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United States policy toward the United Arab Republic, 1945-1959

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UNITED STATES POLICY TOWARD THE UNITED
ARAB REPUBLIC, 1945-1959

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE MASTER OF ARTS

BY
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DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Study.--The general purpose of this study is to present an account and analysis of United States policy toward the United Arab Republic (formerly Egypt), 1945-1959.

The specific purposes of this study are: (1) to present an account of the background and framework of American policy toward the United Arab Republic from 1945-1956; (2) to offer a discussion of the Suez Crisis, 1956-1957; and (3) to investigate American policy toward the United Arab Republic from the end of the Suez Crisis until 1959. In dealing with American policy toward the United Arab Republic from 1945-1956, the significance of the Middle East to the United States, the decline of British power in the area, the Truman Doctrine, the creation of the state of Israel and Egyptian-Israeli conflicts, the Baghdad Pact, and Arab nationalism and the Arab League will be discussed. The discussion of the Suez Crisis will include its forces and causes, the rise and role of Gamal Abdel Nasser, the role of the West, and the Eisenhower Doctrine. The discussion of United States policy toward the United Arab Republic from the end of the Suez Crisis until 1959 will embrace the creation of the United Arab Republic, competition in the area by the Soviet Union for a favored position, and the role of the United Arab Republic in this competition.
and trends of United States policy toward the United Arab Republic during this period.

Methods of Research.--The methods to be employed are the historical and analytical. In giving the background and other important data the historical method will be used. The analytical method will be employed to examine and relate events.

Scope and Limitations.--This study will cover the period, 1945-1959. The study ends with the year 1959 because since that time there has been little change in the relations of the United States toward the United Arab Republic.¹

Sources of Materials.--The materials used will be collected from books, articles, periodicals, public documents and speeches.

Significance of Study.--The study is significant because the Middle East, with the United Arab Republic at its helm, can serve as a barricade against Soviet expansion into the African continent or it can function as an avenue for such penetration. Also, the security of Western Europe and the United States depends, in part, upon the Middle East. Moreover, Gamal Abdel Nasser's attempt to unite the Middle Eastern nations into another world "bargaining power" poses a serious threat to the security of the United States. The Middle East is playing a primary role in changing the trends in the struggle for power between the Soviets and the United States.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK OF AMERICAN POLICY TOWARD
THE UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC: 1945-1956

Significance of the Middle East.--Until the First World War, American interest in the Middle Eastern area was largely cultural. American citizens there made little contribution toward the growth of nationalism. However, now and then, American opinion spoke out in favor of freedom and against those governments which ignored and suppressed it. The Middle Eastern population saw America as a benevolent but distant friend. As a government and as a nation, however, the United States took no stand and had no policy.¹

The beginning of the Second World War actually brought the United States into the Middle East. Economists and American engineers were sent to Iran to maintain the lend-lease supply line to Russia, and to advise and assist the Iranian government. American arms and goods flowed into Egypt to build up the strength of the Allied Middle East Command. In all the wartime diplomacy concerning such matters as Turkey's assurance of Iran's independence, the United States found itself playing a new role partly because of its role as a leading allied power intent upon winning the war and laying the

foundations for a stable peace. President Roosevelt showed a lively interest in the Arab world when he visited King Ibn Saud in Egyptian waters in February, 1945, on his return from Yalta. It was in 1945 that the United States became conscious of the truly vital importance of Egypt for global defense. Cairo had served as headquarters of the Middle East Command and Middle East supply center; the receiving end of the vast airlift, the other end of which was America. It was during this period that:

The United States became conscious, above all, of the disastrous potentialities of the Middle Eastern juxtaposition of power vacuum and the Soviet's dynamic strength. We also became aware of the fact that the link of the vacuum with poverty was bound to propel the Soviet's sweep into the region.

After the Second World War the United States was entrusted with the task of leading the free world's fight against the Soviet's plans.²

The Middle East's significance as seen after 1945 lies in its strategic, economic, and political importance. The strategic significance of the Middle East lies in the fact that the convenient routes of land, air and water communication between the West and East are found in this area. Moreover, the Middle Eastern area contains two-thirds or more of the world's oil resources. The continuing uninterrupted flow of this oil is necessary to the economic and military strength of the United States' European allies, which in turn is important to the security of the United States.³


The economic and political significance of the Middle East can be found in its vast storehouse of oil deposits. Because the Middle Eastern Nations were underdeveloped, control and operation of the oil deposits since 1900 has been in the hands of foreign competitors. This has steadily injected new tensions into the Middle Eastern area because much of the wealth of the area has gone to outsiders. The Middle Eastern nations feel that if this wealth were kept inside the region it could be used for the economic advantage of the persons in the area.

The Middle East, further, can serve as a barrier against Soviet expansion in the African continent or it can serve as an inroad for such penetration. The security of Western Europe and the United States depends upon the Middle East. The main objective of the Soviet Union is to weaken the Western Alliance and keep the Middle Eastern area in a state of unrest and tension so that it can achieve its goal—a Mediterranean outlet and eventually North African Communist penetration. The Soviet Union attempts to create a vacuum by forcing Western withdrawal from the area. This may be seen in the recognition of the Soviets of the independence of Syria and Lebanon in 1945; their support of the Security Council of the United Nations in 1946 for the withdrawal of British and French troops from the former mandated territories; and their support of Egypt in her grievances against

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4See the Atlanta Constitution, May 4, 1965, p. 4, for further information on possible Soviet penetration into Africa.

Britain in 1947. The Soviets have also sought to promote tension and unrest by supporting, along with the United States, the partitioning of Palestine by the United Nations in 1947. Also, the Soviets have kept, primarily since 1951, a steady stream of technicians, diplomats, and civilian employees pouring into the Middle Eastern area. The Soviets have had no territorial holdings in the Middle East; have no record of "oil imperialism" and have avoided, for the most part, public interference in the area. Hence the Russians are able to cry: "Out with the colonialist and imperialists."

Decline of English Power in the Middle East.--Before the United States took on the task of attempting to protect the Middle East from the Soviets, it was Britain's task. Britain played a dominant part in the Middle East because of the weaknesses of the Ottoman Empire and the increasing strength of Russia. Britain's primary concern, until the time of the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, was to prevent France from obtaining a predominant influence in Egypt; for such influence would threaten Great Britain's Indian possessions. The opening of the Suez marked the beginning of a more positive active interest on Britain's behalf in reference to Egypt. Ottoman influence had declined and French power had correspondingly increased. However, France's weakness as a result of the Franco-Prussian War and Great Britain's influence in Europe was sufficiently strong enough to stop unilateral intervention by France, and it was Great Britain who occupied Egypt. Britain's real position was hence not only one of the

6Ibid., pp. 19-26.
Great Powers but also of a global umpire and police force.\(^7\)

In two World Wars against the Germans, Britain lost much of its world power and also felt the impact of age in a fast-changing world. Furthermore, England was no longer the financial power center of the world. Thus in 1947 England vacated her position in the Middle East and offered it to the United States. In this year London informed Washington that it was no longer able to protect the Eastern Mediterranean area against the Soviets and thenceforth America would have to assume the responsibility of halting the Communists in Greece.\(^8\) In the spring of 1947, the foreign policy of the United States shifted decisively. The containment of Communism was evident with the enunciation of the Truman Doctrine.

The Truman Doctrine.--President Truman and his principal advisers saw the Soviet termination of the 1925 treaty with Turkey and its outright demand for bases on the Straits and for a sizeable part of Turkey's territory as a direct threat to American security. These demands by the Soviet Union provided a clear test of the will and ability of the West, particularly the United States, to call a halt to future Soviet expansion, and also the importance which they attached to the Middle East.\(^9\) The United States acknowledged a sphere of influence in the Middle East where it had never had great interests. President Truman asked Congress, in March, 1947, for $400 million in

\(^7\)Lengyel, op. cit., p. 100.


\(^9\)Campbell, op. cit., pp. 32-33.
economic aid to Greece and Turkey to combat Communism. The British empire had ceased to be a world power and the United States was called upon to resume Britain's work.

The Truman Doctrine, authorizing $300 million in military aid to Greece and $100 million for Turkey, equally divided between economic and military assistance, protected the Middle Eastern area on one side.

The Truman Doctrine, along with the later Eisenhower Doctrine, coupled with the use of force, asserted the predominant interest of the United States in direct succession to British diplomacy in the nineteenth century, designed to preserve the integrity of the old Ottoman Empire and to bar Russia from the Persian Gulf.

Creation of the State of Israel and Egyptian-Israeli Conflicts.-- The situation in the Middle East worsened as conflicts broke out between the Arabs and Israel. One of the most serious Middle East dilemmas for the West as well as for the Arabs, after World War II, was the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. With the advent of Adolph Hitler the Jewish population in the Holy Land increased rapidly from the fifty thousand inhabitants in 1917 to a number that threatened the land's absorptive capacity. The result of increased immigration into Palestine was a three-way conflict between the Jewish nationalists, who demanded a state, the Arab

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nationalists, who insisted upon self-determination and Britain. This conflict led to illegal immigration, violence, and sabotage, with Britain caught in the middle of the two conflicting nationalisms.

