

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 26, 1990

Dear Senator Dole:

The vital interests of the United States are at stake in the Gulf, challenged by Iraq's brutal aggression against Kuwait. I am thus extremely pleased with the broad support we have received from the Congress and the American people for our response to this challenge. Together we have made tough decisions; it is critically important that we maintain solidarity as we face further hard choices.

I would like your support for legislation to cancel Egypt's FMS debt. There should be no question that Egypt's contribution is unique and essential. More than any other step, cancellation of the FMS debt will send the message that Egyptian President Mubarak's courageous acts, which are pivotal to the success of our policy, have the admiration and support of the United States.

Egypt has played the central role since 1978 in the search for peace, stability and security in the Middle East. It has kept the peace with Israel, despite a decade of hostility and ostracism from other Arab states. Under President Mubarak's leadership, Egypt has led the moderate Arab world as a counter to extremism in the region. And, Egypt has tirelessly sought ways to promote the peace process, including an Israeli/Palestinian dialogue.

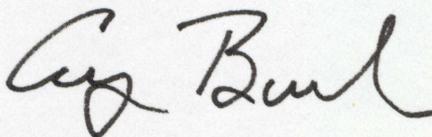
In the wake of Iraqi aggression, Egypt spearheaded the Arab League's condemnation of the invasion, demand for an Iraqi withdrawal, and support for a multinational defense force.

Egypt immediately committed substantial numbers of its own forces to Saudi Arabia, the first Arab state to do so. Egyptian leadership, with popular support from the Egyptian public (who constitute almost one-half the Arab world), has been crucial in preventing Saddam from turning this into an Arab-U.S. issue.

Egypt has assumed enormous political, economic, and military risks by its actions. Mubarak's leadership role and prestige at home and within the Arab world are at stake. He needs clear, tangible support for his courageous and principled stand. Cancellation of Egypt's military debt is of enormous import to him, both politically and economically. Egypt's heavy debt burden is unsustainable--the more so with this crisis. Our support will reinforce Egypt's leadership, which must be maintained if our policy is to succeed. We are undertaking tremendous risks with our Persian Gulf policy; we need full Congressional support for all elements--and Egyptian debt forgiveness is a cornerstone of this endeavor.

I can appreciate that making the decision to cancel Egypt's FMS debt is neither easy nor simple for you and your colleagues. Nevertheless, Congressional approval is essential to sustaining our Persian Gulf policy. Egypt's situation is unique -- I do not see this action as setting any precedent for other FMS debtors. I strongly urge you to support my legislative proposal as submitted in the Desert Shield Supplemental Appropriations request and to report it from Committee at the earliest possible opportunity to enable your colleagues to consider it on the Senate floor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Bob Dole", written in a cursive style.

The Honorable Bob Dole
Republican Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510