

Egypt to U.S.: Drop aid conditions

by UPI

CAIRO -- Egypt won't accept new conditions the U.S. House of Representatives has attached to a military aid bill, Foreign Minister Ahmed Abul-Gheit said.

Speaking to reporters in Cairo, Abul-Gheit said U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice were also opposed to the conditions in the bill, which cleared the House Appropriations Committee on Foreign Operations on June 22, the Middle East News Agency reported.

The bill grants \$1.3 billion in military aid to Egypt but withholds \$2 million with three conditions, saying Cairo must improve its human rights observation, stop interfering with the judicial system and better prevent weapons smuggling along the border with Gaza.

The draft bill also calls on Egypt to modernize its military, the report said.

Abul-Gheit said the conditions were a step backward in the two countries' relations that have been growing since the Camp David accord was signed in 1978.

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