and in light of Washington's decision to cut military aid to Cairo in October, there are no signs of improvement. Already Egypt is in serious economic distress due to falling energy production and skyrocketing inflation. The Egyptians have turned to their Gulf Arab allies for help, thus far receiving \$7 billion of the \$12 billion promised from states such as the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. But the Gulf Arab aid is not enough to keep Egypt stable, and the country is seeking a supplementary patron not only for aid but also to try to shape U.S. behavior.

There are three main areas in which Russia and Egypt can begin to develop stronger relations. The first is financial — Egypt's foreign reserves are dwindling and foreign aid has been insufficient, while Russia has excess cash in its reserves and growing oil-supported wealth funds.

The second potential area of cooperation is military. Reports have emerged that Russia and Egypt are negotiating a considerable military deal, certainly the largest and most important between the countries since the 1970s. Price estimates for the deal, which reportedly centers primarily on MiG-29 fighter aircraft, air defense missile systems and anti-tank guided missiles, range from \$1.5 billion to \$4 billion.

Finally, Russia can support Egypt with larger grain exports. In the 2012-13 grain season, Russia made up a third of Egypt's grain imports, approximately 2.7 million tons. Russia is currently having a healthy year for grain production at home, with a rise in exports expected. The problem in recent months between Egypt and Russia has been the price — Cairo has been

unable to afford Russian grain, which is more expensive than grain from countries such as Ukraine. An agreement for discounted grain is a possibility going forward.

Even with so many important potential deals, there are limits on the Russo-Egyptian relationship — and on Russia ever replacing the United States in relations with Egypt. Egypt will always have some sort of relationship with the United States, and Russian support so far from home is typically piecemeal as Moscow deals with domestic problems. Moreover, Egypt's Gulf Arab allies would not be welcoming of Cairo's attempts to swap Washington for Moscow. But at this time, Egypt and Russia are seeking any advantage they can from rekindling the relationship while the region realigns. Egypt has specific needs that Russia can fill, and Russia needs to continue shaping the Middle East in order to keep U.S. focus far from its immediate region.

Two years ago, France sold 2 “Mistral” helicopter carriers to Egypt after a deal fell through with Russia over the Ukraine civil war.



France then agreed to sell two Mistral-class LHD to Egypt, a transaction estimated at more than €950 million euros. After the failed transaction with Russia due to the ongoing situation in the Ukraine, the fate of the Mistrals was involved in many rumors, including a possible sale to Canada.

Reuters reported that French officials confirmed the deal on September 23, 2015. French President Francois Hollande addressed reporters stating that France and Egypt came to an agreement on the sale of the Mistral.

*“We unwound the contract we had with Russia, on good terms, respectful of Russia and not suffering any penalty for France,”* Hollande told reporters on arrival at an EU summit in Brussels.

In June 2015, Egypt acquired a FREMM Aquitaine-class vessel from France, followed by the Egyptian Air Force taking delivery of the first three Rafales fighters of a 25 plane deal in July 2015. Later, in September, the Mistral deal has been concluded, suggesting that Egypt has a penchant for French-made military hardware, leading to the possibility of more lucrative contracts for French companies.

The sale of the two Mistral-class LHD will significantly contribute to the growing relationship between Russia and Egypt. Although Russia has lost a valuable contract, the fact that Egypt bought the two LHDs enable them to enhance military cooperation and interoperability with Cairo. It is clear that both countries will take advantage of this transaction, but for different reasons.

Once the Egyptian Navy deemed the two Mistrals operational, it was probable that Russia would offer to deploy advisors to share their expertise in operating the vessels—even with limited experience at sea with the Mistrals—to the Egyptian sailors. The fact that Russian soldiers were training on the Mistral will greatly benefit the newly-established Egyptian crew.

If aboard, Russian advisors will most likely have access to the entire ship and could pass technical information of the vessel to national shipbuilders; a move that would enable Russian shipbuilders to work on a similar version of the Mistral.

A Russian version of the Mistral could also benefit Egypt. Russia will most likely provide equipment for the Mistral to Egypt as they were ready to take delivery of the first Mistral when the deal began to waver and as such, they already have systems ready for use by the vessels. They may also develop new technologies that could be deployed on the Egyptian Mistral in the future.

After the failed contract between Russia and France, fifty Ka-52 helicopters were left unused. Fortunately for Russia, Egypt purchased the whole fleet of Ka-52 and are considering the deck-version for seaborne operations aboard their newly-purchased Mistral-class LHD.

