TRIPARTITE AGGRESSION 1956

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PREFACE

In the following pages an attempt has been made to analyse the various factors and forces contributing the general, as well as the specific background of the Anglo-French Israeli aggression against Egypt. It is also highlighted that the crisis which erupted in October 1956 has no fundamental connection either with Suez or Sinai as claimed by the aggressors. The nationalization of the Suez Canal had provided a kind of opportunity which the western powers required at most. They used it as a pretext to justify their hostile action against Nasser who had become a danger to the imperialist interests in the Middle Eastern region. Nasser's action not only jeopardized their economic interests but it ended the Anglo-French imperial legacy with Egypt. For Israel, which had adopted a policy of expansionism since its creation, an attack on Egypt was more appealing when she was assured that Anglo-French Governments would cooperate in her deed.

Apart from the countries directly involved in the 1956 crisis, the role of the two super powers, the UN, the Arab world and the Afro-Asian countries has also been examined.
This work aims at historical analytical study of the events leading to the Anglo-French Israeli attack on Egypt. The introductory chapter brings into focus the commercial, strategic, and political significance of the Suez Canal due to which it had become an object of Great Power rivalry in Egypt. The second chapter seeks to examine the wartime diplomacy of Great Britain which ultimately resulted into the creation of Israel - a cancer in the heart of the Arab world. It is also highlighted that the involvement of Egypt in the 1948 Arab-Israeli war and its subsequent defeat proved to be a last nail in the coffin of Mohammed Ali dynasty. The third chapter deals with the causes and consequences of the Egyptian revolution. The fourth chapter presents the emergence of Nasser as a symbol of Arab nationalism in the Middle East, who not only challenged the western policies in the region, but established a close liaison with the communist countries, particularly with Russia. It is also argued that his act of nationalization of the Suez Canal was not the sole reason of the Anglo-French hostility against Egypt, although it provided a provocation and pretext to their action. The fifth chapter deals with the causes of Israel's antagonism towards Egypt and the Zionists design to extract every possible benefit from the Anglo-French cooperation in her military action. The effectiveness of the pressure exerted by the various countries, particularly the United States and the Soviet Russia through the United Nations resolutions (in case of
for a ceasefire and unconditional withdrawal from the Egyptian territories occupied by Britain, France and Israel in the war has also been examined. A conclusion is attempted after examining the factors and forces responsible for the creation of the climate of hatred and distrust which ultimately resulted in the tripartite attack on Egypt. It also presents the long term consequences of the war in the Middle Eastern politics in general, and in Egypt, in particular.

Finally, I express my deep sense of gratitude to Professor M.A.H. Bilgrami, Chairman, Department of Political Science, A.M.U., for his kind encouragement and guidance in preparing this dissertation.

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Masarrat Fatima
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Chapter - I

GEO-POLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF SUZ Canal

The Suez crisis of 1956, like all major international disputes, has its own unique historical background. The history of Suez Canal is marked by various controversies and conflicts, arising out of attempts to control this strategic waterway, which enhanced the geo-political importance of Egypt in the world. Among factors accounting for tragedies and triumphs of Egypt, the geographical location of Suez Canal has always been given prime importance.

The Suez Canal, after its construction, had become a part of the world's physical and political geography. It joined the Mediterranean and Red Sea, and separated two continents namely Asia and Africa. The geographical location of the Suez Canal has made its strategic value in international affairs greater than that of any other maritime canal in the world. Other routes are much longer in comparison to the Suez passage and consumed more time and money. Suez Canal cut short the hundreds of thousands of miles the distance between important parts of the world.

has revolutionized international maritime shipping. The main trade routes of the western world to the Middle and Far East passed through the Suez Canal. "The Suez Canal", said the U.S. Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, "is a water way of importance to all the nations. For many of them in Europe and in Asia it is, in almost literal sense, the life line it has been called." Laying at the cross road between the East and West, and between markets of industrialized Europe and the raw materials of under developed Asia, the Suez Canal has attracted the bulk of commercial traffic of the world. More over, the economic expansion of the European and Asian countries increased the importance of the canal. With the discovery of the Middle Eastern oil, the Canal has also become an important maritime route for petroleum products of the United States.

