Move for Amity Is Hinted
Special to The New York Times.
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WASHINGTON, March 21—Egypt's demand that Israel cede the Negev as the price of her cooperation with Western defense set off a burst of speculation in Washington today.

In his suggestion yesterday, Major Salem said ceding of the Negev to Arab control would create a land link between Egypt and her Arab neighbors, now separated by the southern tip of the Negev.

The State Department declined comment. The Israeli Embassy issued a statement denouncing Egypt's "utterly lawless claim" to "more than half of Israel's territory."

What aroused unofficial speculation was that Major Salem, who is noted for his extremist statements, had not made it quite clear whether he was talking about taking over the Israeli Negev or whether he was talking about communications.

If it were the latter, there would be a basis for negotiations with Israel, which has repeatedly declared her willingness to give her neighbors transit rights.

A second point of interest was that Major Salem had said that Egypt did not plan to attack Israel and did not believe Israel was planning to attack her. This was a long way from the usual anti-Israeli doctrine of Arab leaders. In the past they have missed few opportunities to proclaim that Israel must be eradicated before she overran the Arab states.

Non-official observers here thought there was a hint in the major's statement that Egypt might like to come to some kind of terms with Israel.

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