The Ka-52 Alligator is a next-generation reconnaissance and combat helicopter designed to destroy tanks, armored and non-armored ground targets, and enemy troops and helicopters both on the front line and in tactical reserves. The helicopter can operate around the clock and in all weathers. The Ka-52 can provide target acquisition and designation for helicopter teams and ground troop command and control centers. It can also provide fire support for troop landings, fly routine patrols, and escort military convoys.

Well-connected sources in the Russian defense industry told TASS that Russia could possibly supply the sea-based version of the Ka-52: *“An agreement on the supply of fifty Ka-52 helicopters has been signed,” he said. “If the Egyptian side finds it necessary, the sea-based version of the helicopters will be supplied.”* That said, the Ka-52K has been specifically designed for seaborne operations. The first delivery is expected between 2017 and 2018.

Russian helicopters rotorcraft manufacturer and Russia’s Defense Ministry said that the Ka-52K would be deployed on other Russian Navy ships instead of the Mistral. Nevertheless, it is almost certain that Russia will agree to sell Ka-52K helicopters to Egypt, reopening the door to more contracts from the Egyptian military.

In the lead up to the sale of the Mistrals to Egypt, Russia has been appearing in the region quite frequently. Russia has been concluding paratrooper training exercises in Egypt, talked about Syria with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and has been increasing its presence in Syria. The increased presence, coinciding with the sale of the Mistrals as well as the continuing deterioration of the situation in Syria, provides Russia with the opportunity to unnerve the West while doing little that can be perceived as threatening. We have seen an increased presence by NATO forces in Europe, particularly on exercise, in response to Ukraine, while simultaneously gradually reducing their presence in the Middle East. By refocusing their deployments to Syria and conducting such exercises in the region, Moscow has effectively told the West that they are ready to fill the vacuum a lessened coalition presence will create, though they remain open to cooperation.

The larger question NATO needs to ask themselves is: If the low levels of cooperation with Russia remain, can they live with an increased Russian political and military presence in the Middle East? After all, the CSTO, much like NATO, is capable of deploying abroad with their rapid reaction force, and with the increase in extremist influence in CSTO members, may provide enough reason for their deployment if Western commitment remains low.

Through relationship building in the Middle East, Russia is positioning itself well regardless of how events in Syria evolve. Despite their vested interest in keeping Assad in power, improving cooperation with the other regional powers and ensuring mutual interests are protected provide Moscow with the best outcome in the Middle East, while likely keeping NATO involved there rather than in Europe.

By purchasing two French Mistral-class LHD carriers, Egypt has stepped up its shopping for items it needed to modernize its 4<sup>th</sup> largest military in the region. Egypt once again looks beyond the USA for new arms. In April of 2016, the governments of Egypt and France signed a

deal for the purchase of weapons that include fighter aircraft, navy vessels, and a military satellite communication system worth \$1.1 billion. The deal was signed upon French President Francois Hollande's visit to the Egyptian capital Cairo on April 18, 2016. Rumors of what exactly will be sold include four new navy vessels from manufacturer DCNS, Two GOWIND corvettes, and a supply of military satellite equipment from Airbus and Finmeccanica group member Thales Alenia Space.

For most of the Cold War, Egypt's military was a Soviet client. Every war with Israel was fought with weapons that were predominantly Russian. Russian pilots, air defense troops, and other specialists even fought in combat beside their Egyptian counterparts. All that changed with the Camp David accords. Egypt slowly flipped, as the flood of American military aid dollars soon translated into a military whose high-end equipment was predominantly American.

Now, hostility from the current US administration after the Muslim Brotherhood was removed from power in Egypt is changing the relationship again. Egypt has been looking beyond the USA for equipment, and the Russians are seizing an opportunity to begin bringing Egypt back into the fold. The Egyptian military's stocks haven't wholly been purged of Russian equipment, either, which adds plausibility to the idea. Is Egypt about to flip again? And who else is in the mix? I believe at this point you can see where I have been headed in this article.

Egypt isn't entirely dependent on the USA for weapons. The Egyptian Air Force's fleet of 18 or so Mirage 2000s adds an important alternative to their 200+ F-16s, but it's a drop in the bucket. Instead, their main alternative is an old standby: over 100 Russian MiG-21s, or their license-built Chinese J-7 counterparts.