In 1947 Britain placed the controversy in the hands of the United Nations. Four months later a majority of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine recommended partitioning Palestine into separate Israeli and Arab states. After much debate, pressure and coercion the Israeli group succeeded in setting up an independent state in Palestine on May 15, 1948.\textsuperscript{12}

The Arabs saw the new society being created as a threat to their tradition and culture. They were becoming increasingly resentful of colonialism and the "stirring of nationalism added to the emotional, psychological reaction to this Western, indeed foreign, organism coming into existence at the heart of their world.\textsuperscript{13} The Arab ill-feeling toward the newly-created Israel state resulted in swift retaliation. A full-scale war erupted immediately. The Arab war has been divided into two parts—the unofficial and the official. Preparations were made by the Jews and Arabs for war as early as November 30, 1947, with the first concentrated attacks by the Arabs being made from January to April, 1948. The first phase of the official war began May 15 and ended June 11, 1948, followed by a truce set forth by the United Nations in June, 1948. The war was the immediate result of a dispute over crossroads used to supply the

\textsuperscript{12}Lilienthal, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 1-14.

\textsuperscript{13}Thayer, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 216-17.
Israeli settlements in the Negev. The original arrangements (provided by a second United Nations truce mediated by Ralph J. Bunche) was to allow the Egyptians to send convoys eastward (the Beit Jibrin-Bethlehem area) for six hours, and the Israelis to send convoys southward for six hours. The arrangement failed to work, however. The Egyptian convoys refused to allow the Israeli convoys to pass through their territory to the south of the Faluja crossroads. 14

Although there were many Arab states and thus many soldiers, the Israeli forces inflicted a humiliating defeat on them. The Jews successfully defended their main coastal area and their outlying settlements, and gained control of a new portion of Jerusalem. The only major victory by the Arabs was the capture of the old city of Jerusalem. The conflicts continued and over two thousand minor raids and three armed clashes took place between Israel and the Arabs before 1956. 15

The Arab-Israeli problem has been presented to the United Nations several times, but no real solution has been reached and none seems likely in the near future. For as a Syrian delegate told the United Nations General Assembly in 1956:

"We must begin from the beginning. We must start de novo on a clean sheet. Everything written by the United Nations should be written off ever since the 29th November, 1947. The establishment of Israel, its membership in the United Nations and all other resolutions will have to be revoked. Then, and then only, the United Nations"

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The Arab-Israeli War began as a rebellion on the part of the Jews against British mandatory rule in Palestine. Hence, the outcome of the war in Palestine was more a defeat of Britain than of the Arab countries. The Arabs suffered some loss; however, it was Britain which suffered most. In the short span of ten years Britain lost all its positions of direct control in the Middle East and was on the verge of losing its direct control over the rich oil deposits of the area. Britain's Prime Minister, Attlee, failed to understand that his empire could not abdicate at will. Britain did not exhibit a conscious policy of abdication, but one of drift, mixed with delaying decisions and improvising when delay was no longer possible. However, Attlee was not alone in the lack of usage of a conscious policy in the Palestine question. The United Nations also failed to commit itself, both as a secretariat and as an international organization, as long as it were possible. President Truman more often avoided decisions than made them. The Egyptian leaders were anxious to avoid a situation where they had to publicly take a stand, and the same was true of the Arab League secretariat under Azzam Pasha. All of these drifted from one position to another until they had drifted into war and British abdication from Palestine.

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16 Ibid., p. 511.

17 See Harry S. Truman, Memoirs (Garden City, New York, 1956), II, for a distinct picture of Mr. Attlee's techniques.
The British view during the Arab-Israeli War was sketched so that she could avoid jeopardizing her relationship with the Arab world, even at the cost of annoying the Americans and outraging the Jews. Hence British policy drifted into the Palestine War and drifted on afterwards to other landmarks of the British decline in the Middle East.

Palestine was the watershed for British imperialism, the old and the new, for it marked the end of the old order in the Middle East. The Palestine War sealed the establishment of Israel, and also signalled the beginning of the real Arab awakening, the Middle East revolution that was to come.  

In order to resist the danger of war among the Arabs and Israel, the United States, Britain and France entered into an agreement, the Tripartite Declaration of May 25, 1950. This agreement guaranteed the borders between Israel and the other Arab states against aggression from either side and gave notice that the pact-makers would limit shipments to the levels required for internal security (the Egyptians bought arms from Czechoslovakia and Russia however).  

The purpose of the Declaration was to maintain stability within the region and not to the matter with which the Western powers were becoming principally concerned—the defense of the area against attack by the Soviets.  

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take action both within and outside the United Nations to prevent frontier violations between Israel and the Arab states.

The Declaration, however, even though its content seemingly makes a clear and concise stand, had a serious flaw. The pact was merely a statement of intention and had no clause for the establishment of institutions to enforce it.

In the autumn of 1950, President Truman sent a State document to the King of Saudi Arabia. He expressed the interest of the United States in the independence of the King's nation. This document was set forth, probably, because of America's interest in the Dhahran airfield on the Hasa coast of this kingdom, "the largest and most convenient in that part of the world." The king, being an orthodox Muslim, could sign no agreement with Truman, whom the king, an Islamic true believer, is expected to be constantly at war.21 The first move of power by America came in 1951. In October, 1951, the three great Western powers, Britain, the United States, and France, along with Turkey, proposed a Middle Eastern resemblance of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization known originally as the Allied Middle East Command, and later talked of a Middle Eastern Defense Organization (MEDO). The establishment of MEDO was especially aimed at meeting the interests of Great Britain. Great Britain desired to maintain her old position and the bases held during and prior to World War II, especially Suez.22 The Middle East Command never materialized. The Egyptian government

22Kertesz, op. cit., p. 288.
was committed to forcing the British out of the country and would not consider an international defense of its prized waterway, the Suez. Russia presented a formal protest claiming that the plan would only benefit the West. Speculators in the West doubted the wisdom of a regional enterprise that contained only one Middle Eastern nation; others feared that England was trying to win support for a hopeless, if not exhausted, Suez policy. If nothing else constructive did not materialize from this project, "it did foreshadow the more ambitious schemes of the Eisenhower-Dulles era after 1953."  

The Baghdad Pact.--On January 12, 1955, the government of Iraq announced its decision to conclude an alliance with Turkey, a country which already had a treaty with Pakistan. The result was the Baghdad Pact, encouraged by the United States through the Middle Eastern Treaty Organization (METO). METO was sponsored by John Foster Dulles and called for the creation of a collective defense regional arrangement of the Northern Tier countries--Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Pakistan--which would be linked by Britain, to fill the gap between NATO and SEATO (The Southeast Asia Treaty Organization). This pact was negotiated by and with American support but under British leadership, for Mr. Dulles wished to avoid charges made by Arab nationalists

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24 Cremeans, *op. cit.*, p. 140.


that the United States was simply interested in establishing a puppet organization to further Western aims in the Middle East.\textsuperscript{27} The Baghdad Pact still left the United States far from a position of strength in the Middle East. Militarily, the pact offered little prospect for effective defense. Turkey, with its troops already committed to NATO, could only try to hold its own territory in the east. Iraq and Iran were weak, and Pakistan was involved in sporadic conflicts with India. The countries of Iraq, Iran and Pakistan had joined primarily to get arms from the United States rather than out of faith in the concept of regional security. Britain had joined in order to save her position in Iraq and to strengthen its declining influence throughout the Middle East. The refusal of the United States to join had left all of the members with a feeling that they had been deceived and let down. Iraq was left isolated in the Arab world and its government was gravely weakened. The gap between the Northern and Southern Tier of Arab states had been widened creating opportunities for Soviet penetration of the Arab world,\textsuperscript{28} for

\textellipsis

...Although the treaty enabled the United States and Britain to maintain military bases in the Northern Tier

\textsuperscript{27}\textit{Davids, op. cit.,} p. 514.