The advancement in science and technology is another factor which has created a vast demand for raw materials of various sorts in developed countries, which obviously goes through the Suez Canal. Diversion of trade to alternative

routes if the passage of ship through the Canal were stopped — or if western countries attempted to reduce their dependence upon this vital sea link would involved longer distance, more sailing time and higher expenses.\(^7\) The saving in shipping time effected by the Canal is roughly half on the journey from Bombay to Liverpool via the Cape, between one quarter and a third to China, with much smaller difference in the trade with Australia, perhaps a day or two.\(^8\) As a result the European countries have become more and more dependent on the Suez Canal for obtaining raw materials essential to their expanding industries. Amongst the commodities going south wards through the passage of the Canal to the east were railway equipment, metals machinery to meet the requirements of under developing countries.\(^9\) In return, these countries export raw materials including Coal, Iron, Timber, Fiber, Rubber, ores and metals to the "industrial core of the world economy".\(^10\) Among the goods and raw materials going north wards through the Canal to the west was the Petroleum products of the Middle East. Oil has been extracted in Persia but the tremendous resources of oil in Arabian Peninsula were discovered in 1933.\(^11\) It further

9. Ibid., p.77
10. Ibid.
enhanced the geo-strategic significance of the Suez Canal. European nations, for strategic as well as economic reasons became involved in oil exploration in the Middle East. The Suez Canal played a vital role in the movements of commodities and in the multilateral payments system to which these movements gave rise. 12

The main producer east of Suez using the Canal were India, Burma and Ceylon. These countries sent jute, cotton textiles, Tea, Vegetable, Animals fats, Oil and Variety of metals and minerals to the west. 13 But the major element of which Britain and other European countries depended upon the Suez Canal was oil from the Middle East. 14 During the world war II, the oil played the role of vital war material. This was shown in the changing proportion of Canal Cargo to world trade, when in 1948 oil became more important than other north bound cargoes. 15 At the time of Suez crisis of 1956, Europe obtained some 80 per cent of its oil requirements from the Middle East, most of this being transported through the Suez Canal. Although short lived, the closure of Suez Canal in 1956 caused considerable hardship and affected the economy of various nations. In 1870, the first year after the Canal was opened to navigation, the number of

13. Ibid.
vessels passing through it was 466 with an aggregate net tonnage of about 436,000 tons.¹⁶ By 1955, the year before the nationalization of Suez Canal by Egyptian Government, those figures had risen to 14,666 ships with an aggregate net tonnage of over 115 million tons and it continued to increase there after.¹⁷

The geo-political and strategic importance of the Suez Canal had become even greater than ever as a result of the two world wars. The had been the main passage way through which heavy equipment and sea borne war materials were supplied. The Canal had proved as a vital link between Europe and Asia and an essential strategic base in peace as well as in war.¹⁸ Since its construction, the Suez Canal had been looked upon as a prize or pown by the Great Powers. The strategic position of the Suez Canal had also played an important role in the diplomatic history of Egypt, Britain and France Geo-political importance of Suez Canal was soon realized by Britain who initially opposed its creation and considered it "unfeasible and politically inadvisable".¹⁹

This realization had become a major cause, which brought Egypt under the occupation of British Government in 1882\textsuperscript{20} and the perpetuation of the British control until 1956.\textsuperscript{21} Formerly Britain opposed the Canal's project due to fear of France, whose predominance in Egypt would upset the strategic balance of the Mediterranean and endanger the British position in India. Soon after the Canal was completed and formally opened in 1869 for navigation, the British Government realized that now it was not possible to keep the world powers away especially France from the area, which was economically, commercially and strategically important to her. The creation of Suez Canal naturally reduced the commercial value of the cape route, which was dominated by the British alone. As a result, a new geo-political concept was developed in European diplomacy.\textsuperscript{22}

In order to neutralize French influence in Egypt and strengthen her position in Asia and Africa, it had become a part of the British strategy to acquire more and more control over the Suez Canal. This was promoted by Disraeli's purchase of almost half of the shares of the Suez Canal company in 1875, and the maintenance of British


forces in Egypt from 1862 to 1956.\textsuperscript{23} Disraeli's purchase of the Canal shares was undoubtedly regarded both at home and abroad, "to be a prelude to some form of British control over Egypt".\textsuperscript{24}

French private interest remained, but from now on, the British Government became a paramount power on the company's board. As far Egypt it was rightly said that she "was no longer master in her own house, but helplessly subjected to foreign interference both in its internal and in its external affairs".\textsuperscript{25}

The Suez Canal "had become the vital artery for the flow of exports, imports and shipping of many nations",\textsuperscript{26} but Britain was certainly the biggest user of the canal in both directions from the very beginning.\textsuperscript{27} About 21 million metric tons out of the 67 million tons of oil moved northward through the Canal in 1955 came to this country. Britain's imports of rubber from Malaya, wheat, meat and wool from Australia, chrome from East Africa, cotton, tea, oil and manganese from India, jute from Pakistan, tea and oil from Ceylon all transported via Sues. In return Britain sent these countries