On land, Egypt has almost 3,000 American M1A1 and M60 tanks, and M113-derivatives dominate their APCs and IFVs. On the other hand, Egypt also has over 1,200 Soviet tanks that have undergone upgrades to Ramses II (T-55) or RO-120 Mk.III (T-62) status, and a similarly-proportioned range of older OTR-60 family, BTR, and locally-designed Fahd APCs. *'Jane's Defense Weekly'* confirms this kind of pattern throughout their forces: higher-end American equipment, with a smaller set of older East-Bloc designs that remain in the force.

The good news is that this split makes a shift away from the USA possible. The bad news is that this isn't the Cold War, and the Russians won't just give everything away as military aid. Egypt can replace and refurbish some of its equipment, but a complete American military cutoff at any time during the next decade would be a serious military problem. Egypt can lessen its risks, and the government will, but it can't remove them.

Ultimately, the question will be who pays for all this. Egypt's ability to afford major weapons purchases is poor without outside aid, and civil stability is a bigger priority than flashy military toys. At the same time, Egypt has a limited window to find other major defense partners, and lessen its dependence on the USA before its older equipment ages into disuse.

By looking to expand its influence in the Middle East, Russia attaches no strings regarding how its weapons are used, and is also interested in economic opportunities like

Egypt's natural gas resources. That makes them a more natural geo-political partner than China, and their opportunities range from refurbishing older Soviet-era military equipment, to selling new. They'll still want Egypt to show them the money, of course, but they'll be flexible regarding exactly what form the 'money' will take.

Egypt's parliament has agreed to \$3.7 billion in French loans which will be used to finance armament procurements from France. The money will go toward a variety of equipment and hardware, and will be spread across the Navy, Army, and Air Force. The modernization of Egypt's armed forces is seen as an integral part of securing the often porous borders in North Africa, and fighting several Islamic militant groups with links to al-Qaeda and the Islamic State in the Sinai Peninsula.

Egypt has received delivery of its second batch of three Rafale fighters bringing its total number to six. A special ceremony marking the delivery was held with French and Egyptian officials in attendance. The importance of the Rafale acquisition was stressed by Army spokesman Brig. Gen. Mohamed Samir who said that they represent a "new addition to the armament system and combat readiness, and enhances the combat capabilities of the armed forces." Last year's contract will see Egypt acquire twenty-four of the jets from Dassault which also included a FREMM frigate from DCNS.

The Obama Administration caved to local security needs and pressures by pledging \$1.3 billion-worth of foreign military financing for Egypt, with the sale of a dozen F-16s, 125 Abrams replacement kits and 20 harpoon missiles cleared following the freezing of military exports to the country in 2013.

Alexander Fomin, the head of Russia's Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation, says that Russia and Egypt followed an initialed arms contracts worth \$3.5 billion. Attacks by Islamists linked to al-Qaeda have been rising in the Sinai, which will make any helicopter buys a big priority. Unfortunately, current reports did not include details. All Rosoboron export's Anatoly Isaykin will say is that their orders portfolio now stands at **\$38.7 billion**, illustrating Russia's slow climb back into the top tier of weapons exporters. Sources: RIA Novosti, "Russia, Egypt Initial Arms Contracts Worth 3.5 Billion" | Reuters, "Russia, Egypt seal preliminary arms deal worth \$3.5 billion: agency" | Al-Ahram Weekly, "Tilt towards Russia".

Israel's Channel 2 is citing official sources in Moscow and Cairo who say that Egypt will buy 24 thrust-vectoring MiG-35s, which weren't even scheduled to begin deliveries to the Russian air force until 2016. Agreement in principle reportedly took place in February 2014, but there is no contract yet, so details are still being sorted out. As one source put it: "UAC CEO Sergei Korotkov confirmed that negotiations are ongoing but said the number of aircraft Egypt will eventually get has been changing constantly."

MiG-35s would give Egypt a formidable aerial opponent that is far in advance of the F-16C/Ds it has received from America. Key questions include whether the MiG-29's human interface weaknesses have been adequately fixed, and whether Egypt can keep the finicky fighters in service if it buys them. The biggest question is how Egypt will fund that buy. Egypt's

treasury is a mess, and so they're relying on funds from Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Neither of whom are happy with Russia's actions in Syria. Sources: Times of Israel, *"Russia said set to sell its top fighter jets to Egypt"* | Defense Update, *"Egypt interested in buying 24 MiG-35s from Russia"*.