\textsuperscript{28}The signing of the Baghdad Pact, February 24, 1955, infuriated Nasser who saw it as a blow to Egypt's primacy in the Arab world and a betrayal of Anglo-American assurances that Cairo would be the center of any regional system of collective defense. Then a raid into the Gaza Strip by Israeli soldiers on February 28 revealed the inferiority of Nasser's military forces and pushed him along a path which ran counter to Washington's prescription for keeping peace in the Middle East. Since the Triparte Declaration of 1950, the United States had tried to prevent an arms race in the area. England and France were often only lukewarm, but the real danger lay in the Soviet bloc. Nasser, as discussed later, cleverly capitalized on Russia's anger over the Baghdad Pact.
countries adjacent to the Soviet Union, it sharpened at the same time the rivalry between Egypt and Iraq in the Arab world, and it created a great deal of alarm in Russia. It soon became apparent that the Soviet Union intended to do something to immobilize the Western military bases in her own back yard.29

Arab Nationalism and the Arab League.—Arab nationalism is marked by an attempt of the Arab countries to resist direct and indirect domination by the West. Thus Arab nationalism may be defined as a reaction to pressures by the West, developed from "a growing consciousness of a common interest of a common tradition." This common interest has been defined as the construction of a powerful political and economic unit to resist pressure from and to increase the bargaining power against the two Great Power blocs. The common tradition is marked by a common origin, a common language, and to a great extent a common religion and the common memory of a specific civilization. Arab nationalism today is essentially a domestic movement within the Arab world attempting to convert and absorb the many forces operating within the Arab world. It is identified with Gamal Abdel Nasser whose policy and propaganda have developed forces of Arab unity in opposition to the various forces operating against that unity.30

It is not clear as to when the seeds of nationalism first burst into full bloom in the Arab world. John Marlowe, in his Arab Nationalism and British Imperialism, cites the landing of Bonaparte in Egypt in

29 Davids, op. cit., p. 514.

1798 as the beginning of Arab nationalism. For it was at this time that:

...the lands of the Ottoman Empire became more and more exposed to military, cultural, economic and political influence on a culturally dormant, politically stagnant and economically sterile society which set in train those diverse spiritual, intellectual, social and political ferments which go to make up Arab nationalism as we know it today.31

However, Sylvia G. Haim states, in the introduction to her Arab Nationalism: An Anthology, that Arab nationalism is a recent development as an ideology and as a factor in Middle Eastern politics. This author sets the beginning of the elaboration of Arab nationalism as a doctrine after the First World War. It was during this period, she states, that:

...politicians in Iraq and Syria, enjoying a measure of independent action and able to exploit the rivalries of the Great Powers in the Middle East, began to attempt the creation of a state which would embrace the whole of the 'Arab Nation.'32

Arab nationalism owes much of its spirit to Jamal al-Din al-Asadabadi, Abdullah al-Nadim, Muhammad Abduh, Muhammad Rashid Rida, Abd Al-Rahman al-Kawakibi, and Neigib Hzoury.

Jamal al-Din al-Asadabadi (1838-1897), commonly known al-Afghani whose activities and teachings contributed to the spread of revolutionary temper and a new attitude toward politics throughout the Muslim East, was one of the first exponents of Arab nationalism.

31Ibid., p. 7.

Al-Afghani justified his political activity by the theory of "safety and deliverance in killing" the oppressors. He believed that:

The Islamic peoples of the world were in a deplorable situation; the states which ought to protect them and procure for them a good life were weak, misgoverned, and the prey of European ambitions. To remedy this state of affairs, the Muslims had to take matters into their own hands; they had to force, even terrorize, their rulers into governing efficiently, and they had to band together in order to present a powerful and united front to the encroaching European.\textsuperscript{33}

Al-Afghani, through his teachings and activities, placed Islam (by following religion devoutly, he thought, a strong state would result) on the same plane as other solidarity-producing beliefs. He was instrumental in spreading a "secularist, meliorist, and activist attitude toward politics" among the intellectual and official classes of Middle Eastern Islam.

Abdulla al-Nadim (1843-1896), a member of one of al-Afghani's circle, also taught that the reason for the backwardness of the East and for the success of Europe is that the Europeans have unified the language of their subjects, gradually unified the races, and imposed religious uniformity. He advised the Muslims to restore and preserve solidarity, and attempt to support a national union so that the Muslims may "let the whole be as one man, seeking only one thing—to preserve Egypt for the Egyptians."\textsuperscript{34}

Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905), known later as Mufti of Egypt, concerned himself primarily with teaching the congruence of Islam

\textsuperscript{33}Ibid., p. 9.
\textsuperscript{34}Ibid., pp. 12-15.
and modernity, as well as the necessity for the Muslims to cast-off outdated superstitions and to strive to acquire the blessings of Western civilization. Although much of Muhammad Abduh's teachings pertains only remotely to nationalism, the relevance of his teachings is that he made popular an attitude toward politics, a belief that human action, based on rational and scientific principles, could remedy the human condition. He felt that the intellectual, by denouncing superstition, and by making science and philosophy understood, holds the key to the door of political and social progress.

It is with the Syrian Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865-1935) that Arab nationalism may be said to have begun. It was Rida, a disciple of Mufti, who formed the Decentralization Party when the Young Turks attempted to stiffen the policy that was detrimental to the Arabs and the Ottoman Empire.

It was not until the 1930's that a serious attempt was made to define the meaning of Arab nationalism and the exact ingredients of the Arab nations. These attempts became more frequent in the 1940's, and in decades since then "hardly a month passes which does not see the publication of one or more books on this subject."\(^{35}\)

Sometime in the late 1930's, some Arab nationalists began seriously to consider including Egypt in the nationalist movement. They knew that Egypt was rich and populous, and if freed from British control she would likely become a power in the Middle East. To officially

\(^{35}\)Ibid., p. 35.
encourage Egypt to join the other Arab nations the Arab Union was formed in 1942 to work for Arab unity. In 1943 preliminary talks on Arab unity were held in Cairo.36

The Arab League was formed in Cairo in March, 1945, by Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Transjordan. Its aim was to create an Arab federation which would present to the outside world something like a united front translated through common tradition and common aspirations. The Arab countries found agreement on, first, the independence of Palestine by means of speeding up the policy laid down in the White Paper,37 and secondly, the immediate independence of Syria and Lebanon.38 Beyond these two points all was rivalry and dissension; thus it was clear that to initiate any fruitful scheme of cooperation it would have to be conceived in terms of the sovereignty of each of the Arab States within their existing boundaries. External unity was not achieved by the Arab nations because of the question of the future of Palestine. The primary question was that if Palestine emerged as an Arab State in accordance with the provisions of the White Paper, would it become an independent state, or would it unite with Transjordan and become a tentacle of Syria? Failure to agree on this question paralyzed united Arab action over Palestine and over all other questions for it displayed the double

36Ibid., p. 51.

37The MacDonald White Paper is a document set forth by Great Britain in 1939 restricting immigration into Palestine.

38Marlowe, op. cit., p. 42.
rivalry between the Nile and Euphrates on one side and the desert and the fertile area on the other.

By the spring of 1959, the Arab League had been in existence for fourteen years. At this time the members had increased from seven to ten with the addition of Sudan, Lybia, Tunisia and Morocco, and the subtraction of one due to Syria and Egypt fusing into the United Arab Republic. Egyptian domination of the League may be seen by the two Secretary-Generals, Abdul Rahman Azzam and Abdul Khaliq Hassuna, both Egyptians, and the establishment of the League's headquarters in Cairo. The League had proved during its existence quite ineffective in the promotion of common action between its member states in their relations with each other or with the outside world. The League was not even an effective forum for the discussion of differences between member states. After the Palestine calamity the League was not used for promoting unity, but rather to conceal disunity behind a cloak of resolutions, without any action, proclaiming Arab solidarity in the face of Zionism and imperialism. Perhaps the only really effective aspect of the League was its increasing effectiveness as an organ of Egyptian foreign policy. This can be seen in the pre-Nasser era when the League's influence was consistently directed against Hashemite-inspired attempts to unify the Fertile Crescent. Since Nasser's accession to power it has become more noticeable when the Secretariat of the League almost wholly became a part of the propaganda section of the Egyptian and, later, of the United Arab Republic's
The policies and objectives of the United States have been hindered greatly by Arab nationalism, for:

... Arab nationalism contains the strains of resentment and suspicion engendered by the colonial past and by the frustrations of the mid-Twentieth Century. ... Ideological and practical differences between various Arab national groups have even been the cause of ... violence, governmental upsets, and continued instability.\(^{40}\)

At the present time, historical, ethnic, economic and social differences have prevented development of a deeper unity among the Arab lands.\(^{41}\) However, there is a growing school of thought suggesting that eventually a healing of the scars within the Arab camp, and the problems underlying them, may make Arab unity possible some day.

\(^{39}\)Ibid., pp. 190-91.

\(^{40}\)U. Alexis Johnson, "American Policy in the Middle East," An Address to the Citizens Committee on U. S. Policy in the Near East (The Department of State, January 20, 1964), p. 3. (Mimeographed.)

