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EGYPTIAN INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES

analysis

30 MAY 2019

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In an article published on Israeli INN website, TZahi Levi, an Israeli writer and political researcher, wondered why Israel ignores Egypt's quest to strengthen itself militarily, especially regarding its naval force. Citing Der Spiegel German newspaper, Levi said that the German government has approved the sale of two MEKO 200 frigates to the Egyptian navy. However, the Israeli writer also addressed other Egyptian arms deals concluded with France.

The writer wondered in his article about the imaginary enemy that led the Egyptians to acquire such huge naval firepower. "The question arises: who is the imaginary enemy against whom the Egyptians need so much naval firepower?! Is it the old and disintegrating Iranian fleet or the Libyan fleet that does not even exist of the Sudanese fleet? Egypt is a poor country that has difficulty in providing food and water to its own citizens. Why does such a country, which needs every cent to maintain the current political system, invest so many billions in purchasing arms when there is no external threat?" Levi asked.

Egypt's buildup has not been limited to development of the Egyptian naval force, but the Egyptian army also acquired French and Russian planes as well as American F16 planes and sophisticated Abrams tanks. Levi added that "Israel is unfortunately indifferent and does nothing about this, even though it believes the Egyptian regime may be subject to change at any time. This means that there is a threat that these weapons will be directed one day at Israel. "In the absence of a defined enemy, we may suspect that all this advanced weaponry might be directed one day against us,"

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he said, adding that while Israel is busy building walls between “Israel” and Hamas, and between “Israel” and Hezbollah, Egypt is gaining significant offensive capabilities.

Tzahi Levi concluded his article by recommending that “On the issue of the Egyptian arms race, Israel should turn to the United States, which is a guarantor of the peace treaty, to demand action on the issue. It is time to step out of apathy in the face of the Egyptian buildup and to take aggressive political moves to limit it in parallel to the IDF's proper [preparations](#), and such determined steps will preserve the peace agreement between the two countries.”

Despite such warnings, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu approved Germany's sale of sophisticated submarines to Egypt.

Israeli explanations for Netanyahu's approval of the German submarine to Egypt

The Israel Defense Forces believes that the sale of the German submarines to Egypt would pose a challenge to the Israeli navy in the future, according to a report published by the IDF radio. General Gabi Ashkenazi described Netanyahu's approval of the deal as damaging to the Israeli [national security](#). This led the Movement for Quality Government in Israel (MQG) to file a complaint with Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit for further investigation into the situation of the submarine sales between [Germany and Egypt](#). When Amos Gilad, head of the Defense Ministry's political-security branch, was summoned he confirmed that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu approved Germany's sale of [submarines](#) to Egypt.

However, there are many Israeli explanations about the reasons for Israel's approval of Germany's sale of sophisticated submarines to Egypt, including:

First Explanation:

Avi Bar-Eli, a historian at Ben-Gurion University, said that Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu approved sale of sophisticated German submarines to Egypt due to the fact that Israel's opinion in such deals is not binding on Germany on the one hand, and that Germany's desire to sell submarines to Egypt was present and strong on the other. In addition, Egypt could buy submarines of the same efficiency from another country if Germany suspended the deal. However, Avi Bar-Eli's most significant point in this is that there is a direct relationship between the gas deal between Egypt and Israel and the [submarine deal](#).

Second Explanation:

Amir Oren, a senior correspondent and columnist for Haaretz and a member of the newspaper's editorial board, has published a strategic report on Wala, a Hebrew website, stating that Netanyahu's approval of the German submarine deal to Egypt was due to existence of secret deals between Egypt and Israel, and that the transaction comes within the military security framework. He added that Israel is already preparing for a major military action against Iran and is counting on Egypt to play a role in any likely future military confrontation through an Egyptian military intervention to protect the Gulf states, especially that Israel expects that Syria, Hezbollah and Hamas will intervene militarily against Israel in the event of launching a military strike against Iran.

Conclusion

In the past five years, since the accession of Abdul Fattah al-Sisi to power in Egypt in 2014, Egyptian arms imports rose by 215%, according to a report by Israeli "[nziv.net](#)" website, specialized in military affairs. The report said that Egypt has signed major

arms deals with a wide range of suppliers, including the United States, Russia, France and Germany. The report also addressed the military budgets of the major regional countries, indicating that Egypt's military budget was \$ 4.3 billion, Turkey \$ 18 billion, Israel \$ 15 billion, Iran \$ 14 billion, and Saudi Arabia \$ 65 billion annually. In addition, the report pointed to the development of arms purchases by the Egyptian military since 2002 until the end of the year 2015, confirming that Egyptian arms imports increased significantly from 2013 to 2017. The report referred Egypt's move to increasing its arms purchases to several reasons, including:

- 1- Egypt plays an important role in regional geopolitics because of its strategic location.
- 2- Egypt is located in the Middle East and North Africa region, one of the hottest regions in the world due to the conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen, as well as competition for regional leadership among the five strongest powers (Egypt, Israel, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Iran).
- 3- Egypt suffered an increase in terrorist activity after the 25 Jan. revolution of 2011, due to the collapse of the police force and the escape of prisoners, which endangered the safety of civilians.
- 4- Egypt has a natural gas field that is considered the largest gas field in the Mediterranean that needs protection.
- 5- Despite the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, Israel considers Egypt its first traditional enemy.
- 6- Egypt has the largest army in the Middle East and Africa, and it is considered the strongest Arab country and the strongest Middle Eastern country (after Israel). Therefore, this army needs continuous development; by boosting its strength and improving its efficiency to be able to face any likely challenges or threats.