The USA will continue with the sale of 10 AH-64D Apache attack helicopters to Egypt, at the request of both Israel and Egypt thanks to terrorist activity in Sinai and Gaza. Pentagon spokesman Rear Admiral John Kirby explicitly said that they're meant to bolster counter-terrorism operations in the Sinai.

The excuse given was that then U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry will "soon certify to Congress that Egypt is sustaining the strategic relationship with the United States and is meeting its obligations under the 1979 Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty." On the other hand, the USA won't be certifying that Egypt is taking "steps to support a democratic transition" until the coming elections are held. Which will keep the deal for 24 F-16s on hold.

Russia's Vedemosti reported that Egypt and Russia have taken the next step, and signed a \$3 billion weapons deal. The MiG-29s were expected, and so was an unspecified air defense component. What's new in these reports is the inclusion of Mi-35 attack helicopters, light weapons and ammunition, and "coastal anti-ship complexes."

Russian anti-ship missiles like the SS-N-26 Oniks would be a serious threat to any navy operating near Egypt, but their missiles also have land-strike capabilities and good range. The question is why a country facing few naval threats would see such missiles as a priority when they already have a range of naval systems that include platforms firing French Exocet and American Harpoon missiles.

Ruslan Pukhov, a member of the Russian Defense Ministry's advisory board and head of the Center for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies in Moscow, says that Egypt is seeking up to \$2 billion in Russian weapons. The Russian defense and foreign ministers were flying people in to Cairo for 2 days of "military-technical" cooperation talks with Egyptian officials, and Egyptian Foreign Minister Nabil Fahmy confirmed the arms talks in an interview with Russia Today's Arabic channel.

So far, reports have varied between \$2-4 billion, which would need to be financed with a combination of Russian government help and aid from the Gulf States. Now that reporting is starting to involve Russian sources mentioning specific items, reports regarding the package on request from Russia include:

**Fighter jets.** 24 multi-role MiG-29 M2 fighters, a package that could run as high as \$1.7 billion. That's a high price for MiG-29s, but Egypt would be a new user of the type. Russia would certainly be happy to see the UAC's MiG group rack up additional orders, and follow-on buys might be cheaper. Egypt's problem is that this would create 3 fleets (American, French, Russian) with very different weapon sets, aside from some Western/Russian overlap reported in its upgraded MiG-21s.

**Air defense.** The medium-range Buk M2 (SA-17, a much modernized SA-6) offers familiarity, while shorter-range Tor M2 (SA-15) and Pantsir-S1 (SA-22) systems offer command-guidance options that are already popular in the region. This isn't the first time Egypt has reportedly discussed SA-17 and SA-15 purchases from Russia, and there are reports that Egypt already possesses 10 Buk M1 batteries and 16 Tor M1 firing units.

**Anti-tank missiles.** Egypt's BGM-71D TOW missiles were assembled locally, and the Army still has a wide variety of Russian AT-2/3/5 missiles, as well as the high-end MBDA Milan II from Europe. Russia can offer very effective AT-13 Metis-M and AT-14 Konkurs missiles to supplant the TOWs at the high end, or more AT-5s if Egypt wants to fill in its low end with better gear. Sources: Bloomberg, *"Russia woos Egypt with biggest weapons deal since Cold War"*.

The UAE is looking to replace its fleet of 68 modernized Mirage 2000-9 fighters with even more modern planes: Dassault's Rafale and BAE/EADS' Eurofighter are reportedly their lead options. The question is what to do with their old aircraft. Dassault doesn't seem interested in buying them back, but Egypt already flies Mirage 2000s, and the Gulf states (with the exception of Qatar) have stepped in as key Egyptian aid providers in the wake of America's withdrawal. Buying the UAE's Mirages would push the Egyptian fleet to 86, making it a viable high-end alternative to their F-16s.

The UAE is pushing, and Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi General Sheikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan is said to have told Dassault Aviation about his talks with Egypt. Will Egypt bite?

Egypt's biggest problem is that it will have a very hard time affording these used fighters, let alone buying enough French weapons to equip them. Their next problem will be fending off American interference, but the UAE isn't a country the USA can afford to offend. That hasn't necessarily stopped the Americans recently, but the UAE's position at the Straits of Hormuz, and quiet but extensive basing for USAF aircraft, are levers that can't really be ignored.