\(^{41}\)U. S. Department of State, op. cit., p. 8.
CHAPTER III

THE SUEZ CRISIS: 1956-1957

Forces and Causes.--The Soviet Union capitalized on the decline in world cotton prices in 1955, which was brought about by the rumor that the United States intended to dump much of its surplus cotton in Western Europe at bargain prices. Egypt's exports were 85 per cent cotton, and the mere expectation of lower cotton prices temporarily dried up Egypt's European markets and caused her to go seriously into "the red." The Soviet Union, then provided with an opportunity to step into the Middle East, offered to buy some of Egypt's cotton and got her satellites and Red China to purchase the remainder of the cotton refused by the West. Egypt negotiated agreements with Russia, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania and East Germany. Nasser welcomed Russia not only as a profitable ally, but as a country from which he could obtain arms shipments to enable him to renew his offensive against Israel. The Soviet Union, in an effort to counteract the Baghdad Pact, was happy to provide arms to Egypt. With Egypt obtaining arms, Israel, too, appealed for increased arms from the United States. The appeals were denied on the grounds that Israel seemed to be too far ahead in the Arab-Israeli arms race; that France was furnishing Israel arms; and that the United States did not want to contribute to
an acceleration of the arms race.¹

Egypt, after receiving arms, speeded-up her fedayeen² raids into Israel. These specially trained hit-and-run troops knew the Israeli country well and were instructed to invade the enemy territory and shoot and murder anyone to paralyze the Jews with insecurity and fear. Nasser, now with guns and ammunition, supplied some of the Soviet arms to Algerian rebels (Nationalists) to aid them in their battle with the French. Egypt now became a clearing house for arms traffic between the Communist countries and the Arab and African states, and French leaders concluded that Nasser must be eliminated. Only in this way, the French believed, could the Algerian problem be solved.³

During the period, 1955-1956, the situation grew increasingly critical. America and Britain, hoping to concentrate Nasser's attention on Egypt's economic problems, tried to divert him from his expansionist ambitions by offering to help him construct a high dam at Aswan, 800 miles south of Cairo.⁴ Nasser had dreamed of the construction of a dam on the Nile at Aswan (originally suggested by Western engineers), which would increase Egypt's irrigated territory by over 30 per cent

²The fedayeen were commandos recruited from the Arab-Palestine refugees.
and stimulate a vast expansion of electricity and industry. Nasser saw this as a crowning star to add glory to his rule by enlarging the production of food and goods in a traditionally famine-stricken and poverty-ridden country. However, Nasser also realized that this star would remain unlighted unless he could secure foreign financing for the construction of the Aswan Dam. To prevent Russia from scoring another triumph the Eisenhower administration joined Britain's Eden cabinet in a trial offer of aid.\(^5\) Egypt felt it had the assurance of Western aid. There were rumors that the Soviet Union would extend loans to aid in building the dam. American sources (Secretary of State Dulles) warned Egypt against taking a loan from the Soviet Union and that to do so would jeopardize American aid. The Soviet offer, however, proved only to be a rumor and did not materialize at the time.\(^6\) In the meantime, Nasser played the Soviet Union against the West, rejecting the British-American offer as "threatening Egypt's independence," hinting he could do better in Moscow. Nasser's game proved futile, for as mentioned, Russia's offer did not materialize and eventually the West was also to withdraw its offer. Why? Because

\(^5\)The offer involved an initial grant of $70 million, of which the United States was to contribute 80 per cent (actually the United States 56 per cent, Britain 14 per cent), to defray expenses for five years and a promise of $130 million at 5 per cent, repayable in forty years. Egypt was to be responsible for $900 million and was to obtain agreement with Sudan, Uganda and Ethiopia, who also owned property along the Nile, on the project.

\(^6\)Although the offer did not materialize at this time, Russia ultimately financed nearly 30 per cent of the estimated $1 billion cost of completion of the Aswan. "The Red Bankroll," \textit{Time}, January 15, 1965, p. 30.
of the vastness of the undertaking. America and Britain expected that Nasser would exercise some economic restraint to meet Egypt's share of the costs, initially $900 million, and that he would be more reserved in his arms purchases from the Soviet Union. This did not prove to be true. Although Nasser wanted the Aswan Dam for Egypt, the lengthy twenty year target date (1975) for completion dampened its popularity in the country. Nasser was thus more interested, it appears, in accumulating arms from Russia to deal with Israel.

Both the United States and Britain delayed handing over their share of the money for the project because of the increasing close harmony between Egypt and Russia. In May, 1956, Nasser recognized Red China and accepted an invitation to visit her. When the money did not arrive, Nasser indicated that there was a possibility that the Soviets might finance the Aswan Dam, and indicated that this offer might be accepted. Shortly after the British evacuated the Suez Canal Zone in June, 1956, the Egyptian Ambassador in Washington was

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10 The British evacuation of the Suez Canal Zone was a result of the Suez Base Agreement of 1954, prompted by the Egyptian's willingness to compromise. This led Western officials to believe that the new regime (1952) could do business with the West. Britain's decision to leave the Canal Zone was probably influenced by evidence that even the strongest military base had questionable value if surrounded by a bitterly hostile population. Nasser's position was that once the special position of the British in the Sudan and Canal Zone was removed, the new regime could settle down to dealing with basic problems of economic and social reform. England shifted its main base from the Suez Canal Zone to Cyprus.
instructed to find out what were America's intentions in respect to financing the Aswan Dam. There were signs that the offer may be withdrawn because of Egypt's anti-Western policies. Nasser supported the Algerian rebels against France, and plotted against the British faction in Iraq and Jordan; while the controlled Cairo press and radio slandered the West, praised the Soviets, and proclaimed the doom of Zionism. These suspicions proved to be correct. By then Nasser had almost mortgaged his economy (for arms he employed dealing in the future for cotton with the Soviet Union) to the Soviet bloc and hence raised serious doubts of his ability to meet his share of construction costs. His showy hostility to British-American policies had made such pro-Western countries as Turkey and Iran ask why they had not received the same massive help. Also, Congressional opinion had turned against the wisdom of pro-Westernizing Egypt (primarily because of opposition in Congress from senators representing cotton-producing states), and on July 16 a Senate committee recommended that no appropriations under the Mutual Security Act be used for the proposed dam.\textsuperscript{11} The Egyptian government was informed by the United States in July, 1956, that, because of a number of practical considerations, it was not feasible in present circumstances to participate in the Aswan project.\textsuperscript{12} With America's refusal to help finance the project Britain promptly withdrew her offer

\textsuperscript{11}Leopold, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 785-86.

\textsuperscript{12}Ralph McGill, Nobel Prize winner and Publisher of the Atlanta Constitution notes in his column of January 1, 1965, that this decision was "made abruptly by the late Secretary of State Dulles, who acted without conference with other agencies including the World Bank."
and on July 23 the World Bank's offer was withdrawn. It was explained
the Egyptian economy was already obligated too heavily to pay for the
dam.

Nasser was silent for four days. He had been attending a meeting
in Brioni, Yugoslavia, with Tito and Nehru of India, when the State Depart-
ment's decision was announced. Nasser interpreted the Western refusal
to finance the dam not only as an effort to humiliate him,¹³ but as a
deliberate attempt to undermine world confidence in the Egyptian eco-
nomy. His own prestige became tarnished. The center of his attack,
at first, was the United States. Washington, he declared, had acted
"without shame and with disregard for the principles of international
relations." Appealing to nationalist sentiment Nasser boldly declared,
"Egyptians will not permit any imperialists or oppressors to rule us
militarily, politically, or economically; we will not submit to the
dollar or to force. We are determined to live proudly and not to beg
for aid."¹⁴

At Alexandria on July 26, Nasser announced the nationalization
of the Suez Canal Company, which was largely owned by the British and
French. Nasser promised that the private company which owned and


¹⁴ Davids, op. cit., p. 516. Nasser again indignantly stated at
his "Victory Day" speech celebrating the end of the 1956 Suez crisis,
infering a United States threat to cut off $140 million a year in aid
to Egypt, "We drink tea seven days a week now; we can cut it to five.
We eat meat four days; we can cut it to three. We are people of dignity,
and do not accept disdain from anyone. . . .We shall not sell our inde-
pendence for 30, 40, or even 50 million pounds." "Sea and Tymphony,"
Time, January 1, 1965, p. 35.
operated the Canal would be reimbursed. The next day, a little over a month after the British had withdrawn, Egypt seized the offices of the company and declared martial law in the Canal Zone. The Aswan, Nasser held, would be built from the money obtained from the operations of the Canal. He warned the West against interference—"For the Egyptian people were mobilizing and standing ready to defend their rights and sovereignty against imperialism."

Gamal Abdel Nasser.--Gamal Abdel Nasser, head of the United Arab Republic, is the symbol of Arab nationalism today. He has given the force of Arab unity coherence and direction. Nasser took the office of Prime Minister of Egypt from General Neguib, the Head of State after a Republic had been formed in July, 1953. General Neguib, after the Egyptian Revolution whereby Egypt was brought from under British rule, was in favor of a gradual return to constitutional life. However, Nasser, at this time a relatively unknown figure, realized that a return to constitutional life would involve a return to situations of years before. The struggle between Nasser and Neguib ended in April, 1954, when Nasser became Prime Minister and Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council and hence the real power in the country. As mentioned, Nasser was relatively unknown, but through the use of mass communication he built up quite a specific, clear-cut and well-defined image of himself. Neguib, after being eliminated from public


16 The "final liberation from imperialism" was brought about by an agreement reached in July, 1954, whereby the British agreed to evacuate her troops from the Canal Zone within eighteen months.
life, became a father figure in Egypt and did much to commend the new
regime to the people.\textsuperscript{17}

The first task of the new President was to tame the Moslem
Brotherhood which, together with the Communists, turned against the
regime, after having originally greeted it with approval. Fearing
an attempted assassination by the Brotherhood, Nasser arrested some
four thousand members, tried, convicted and sentenced several to long
terms of imprisonment, and condemned six to death by hanging. Mean-
while, Neguib, alleged to be the Brotherhood nominee as Head of State
after Nasser's overthrow, was placed under house arrest and later
vanished into obscurity.\textsuperscript{18}

Nasser's nationalist obsession was evident in the Suez crisis.
He had held that failure at nationalism was due to a lack of unity and
to a lack of leadership. Thus Arab countries were being exploited be-
cause of their geographical and economic advantages and in spite of
their potential bargaining position given to them by the Cold War.

Nasser's idea of re-establishing Egypt's primacy in the Arab
world was through the medium of what he described as a policy of "posi-
tive neutrality". He was encouraged by the example of Nehru of India,
who was pursuing a similar policy among the countries of Southeast
Asia, and by the attitude of the Soviet Union, whose influence in the
Middle East was largely due to the fact that her foremost interests
(the denial of the West of military establishment in the Middle Eastern
area), paralleled Arab nationalist sentiments. From the Arab point of

\textsuperscript{17}\textit{Marlowe, op. cit.}, pp. 73-74.

\textsuperscript{18}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 76.
view, the only advantage to be derived from a military pact was economic aid. Western policy, the offering of economic aid made conditional on a military or political alignment with the West, tended to divide the Arab nations. This policy resulted in committing the West to support Arab governments, not against Russia, but against her Arab neighbors. A policy of this sort may have been good if the West had been able to persuade a majority of the Arab nations to join her camp. However, the failure to win Egypt over to a policy of military alliance and political collaboration, which was the key and would have made the policy plausible, aided the Arab policy of neutrality.

At the end of 1954, Nasser was committed to neutralism, but had not seriously embarked upon domination by Egypt of the Arab world. In 1955, Nasser's policy was one of good will toward England and Iraq, and of moderation toward Israel. However, by the end of 1955, the Arab world was divided into two camps, one led from Baghdad which relied on Western arms and support, and the other led from Cairo relying on Soviet arms and support. The struggle was for control of the Fertile Crescent and the Arabian Peninsula, taking the form of propaganda and attempted subversion. The receipt of arms from Czechoslovakia in September, 1955, (an attempt by Nasser to free himself from the system of arms rationing whereby the Western powers attempted to tone-down the Arab-Israeli Wars) marks the beginning of Nasser's imperialism in the Middle East. It was, further, a gesture of defiance towards the West, a threat to Israel and a statement of intention to the other Arab nations. The arms agreement raised Nasser's prestige among the Arab nations primarily because of his previous military incompetence which
was due to the limitation of arms imposed on him by the West.

The conclusion of the arms deal had an adverse effect upon American opinion. Until this time American policy regarded Egypt in her relations with Great Britain as a country rightly struggling to be free. The United States had aided through diplomatic pressure to speed Britain's withdrawal from the Canal Zone and declined to join the Baghdad Pact although the United States had originated the idea. However, the arms deal caused the United States to view Egypt as a potential Soviet satellite. Hence by the autumn of 1955, Egypt became committed to a policy, primarily concerning Arab nationalism identified with neutralism and anti-imperialism, aimed at Egyptian dominance over the Arab world, involving a struggle for power in the Middle East against Great Britain and Britain's allies.19

The Role of the West.--The United States, England and France protested against Nasser's seizure of the Suez Canal. However, they did not attempt to test the legality of their charge that the seizure of "an international agency" for national purposes would be detrimental to the freedom and security of the Canal, before the International Court of Justice, nor did they insist that the company be restored to its former position (the Universal Suez Maritime Company's concessions to operate the Canal would expire in 12 years, 1968). England and France found it difficult to accept Nasser's assurance that they would be reimbursed. They did not trust a man who had already shown little respect for his international obligations. They thought that

19Ibid., pp. 85-91.
Nasser might bar their shipping from the Canal as he had done Israel since 1950, in spite of protests from the Security Council of the United Nations. They doubted whether the Egyptian government could retain or retrain the skilled personnel to carry on efficient operations and whether it would devote the financial proceeds to carry out planned improvements.

Moreover, in Nasser's move they saw a historic parallel. They recalled Hitler's unopposed reoccupation of the Rhineland and were determined to stop Nasser before it was too late. In London unrestricted use of the Canal was seen as the destruction of the few remaining symbols of British prestige in the Middle East. Meanwhile, in Paris the seizure was seen as another blow to a pride wounded in Indochina and Algeria where Egypt had supplied arms. The French and English became convinced that they must be ready, in the last resort, to use force. This Prime Minister Eden cabled President Eisenhower July 27, 1956.

The United States did not possess the same sense of urgency of its Western allies, for the United States was less dependent upon the Canal. The United States hoped for negotiation rather than the use of force. The administration's thinking was influenced by a concern of its image in the ensuing Presidential election and its desire not to be associated with English-French colonialism. However, the President sincerely believed that more could be gained by talking rather than by fighting, hence he sent Secretary of State Dulles to London, where a common policy was formulated on August 2, 1956.

20 In 1955 the Canal handled 107 million tons of cargo, three-fifths of which was oil destined to the countries of Europe.
Dulles agreed with Eden that it was intolerable for any one nation to have control of the Canal by influencing world opinion. Dulles, however, felt force should be used only if all else failed. Dulles began with a conference of the signors of the Constantinople Convention and of those countries whose tonnage and trade gave them a vital interest in the Canal. Britain and France had assumed that the United States had consented to direct responsibility in the Middle East for a policy which required building a northern tier pact and diluting Egypt's nationalistic desires. The United States was expected by England and France to block Nasser forcefully and protect their vital oil supply.

In a period of less than three months, August 16 to October 13, 1956, three attempts collapsed to settle the Suez question by diplomacy. The first was a twenty-two nation conference at London, which recommended that the Canal be entrusted to an international board. The second attempt was a scheme by Dulles to organize a Suez Canal Users Association. The Association would make the paying of Canal tolls to the Association permissive rather than mandatory, maintaining the route, and hiring pilots. This scheme ruled out any American use or show of force, although it would have given the United States a legal part in the Canal, and struck British and French governments hard. The

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21 The Convention of October 29, 1888, guarantees free navigation to all nations in peace or war. The basic instrument was signed by England, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, and the Ottoman Empire. The United States was not a party to this document.

22 Leopold, op. cit., pp. 786-87.

Association appeared a promising and orderly place to stand if resolutely backed.

However, the British and French came to feel that the United States had failed to protect their vital interest and had not honored its pledged word. Nasser objected to the Association as he had the recommendations of the London Conference. Although fifteen governments consented to the Association by October 1, the project never went into effect. The third attempt was a set of six principles worked out by Britain, France and the Egyptian foreign ministers under the mediation of Daj Hammarskjold, Secretary-General of the United Nations. These principles called for the Canal to be open to all without discrimination, insulation of its operations from the internal affairs of any country, respect for Egyptian sovereignty, joint fixing of tolls by Egypt and the users of the Suez Canal, allocation of revenues for improvements, and arbitration of all disputes between the Canal Company and the Egyptian government. These resolutions represented some concessions by Nasser, but the absence of sanctions to compel him to fulfill his obligations left them short of Anthony Eden's demand that no single nation have unrestricted control of the Canal. In an attempt to insure Nasser's compliance, England and France brought a two-part resolution to a vote in the Security Council on October 13. The first half, concerning the six principles, passed unanimously. The second half, outlining the guarantees, received the support of nine nations but was

As these attempts ended in futility, the Atlantic allies drifted seriously apart. A basic difference separated the English-French and American positions. To the English and French a principle involving their very existence was at stake. To America only the unrestricted use of the Canal seemed important. However, Britain was prepared to fight rather than be left at the mercy of Nasser:

... the governments in London and Paris apparently connived with the Israelis and the Israeli army attacked Egypt. The Anglo-French allies--without consulting the United States--sent an ultimatum to Egypt and failing of a satisfactory answer attacked and occupied Port Said, meanwhile bombing Al Maza airport at Cairo and other Egyptian installations.26

The United States was persuaded that extreme measures were unnecessary. Washington held that, given the tactical nature of the problem of seizing and holding a long canal, the use of force would be ineffective; and, further, that it would only worsen an already dangerous situation in the Arab world. The English and French had agreed on August 2, 1956, to try other means, partly to obtain American cooperation but mainly because they needed six weeks to mount an attack. By October 13, France and Britain became convinced that they had been betrayed by the Secretary of State and the President. By their plans, the Anglo-French coalition antagonized the United States and lost any chance of winning its support for such a maneuver.