More F-16s then were put on hold. The 24-fighter buy has presented major problems throughout, from reports of Chinese espionage, to concerns about the Morsi government's belligerence, to post-coup issues and the suspension of deliveries. Egypt is the 4th largest F-16 operator in the world, behind the USA, Israel, and Turkey.

The rapidly developing relations between Russia and Egypt have been overshadowed by the more prominent relationships between Russia and Syria, as well as Russia and Iran. Nevertheless, the Russia-Egypt relationship deserves closer scrutiny because, unlike the country's relations with the other two Middle Eastern powers, it concerns a country that until recently appeared to be firmly in Western orbit. The abrupt shift of its geopolitical vector toward Eurasia therefore represents a far bigger change for the region than Russia's successful support of the legitimate Syrian government, or the close relationship with the Islamic Republic of Iran, both of which have been on the Western "enemies list" for decades. The reasons for this shift are twofold, and have to do with the way Western powers interact with Middle

Eastern powers in the context of a systemic economic crisis, as well as with Russia's demonstrated attractiveness as an ally.

The West's systemic crisis clearly transformed how Western powers view non-Western ones. Whereas the "end of history" globalist rhetoric suggested a post-sovereignty utopia in which weak and strong powers interact on equal terms in a world without borders, in practice that rhetoric was a ruse to persuade non-Western powers to drop their guard and allow themselves to be penetrated by Western corporations and financial institutions and lose any possibility of charting their own, independent course. Alas, from Western perspective, assimilating "emerging markets" is still the cornerstone of economic policy, the only program of economic growth. Whereas during the 1990s this assimilation took relatively benign form, 9/11 had the effect of initially allowing the U.S. to adopt a far more aggressive stance, to the point of overt military invasion. While EU initially did not follow suit, the severity of EU's own problems prompted it to jump on the bandwagon of "regime change" in the case of Libya, Syria, and the Ukraine.

Egypt, a long-time Western ally since the late 1970s, unexpectedly found itself on the receiving end of predatory Western policies which took the form of the Tahrir Square "color revolution" which ultimately led to the electoral victory of the Muslim Brotherhood, which in turn fell to a military overthrow once the danger of the country's slide into a civil war became apparent. The fact that the Muslim Brotherhood was financed by US-allied Persian Gulf states made Egypt aware it too was the target of state-sponsored jihadism, and that the US was incapable or unwilling to force its allies in the region to refrain from targeting Egypt. While Syria is only a peripheral concern for Egypt, the civil war in Libya, where Islamist formations including ISIS enjoy Gulf Arab support, represents an immediate threat to Egypt for several reasons. The country can be used as a staging ground for launching attacks into Egypt and a sanctuary against retaliation and, in the longer term, should its government be a puppet controlled by hostile Gulf powers whose long term goal is the control of Egypt and of the Suez Canal, which means that Cairo is keenly interested in influencing the outcome of that war.

Russia thus became an attractive partner because of its history of non-involvement in the internal politics of its allied states (almost to a fault, because unilateral restraint led to the Maidan revolution in the Ukraine), because it can fill the security void left by the Western weakness, and, last but not least, because it can physically defend Egypt's political and territorial integrity against every conceivable threat, an ability it is currently demonstrating in Syria. Egypt appears to be taking advantage of these capabilities. Cooperation now includes the possibility of establishing a Russian airbase in Egypt, visits by Russian paratroopers to Egypt, and special operations troops providing training to their Egyptian counterparts. Egypt is also shifting its military procurement plans toward Russia. The two Mistral-class ships that have been acquired by Egypt will receive the originally planned Russian electronics suite and will carry Russian helicopters; there are discussions of MiG fighter sales to Egypt, and the country received a Molniya-class missile boat.

From the Russian perspective, Egypt represents yet another bulwark of security against Western encroachment, a symmetric response to NATO expansion, "Eastern Partnership", and

color revolutions. Combined with the military presence in Syria, Cyprus' general pro-Russian orientation, and the neutralization of Turkey which was also facilitated by an abortive West-promoted coup attempt, Egyptian bases would transform Eastern Mediterranean into a "Russian lake." Last but not least, these bases and alliances could serve a launchpad for power projection into other unstable areas of the Middle East and, if Egypt's control of the Suez Canal is guaranteed by Russian arms, this guarantee endows both countries with a very effective means of pressuring Western and Gulf Arab powers.

In 2002, Israeli Knesset member (MK) Avigdor Lieberman, admittedly a man given to controversial statements, announced that Israel could defeat an invading Egypt by bombing the Aswan High Dam. He knew that this would require the use of nuclear force, since many experts have testified that the dam is too massive to fall to ordinary explosives. Lieberman, who served as Israel's Deputy Prime Minister, and as Minister both of Foreign Affairs and Strategic Affairs, had obviously been briefed upon military alternatives. It appears that he wanted to give Egypt something to think about.

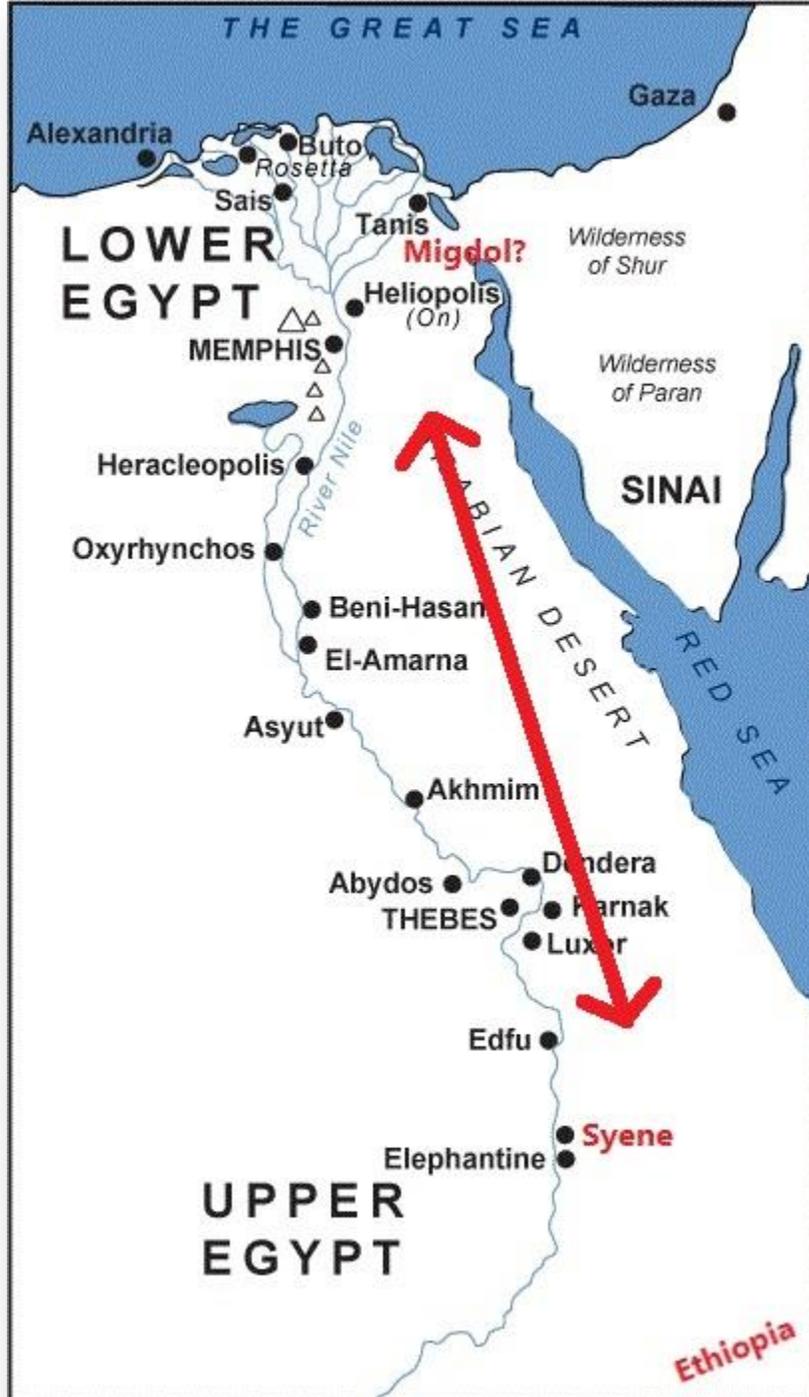
Avigdor Lieberman was simply stating the obvious. If Israel's existence were threatened by an Egyptian invasion, drastic measures would be brought into play, The Aswan Dam holds back the enormous Lake Nasser, 340 miles long and 22 miles wide at its widest. If the dam were breached by a nuclear blast, radioactive waters would cover Egypt from one end to the other.