The appeal to arms in Suez was not an isolated incident. It occurred at the same time when satellite uprisings broke out in Eastern Europe on October 21-23, 1956, and the preventive war which Israel started against Egypt on October 29. The amount of collaboration that existed between London, Tel Aviv and Paris is still disputed, but there is no doubt that France materially strengthened Israel's military establishment in previous months. It is evident that Ben-Gurion ordered the invasion of the Sinai Peninsula, in spite of assurances to the United Nations, to stop terroristic raids originating there, to open the Canal to Israeli shipping, and to insure free passage of the Gulf of Aqaba. It is also clear that the English-French aerial bombardment of Cairo and the Canal Zone, which began on October 31, offset in Afro-Asian eyes Russia's ruthless repression of the Hungarian rebellion and quickly converted Nasser from a "menace to peace", into a "victim of aggression". When Eden and Mollet justified dramatic measures as a device to keep the Sinai War away from the Canal and when their troops required a week to secure key points, during which time Egypt blocked the waterway by sinking ships, it became evident that a great blunder had been committed.27

During this period Americans were about to go to the polls to elect a president. Eisenhower, in his campaign, stressed peace and prosperity. His policy in the Middle East had been to exclude Russia from the area, keep the Canal controversy separate from the Arab-Israeli feud, and uphold the Triparte Declaration of May 25, 1950, which

27Leopold, op. cit., p. 789.
obligated the United States, Britain and France to take prompt action, within or outside the United Nations, to check any breach of the armistice lines.

On April 9, 1956, Eisenhower went further in promising "to support and assist" any country in the region that was attacked. Now the British-French move defeated every item in that policy. Dulles had repeatedly warned Eden that seizure of the Canal would not destroy Nasser but would, rather, lead to guerrilla war from which the Soviets alone could benefit. Hence, there was little hesitation in taking a stand against the NATO partners. "There can be no law if we work to invoke one code of international conduct for those we oppose and another for our friends." Thus he placed the ideals of collective security above the realities of collective defense, even if he jeopardized the alliance designed to provide the safeguards which the United Nations, in practice, had not furnished.

On October 30, 1956, Henry Cabot Lodge offered a resolution in the Security Council calling upon all members to refrain from using force in Egypt and upon the Israeli troops to withdraw. Russia gave its support, but England and France objected because they had already sent a twelve-hour ultimatum to Cairo and Tel Aviv in which they demanded an end to the fighting, the evacuation of all military units to a distance of ten miles from the Canal, and Egypt's permission to occupy temporarily positions along the route so as to separate the belligerents and insure freedom of transit. With Australia and Belgium refraining from voting, Lodge's motion received seven votes, but it was lost when the British cast their first veto and the French their
third. Russia also drafted a similar resolution, omitting the injunction against interference by others, but it too failed to pass. The next day the Council convened an emergency session of the General Assembly under a procedure designed in 1950 to get around the Soviet veto. On November 2, that body adopted by a vote of 64 to 5 with 6 refusing to vote an American resolution urging all parties to observe a cease-fire and to withdraw behind the armistice lines of 1949.

The next days were ones of trial. On November 3, 1956, Dulles underwent surgery for cancer. On the same day England and France refused to accept a cease-fire until certain conditions were met; Egypt continued to sink ships in the Canal; and saboteurs in Syria cut off Britain's oil supply from Iraq. A second emergency session met on November 4 to deal with Hungary, while the first renewed its appeal to the nations concerned in the Sinai Peninsula. On November 5, the Assembly created a multi-national Emergency Force "to secure and supervise the cessation of hostilities"; and while several weeks elapsed before the forces could take the field, the invaders were able to retire without complete loss of face. However, at this time, this gain was offset by Bulganin's warning that his country stood ready to "crush aggression". At the same time the Kremlin sent a message to President Eisenhower with the proposal that the two nations use their air and naval forces to stop the war. Quickly the White House answered that it was opposed to any Soviet action in the Middle East. Undeterred by the refusal the Soviet government submitted a proposal to the

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28 When Dulles died in 1959, Nasser gleefully observed: "The worms are now feeding on this rotten old man." "Sea and Tympany," op. cit., p. 34.
Security Council to authorize a joint United States-Soviet "police" action in Egypt. This proposal was defeated, however. On election day, November 6, Eisenhower ordered a global alert of the armed forces; however by evening the worst was over. Having seized all of the Gaza Strip, most of the Sinai Peninsula, and two islands in the Gulf of Aquba, the Israeli forces agreed to halt their assault. Although, as speculation goes, the Canal Zone could have been taken away from Nasser in three more days, "Her majesty's government agreed to stop further military operations."

Nasser emerged from this encounter stronger than before, because Russia persuaded the Arab world that it had compelled "the colonialist aggressors" to stop, because the problem of Israel and the control of the Canal remained unsolved, and because the Western allies suffered serious and permanent scars.

The Eisenhower Doctrine.--The 1956 crisis called for a review of American policy. Washington had to consider certain facts: 1) England had lost its role as a great power in the Middle East; 2) Russia had intervened in the crisis, not with armed force but still strongly enough to show that it would take full advantage of the division among the Western allies. Hence the United States had to look to the grave danger of the expansion of Soviet power. The method to thwart Soviet expansion was one of a new public posture rather than of new arms and policies.

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America's objective for some years had been an attempt to prevent the advance of Soviet power into the Middle East, evident in the Truman Doctrine of 1947, and in the programs of military and economic assistance carried on since that time. What seemed needed now was a declaration showing that the "security frontiers" of the United States extended to the Middle East as they did in Europe and Asia, while dramatizing the aid programs and making them a more flexible instrument of policy for the future. These aims are found in Eisenhower's message to Congress on January 5, 1957, labeled a doctrine by the press.

The President requested a grant of authority in advance to halt Communist aggression, direct and indirect, in the Middle East. The proposal specifically called for: 1) authorization of the President to employ as he deemed necessary the armed forces of the United States to secure and protect the integrity and independence of any nation or nations in the Middle Eastern area requesting aid against overt armed aggression from any nation controlled by international Communism; 2) authorize the President to undertake programs of military aid to any such nation or nations desiring it; 3) authorize cooperation with them in the development of economic strength for the maintenance of their national independence. The President also asked for authority to spend $200 million of already appropriated funds (mutual security) for military and economic aid in the Middle East. After a two-month debate, the President won most of what he sought in a joint resolution passed by the Senate on March 5 by a vote of 72 to 19, and the House, two days later, 350 to 60.

32 Campbell, op. cit., pp. 121-22.
In this resolution it is clear that America was announcing its intention to fill the vacuum resulting from the decline in British power. America knew that if it did not fill this vacuum the Soviets would. The United States felt it necessary to make its power felt there, through commitments and the will and ability to give them meaning.

Britain took satisfaction in the fact that America, after "scolding" Britain for unilateral intervention, found it necessary to proclaim a doctrine of what looked like one of unilateral intervention. However, the United States took care to point out that it would assist a nation only if it asked for help, and that going in to protect a state against Communist aggression was very different from going in with bombs to impose one's will.

The Eisenhower Doctrine did not yield a prompt resolution of the Middle East crisis or even a change in the trend of events. It failed partly because it was addressed too fully to remote or nonexistent problem of a Soviet military invasion, and partly because the American approach to economic development in the Near East and the whole posture toward Arab nationalism incorporated in the Doctrine was not attractive enough— or politically powerful enough in its affect on Arab and world opinion— seriously to deflect Nasser from his goal of virtually unilateral power in the Arab world.33

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33Rostow, op. cit., p. 361.
CHAPTER IV

UNITED STATES-UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC

RELATIONS: 1957-1959

Creation of the United Arab Republic.—Egypt and Syria merged to form the United Arab Republic on February 1, 1958.¹ This merger had no marked affect upon the relations between Egypt and the United States. In fact, Washington welcomed the merger as a move to frustrate a Communist coup of Syria. In late 1957, some of the non-Communist Syrians, including its President, Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, and Baath Party leader, had to abandon plans to crack down on the Communists in Syria, fearing that they were too weak to make the attempt alone. The only solution was a merger with Egypt. Nasser did not take well to the idea of the merger, but Salah Bitar, who had led a Syrian delegation to Cairo in 1958, said Nasser had two alternatives—Nasser could either help solve Syria's problems through union, or watch Syria move into the Soviet camp, with Egypt possibly following. Nasser agreed to the merger hailing it as the first step toward the union of all the Arab nations.²

¹The dual-country United Arab Republic was short-lived; Syria withdrew in 1961.

Nasser became President and al-Kuwatli (former President of Syria) became Vice President of the United Arab Republic, which was divided into two regions, Egypt and Syria. Nasser appointed a cabinet composed of 20 Egyptians and 14 Syrians, with the Egyptians holding the important posts of defense, foreign affairs, education, and national guidance.  

The United States and the United Arab Republic felt that their relationship could be improved through concrete acts of cooperation. President Nasser stressed the common problem facing the United States and the United Arab Republic in the Middle East, the prevention of a Soviet victory. Nasser felt that the United States could not fight both the influence of Nasser and the influence of the Soviets, for to do so would only fuse Communism and Arab nationalism.

Although the United States and the United Arab Republic looked upon their relations as improving, all suspicions had not yet vanished. Abdel Hamid Serraj, United Arab Republic Minister of Interior for Syria, accused King Saud of Saudi Arabia of planning to assassinate President Nasser and to stymie the union of Egypt and Syria. Serraj claimed that the United States was a party to the plot. When, on March 24, King Saud was replaced by his brother, Crown Prince Feisal, the plot story died without seriously affecting the favorable moves by the United States and the United Arab Republic. By the spring of 1958 Washington had learned that she must either deal with Nasser on his own terms or not at all, and that cooperation with the United Arab Republic might aid the United States' interest in other nations of the Arab world.

Nasser, on the other hand, had returned to the belief that the United States might be willing to help him without encroaching upon his independence.⁴

**Competition: The Soviet Union.**—The Soviet aims and demands in the Middle East have been for straits, islands, ports, oil wells, and a strategic location for defense purposes. Throughout Russia's history one of its driving desires has been the urge to move Soviet territory toward the sea. Karl Marx, speaking against Russian czarism, asserted in 1853 in the *New York Herald Tribune* that:

... Istanbul in Turkey is the golden bridge between East and West. The Western civilization like the sun is unable to encompass the world without crossing this bridge. However, Western civilization will be unable to cross this bridge without struggling with Russia. But let Russia get possession of Turkey and her strength is increased nearly half and she becomes superior to all the rest of Europe put together. Such an event would be an unspeakable calamity to the revolutionary cause.⁵

In 1924 Trotsky stressed the importance of the Middle East when he stated:

... We must cry aloud that we need Constantinople and the Straits. A country such as ours cannot suffocate for the caprice of the interests of anyone.⁶

Another Soviet motive in the Middle East has been to weaken the position of the West, by any means short of war,⁷ rather than strengthen

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⁴Ellis, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-54.


⁶Ibid., p. 100.

her own position. In the United Arab Republic this technique burst into full bloom in September, 1955, when Soviet arms were exchanged for Egyptian cotton. This relationship later became more full when the Aswan Dam was financed by the Soviet Union. Before 1954 trade between the Middle Eastern nations and the Communist bloc had been of little importance to both sides. For example, in 1938, only 5 per cent of the Middle Eastern imports, and 3 per cent of its exports were with the Soviet Union, although Middle Eastern trade was higher with the countries of Eastern Europe.

In 1954, however, Syrian and Egyptian trade began to rise with the Soviet bloc. In 1959 the Soviet Union was Egypt's best customer, with Communist China, East Germany and Czechoslovakia closely following. During 1954-1958, Soviet purchases of Syrian goods increased almost four times the 1938 figure. However, Syria bought more from the West during this period than she did from the East.

In October, 1957, Syria had received credit from the Soviets amounting to $168 million to finance nineteen development projects. The loans were to be drawn over a period of seven years, repayable at 2.5 per cent interest per year, calculated on each part of the credit from the date it was drawn. Payment for each portion of credit drawn would begin only after the project was in operation, and was to be payable in twelve annual installments.

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A similar arrangement was signed between Egypt and the Soviets in January, 1958, for $175 million to be used in forty development projects and possible sixty-five develop projects. Repayment was modeled closely to the Syrian form. This credit was a portion of Egypt's five-year industrialization program scheduled to cost $750 million.

The building of the High Dam at Aswan was outside the massive industrialization program. Until 1956, Nasser, the United States and Britain hoped the Aswan would be financed with Western funds. However, as noted in Chapter III, the relationship between Nasser and the Soviet Union, coupled with Secretary of State Dulles' abrupt withdrawal of American aid to finance the dam, proved this idea futile.

In December, 1958, Egypt accepted a Soviet loan of $100 million to finance the Aswan, with the stipulation that Soviet technicians and machinery be used in the construction. At that time the United Arab Republic announced its freedom from commitments for the second and most expensive stage of the dam, implying that Western governments would be welcomed to bid on the project.\(^{10}\)

To service projects implemented under the Soviet loans the United Arab Republic contained 655 Communist technicians in its Egyptian region, and 735 in the Syrian region.\(^{11}\)

\(^{10}\)In January, 1960, Egypt accepted a Soviet offer to build the second stage of the Aswan under the same conditions of the first stage--namely, using Soviet men and machinery. The amount of credit advanced was estimated at $280 million, with completion scheduled three years earlier than the target date, and at a reduced cost of $968 million.

\(^{11}\)Ellis, op. cit., pp. 160-64.
Despite the seemingly favorable relationship between the United Arab Republic and the Soviets, the relationship has not been completely harmonious. The United Arab Republic has been displeased with several tactics used by the Soviets. The Soviets have used the trading tactic of re-selling cotton purchased from the United Arab Republic at a discount on the Western European market. Moreover, the Soviets stay out of the United Arab Republic cotton buying market until buyers from the West have made their entry. Then the Soviets enter the market, buy heavily and thus force the price far beyond what the Westerners wish to pay. This keeps the purchases of the West low and insures the United Arab Republic's continued dependence upon the Soviets. Further, the Soviets often deliver goods long after the United Arab Republic has paid for them. This places the United Arab Republic in the position of a creditor of the Soviets, being left, in the meantime, without the promised goods or the cash to put to work in other areas. The United Arab Republic and the Soviets have a bilateral trade agreement, hence each deal is withdrawn from the open market, enabling the Soviets to place higher prices on their goods and often making substitutions in deliveries. While the trading practices with the Soviets are helpful to the United Arab Republic, for they provide goods and services which would otherwise have to be paid for in cash, and the United Arab Republic is able to maintain trade surpluses with the Soviets, the conditions of this trade make the United Arab Republic uneasy. However, as long as the United Arab Republic is unable to sell her cotton to the free world, she is virtually helpless to this arrangement.  

Trend of United States-United Arab Republic Relations.—Starting early in 1958, relations between the United Arab Republic and the United States began to improve. Primarily responsible for the improvements, perhaps, was Ambassador Raymond Hare, who succeeded Mr. Henry A. Byroade. Ambassador Byroade, who had been Assistant Secretary of State for Near East and African Affairs, had established an excellent informal relationship with Nasser. Mr. Byroade was the only American Ambassador who has dealt with Nasser on a first-name basis. Ambassador Byroade had established a relationship so that Ambassador Hare was faced with conditions to quicken the recent American policy of "attentive inactivity." The road back towards good relations had to be traveled quietly, with little publicity, and with no fixed schedule of achievement in mind. An attempt to initiate a fixed policy would only heighten Egyptian suspicious that the United States was still only interested in "imperialism."

The American Ambassador waited until Nasser's disenchantment with the Communists made him receptive to some gestures by the United States. It was Mr. Hare's task to persuade the State Department that the gestures would not be used by Nasser to play one side against the other, as Washington felt its aid had been used since the Soviet arms deal of 1955.

In the early stages of the "new relationship" neither side fully trusted the other. Both sides knew that they must not subject

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themselves to undue publicity, for it might destroy what progress had been made. Nasser had to avoid the charge that he was falling into the grasp of American imperialists in his effort to escape the Communists.

In August the first provisional step was taken when the United States released $400 thousand worth of road-building and other equipment, originally meant for Egypt but had been held in the United States since November, 1956. In September the United States allowed CARE to resume its school lunch feeding program for more than a million Egyptian children. Although the handling of the food was done by CARE, the food supplies themselves were supplied by the United States government. Also in September Washington released Egypt's frozen sterling balances in the United States amounting to about $21 million.

On December 22, 1958, the Suez Canal Authority leased the giant United States Army dredge "Essayon," to be used to deepen the Bitter Lakes in the Suez Canal and to improve the harbor of Port Said. The dredge was used twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week for six months, and was leased to Egypt for $1,600 per day less than an American business would have had to pay.

Also in December, 1958, the United States agreed to sell Egypt $25 million worth of wheat for Egyptian pounds. This sale was made under the Agricultural Trade and Development Act of 1954 (Public Law 480).15 This was the first of several agreements under which this

15Public Law 480, enacted by Congress in July, 1954, has three titles or sections. The most widely used section is Title I, whereby surplus goods are sold to a country in return for its local currency. The money received is then put to work within the country concerned.
type of aid to Egypt increased to almost $100 million by the end of 1959.

Under the stipulations of Public Law 480 some of the local currency has been lent back to the United Arab Republic government for development projects. Other funds are used to pay American Embassy and consular expense within the United Arab Republic. Some of the funds from the sale of wheat was used to pay for an exchange of students and teachers when the Fulbright educational exchange program was renewed by Washington and Cairo on September 28, 1959. It was during this time that Egypt withdrew many of its students from Communist-bloc schools and sent them to the West.  

In March, 1959, the United States released almost $8 million in old economic assistance funds to Egypt, frozen since the Suez crisis. United States Point Four aid to Egypt was resumed for highway development and the training of civil aviation specialists. In April, 1959, American specialists returned to Egypt to aid in the draining of swamplands under the direction of the Egyptian-American Rural Improvement Service. Under this program two areas of land have been drained and prepared to grow grain crops.