Satellite photos reveal a staggering truth about Egypt. Virtually its entire population lives in close proximity to the Nile River, from Aswan all the way down to Cairo and the Mediterranean Sea. Night photos show the Nile as a narrow river of light that fans out at the Nile Delta. Egypt may be the only country on earth so vulnerable to total destruction.

From several sources, it is quite easy to confirm that the biblical Syene is really Aswan. One of these is the Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament, first published in 1866. It affirms the connection, from the Greek Septuagint: "[Syene, in the inscriptions according to Brugsch [was] the most southerly border town of Egypt in the direction of Cush, i.e. Ethiopia, on the eastern bank of the Nile, some ruins of which are still to be seen in the modern Assuan (Aswan) ..." (Vol. 9, Ezekiel 29-48, p. 8).

When Keil and Delitzsch wrote their commentary in 1866, there was no tower at Aswan. When Ezekiel wrote his prophecy around 570 B.C., there was no tower. In fact, until the huge hydroelectric project was completed by the Russians and Egyptians in 1967, there was no tower at Aswan. Now, this dam is the most towering feature of the area, and it is doomed to be wiped out at some point between now and the Tribulation.

The question that most naturally will ask is when will this prophecy be fulfilled? Without going into the details at this point, I believe it will occur at the mid-point just after the Abomination of Desolation, when the Antichrist declares he is god. In part 2, I will discuss this along with the fact that Israel may not be saying much, but you can be sure they are aware of the Egyptian military build-up that is underway.



The map above shows the location of Syene, and the area where the Aswan Dam is located. Pundits dismiss Egypt and its existing treaty with Israel as a confirmation of peace, but as historians will note, Treaties are made to be broken! That said, along with what the Bible says in Ezekiel 29:10-12, I am more inclined to put my bets on what the Bible says!

Anna Borshchevskaya, a contributor for *'Forbes'* magazine, covers *Russia, Eurasia, and the Middle East*. She wrote about a deal that would be a big deal for Russia recently. Russian President Vladimir Putin and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi signed a preliminary agreement to jointly build Egypt's first nuclear power plant, after the two leaders met in Cairo on February 9-10, of 2017.

This announcement comes after multiple reports last November about Russia's state nuclear power company Rosatom's agreement to help Iran build several nuclear reactors, including reactors at Iran's Russian-built Bushehr nuclear power plant.

Putin had traveled to Cairo upon Sisi's invitation. Russian-Egyptian relations began improving after the July 2013 military ouster of former president Mohamed Morsi, when U.S.-Egyptian relations began to decline. Cairo grew increasingly concerned with what it perceived to be U.S. engagement with the Muslim Brotherhood, and felt abandoned in its fight against terrorists, particularly in the restless Sinai—a hotbed of radicalism and instability going back to President Hosni Mubarak's time. Washington also delayed weapons deliveries to Egypt, withheld military aid, and later halted the nascent bilateral strategic dialogue. The decline of U.S.-Egyptian relations created an opportunity for Putin to step in and assert his national interests in Egypt.

Putin and Sisi see eye to eye on a number of issues. Putin would certainly prefer to see a secular government in Egypt. Unlike President Obama, Putin enthusiastically endorsed Sisi's bid for Egyptian presidency. Russia's Supreme Court has designated the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization in February 2003. Russia continues to battle an increasingly-radicalized insurgency in the Caucasus and the Kremlin has long believed the Brotherhood helped arm radical Islamists in Russia. Putin certainly won't criticize Sisi on his democratic backslide.

Economic relations have significantly improved between Egypt and Russia in recent years. In 2014, out of Russia's 10 million tourists, over three million have visited Egypt, primarily the Sinai resort of Sharm al-Sheikh. According to Putin, approximately half as few Russian tourists visited Egypt in 2013. Trade between the two countries also grew by approximately 50 percent since 2013 according to Putin, to over \$4.5 billion in 2014. Russia provides approximately 40 percent of Egypt's grain.

Putin's trip to Cairo created a political opportunity for him to show to the West, in light of his aggression in Ukraine, that he is not isolated, no matter what the West says. His announcement of a number of agreements reached in Cairo helps bolster this claim, even if at this point they are still preliminary.

With that summation, I will use it as a transition point for more on what I deemed to address the "Out of Egypt and Pharaoh's Revenge" in the next segment of this series.

Pastor Bob  
[EvanTeachr@aol.com](mailto:EvanTeachr@aol.com)