Other steps include the loan of $5 million by the Export-Import Bank to an Egyptian chemical factory; the completion of a treaty avoiding double taxation for nationals of the two countries; and the hiring of American firms to aid in Suez Canal improvements, capped by a World Bank loan in December, 1959, of $56 million to widen and deepen the Suez Canal. The Egyptians have also received the assistance

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16 Ellis, op. cit., pp. 55-57.
of an American expert form the United States Geologic Survey, which has resulted in an increased water supply for the Libyan Desert area west of the Nile.

It was the Iraqi revolution of July 14, 1958, which caused Nasser to ask the United States for aid to Syria. The renewal of American aid had been confined to Egypt, the southern region of the United Arab Republic, and the revolution implied a threat to President Nasser's hold over Syria. Before this time Syria had never accepted United States aid. Syria had rejected Point Four, and was regarded as the most anti-Western of all the major Arab lands. However, on November 12, 1959, the United States announced that the Development Loan Fund would lend $700 thousand to a private Syrian firm to build a woolen firm outside Damascus. A few days later the United States made public the sale of over $9 million worth of wheat and barley to Syria under a Public Law 480 agreement. These goods were to be paid for in Syrian pounds, whereby 50 per cent of the funds were used for aid for Syrian development projects; 25 per cent was lent to Syrian import-export firms to help them buy Western rather than Communist goods; and the remaining 25 per cent was used to meet United States expenses, including the cost of running the two American consulates general in Damascus and Aleppo.

Throughout the relationship between the United States and Syria, caution was used. New projects were carefully screened from the public until they could be signed and put into operation. Syria was
at this time groping toward better relations with the United States just as Egypt was in 1958.\textsuperscript{17}

CHAPTER V

EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

The United States, in order to protect its security and worldwide interests, has had to lift many burdens from the shoulders of those nations that could no longer carry them. Hence, the United States has been faced with the problem of moving into many areas of the world, attempting to develop policies to enable these nations from being engulfed by the tides of Communism. The realization of this role in the Middle East came late and amid confusion as to just what course to pursue. It came at a time when there existed uncertainty in Americans as to where their interests lay; in the absence of a workable understanding with England and France; and at a time when the nations of the Middle East were submerged in unresolved conflict, void of mature or responsible leadership, and vulnerable to Soviet penetration. The Soviet Union already had a firm footing in the Middle East and was looked to as a great and good friend.

The United States had great difficulty in the Middle East in its role as a partner or organizer of the strength of the free world. This was due, primarily, to the fact that the Middle East was a region with no united will against the Soviets and a region of many conflicting aims and interests. The United States was faced with a dual dilemma. First, the United States had to act amid an everchanging
situation, often involving strong political pressures at home and many and varied criticisms from abroad. Second, because of its powerful po-
sition in the world, other countries looked to the United States for sup-
port of particular interests and were critical when this support was absent or inadequate.

Although the United States has sought to formulate long-range policies, it has found itself able to do little more than meet crises as they arose. The diplomatic efforts of the United States have had to take two roads simultaneously. First, the road of mediation and com-
promise; to settle conflicts standing in the way of general cooperation evident in the disputes over the Suez Canal, inter-Arab rivalries, and the never-ending conflicts between the Arabs and Israel. Second, the road of moving ahead to prevent further Communist penetration evident in the courting of Egypt, the initiative for northern tier alignments, and the Eisenhower Doctrine. Neither road was an easy one; both were strewn with obstacles. The mediation did not always prove effective, for many were beyond America's capacity to solve. Meanwhile, attempts to build barriers, although they were not without merit, often only heightened the conflicts and suffered from defects of unilateral or partial measures.

Many American observers in the Middle East, diplomatic and pri-
vate, are convinced that United States interest in the Middle East cannot be served without some modest cooperation with President Nasser, the acknowledged leader of Arab nationalism. The United States must re-
cognize that Nasser is the single most powerful man in the Arab world, and it appears impossible to work harmoniously with the Arabs without his cooperation.
American policy in the Middle East has not been all of a piece, but made up of several different strands, some coming close to incompatibility with the others. One strand was United States support of King Hussein of Jordan. Another was cooperation with the royal house of Saudi Arabia. Neither monarchy was liked by Nasser, or by Israel. However, both Israel and Nasser accepted American support of the kings because neither wished to risk the consequences of trying to change the present condition of affairs in Jordan or Saudi Arabia. Israel and the United Arab Republic did not complain about American relations with the other Arab states, or about Washington's formal alliances with Turkey and Iran. Although Turkey and Iran are friendly with Israel, they are non-Arab countries and do not threaten President Nasser's concept of "positive neutrality" for the Arabs.

What makes America's Middle Eastern policy hazardous is the attempt to be friendly with both Israel and the United Arab Republic. Such friendship seems feasible as long as neither side makes a military move toward the other, and as long as the Jewish influence in America does not produce Congressional action damaging to the United Arab Republic.

Although there is little question of our severing ties with Israel, there should also be little question about cutting our still fragile ties with the United Arab Republic, if the interests of the United States are to be served. The primary objections to Mr. Nasser are that he is anti-Western and an enemy to Israel. The question is whether the United States must sacrifice the interests of other nations (our allies, Britain, Israel and Jordan) to get along with the United Arab Republic.
The question of American relations with Nasser acquired pertinence in December, 1958, when he began his anti-Communist campaign. The leaders of Jordan and Israel continued to assert that the leopard had not changed his spots and that Nasser's anti-communism was only a temporary expedient. Others asserted, however, that Nasser's rift with the Communist gives the West an excellent opportunity to place itself in the forefront of Arab thought, hence increasing the chances that communism will be defeated in the Middle East.

There is ample evidence that Nasser welcomes economic and technical aid from the United States, unconnected with any political conditions, to aid him in meeting Egypt's staggering economic problems. The economic and technical aid would also help to foster the impression that President Nasser and the United States, each without sacrificing principle, have found it possible to get along together. Such an impression would help to mitigate the suspicion that the United States opposes Arab nationalism and would bolster Nasser's prestige among many anti-Communist Arabs in other countries.

Some members of the State Department are asking if Nasser learned his lesson. If he has learned his lesson, then perhaps we can deal with him. This would seem to mean that if Nasser is ready to abandon his attacks on the West and his doctrine of "positive neutrality," then we will be able to deal with him. However, there is little evidence that Nasser is willing to abandon his doctrine of "positive neutrality." For President Nasser, nonalignment of the United Arab Republic is the only escape from domination by one power or the other.
Further, it appears that it would be harmful to the United States if Nasser deserted his nonalignment policy and came into the Western fold. An abandonment of "positive neutrality" would give Nasser's enemies positive grounds for charging that he has deserted the movement for Arab independence.

Nasser has become convinced that the Soviet Union also aims at controlling Arab affairs. Hence he is no more likely to trust Russia than the West. Thus, in this sense Nasser's "positive neutrality" works both ways. This does not mean that Nasser desires to discontinue Soviet aid, which the United Arab Republic army and economy are highly dependent upon. For Nasser, aid from the East is no more harmful than aid from the West, as long as neither has political conditions attached. Further, the Communist East offers the only sizeable market presently open to Egyptian cotton.

The question of whether American aid to the United Arab Republic has or will help defeat communism in the Middle East is still unanswered. From the American standpoint it appears that Western aid to Nasser will serve to deter Communism. President Nasser presently serves as the rallying point for the anti-Communist Arabs. President Nasser's image in the Arab world has been tarnished somewhat by the failure of the Mosul revolt in Iraq, and by his failure to subvert the leaders of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the Sudan, Tunisia and Lebanon. However, Nasser's ability to secure Soviet aid to build the Aswan Dam, his success in attracting American aid, and his refusal to allow Israeli cargoes through the Suez Canal has added a coat of gloss to his tarnished image.
United Arab Republic-United States cooperation indicates to many Arabs that the United States has accepted Nasser on his own terms as leader of the Arab nationalist movement. Such a policy by the United States involves a risk to Israel, Britain and pro-Western Arab kings. However, there is no clear indication that the risks to these powers would be any less if the United States kept Nasser at a greater distance. Further, it seems evident that a decline in Nasser's influence in the Arab world would only serve to advance the Communist influence in the Middle East. President Nasser remains the most influential and popular leader in the Middle East. To oppose or be passive toward him would only obstruct United States endeavors in the Middle East. It would seem completely illogical to attempt to seek area-wide objectives while, at the same time, alienating the majority of the people in the area.

Future Arab policy depends upon what ingredients American citizens decides should go into our Middle Eastern policy. We all realize that the prerequisite of this policy is to start with the undefinable national interest. When this is done, then the necessity is evident for several additional steps including United States alliances with Turkey and Iran, an American guarantee of the integrity of Israel, a United States guarantee of Arab frontiers, and cooperative arrangements with individual Arab states.

Of all the strands of policy, only the United States-United Arab Republic relations are in question, as evidenced in Congressional attempts to restrict Americans aid to the United Arab Republic. This means taking sides in the Arab-Israeli dispute. However, favoritism
to either side is not suited for gaining the trust of the Arabs, among whom the United States has great interests. To serve those interests the United States must be friends to both sides, now and in the future.
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