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{24} Lord Kinross, Between Two Seas: The Creation of the Suez Canal, (London, 1968), p.276. See also Obieta, \textit{op. cit.}, p.8, and also Schofield, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.45-49.
\textsuperscript{25} Obieta, \textit{op. cit.}, p.9.
\textsuperscript{26} Bowie, \textit{op. cit.}, p.2.
\textsuperscript{27} \textit{The Economist}, (August 4, 1956), p.426.
\end{quote}
machinery, vehicles, and consumer goods, certain chemicals and cement, which also passed through the Canal. 28

Soon after its opening until 1956 the Suez Canal was regarded as a key feature of the British economy. The Economist, a famous Journal published from London, commented that "it had been cut by French energy and Egyptian money for British advantage". 29 Britain emerged as the chief beneficiary of the Suez Canal which she had emphatically and implacably 30 opposed.

Concession, Controversy and Construction

The history of ancient Egypt shows that the dream of building a water way to connect the Mediterranean and the Red Sea was alive for centuries. 31 It is also evident that in the ancient and medieval period the need for a canal to accommodate the water borne traffic between the two seas was strongly felt.

The modern phase of the Canal history begins with the landing of Napolean in Egypt on July 1798. 32 Napolean took a keen interest in the Canal project and revived the old

28. Ibid.
29. Quoted in whiting, op. cit., p. 76
31. The UAR Year Book, 1960, p. 68. For further detail see Obieta, op. cit., p. 4.
idea of digging a canal to connect the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. His conquest not only intensified the idea of digging a canal but it also diverted the attention of the western world to the strategic importance of Egypt.33

The discovery of Cape route in 1498 radically changed the balance of world trade. France, and other Mediterranean commercial powers were badly hit by this change.34 Since the cape route was dominated by Britain, France never lost her interest in Egypt as well as in the Suez Canal project. Among the European states France enjoyed a leading position in the eastern Mediterranean, and for geographical reasons her interest in the ancient commercial route through Egypt was more greater than any other country.35

The idea of constructing a canal across the Isthmus of Suez was revived in modern time largely due to the necessity felt in Europe, and particularly in France, to offset the commercial advantages enjoyed by Britain in her traffic with India via the Cape by an alternative provision to find out a route more accessible to Mediterranean powers.36 As the interest of France and Britain clashed over the canal issue,

36. Ibid., p.20.
it had become a "diplomatic axiom" that the one country was to secure the construction of the Suez Canal and the other to prevent it.

Napoleon who had a desire to expand the hegemony of France over Egypt "to obtain mastery over the Mediterranean" saw the Isthmus of Suez in a global perspective as a means of establishing the military and political power of France to counter the growing dominance of the Great Britain. He took a practical step in this regard and so to say the age old canal project was to pass "from the realms of theory into those of factual enquiry". Napoleon appointed a team of technicians and engineers to under take the work of canal. Among them was the famous engineer J.M. Lepere who conducted the survey of the Isthmus of Suez and reported against the cutting of a direct canal due to the difference in the level of the two seas. According to this report Red Sea was more than thirty feet higher than the level of the Mediterranean. Lepere, opposed the construction of a sea to a sea canal. This misconception prevailed until 1847.

37. Ibid.
Napoleon's rule in Egypt ended after a mere two years. The end of French rule left a political vacuum in the country in which a struggle for power among competing groups was developed. This struggle gave rise to Mohammad Ali, an Albanian officer in the Ottoman Army, who by liquidating the Mamluks, established a dynasty of hereditary Pasha's in Egypt. In 1805 he was recognized by the Sultan as Governor of Egypt. In 1807 he defeated a British force which had occupied Alexandria. Finally a Firmag of June 1841 granted him the hereditary viceroy of Egypt under suzerainty of the Turkish Empire.

During Mohammad Ali's reign, Egypt regained prestige and made progress in various fields. But the scheme for a maritime canal across the Isthmus of Suez was still in chaos. Various attempts had been made by France to achieve this end but no permission was granted until 1854 due to the strong British opposition. Mohammad Ali realized the importance of such a canal if it was ever constructed, he refused to grant the necessary concession on a political ground. He thought that the canal might lead the intervention of foreign powers in Egypt.

48. Ibid., p.5.
The British Government resisted French efforts at every step. As to counter the plan of a canal introduced by France, Palmerston, the then foreign secretary, promoted a railway project, aiming the creation of a rail road from Alexandria to Cairo and Suez. At first, this scheme was considered in 1834, and soon after the settlement of 1841 it was again revived by Britain by offering financial aid for this purpose to Egypt. As a result, railway versus canal had become a controversial issue between the two governments. The railway project was attacked by France and Austria, while England considered canal impracticable.

Mohammed Ali doubted the success of Canal project due to the growing Anglo French rivalry on this issue. Once Ali had expressed it in the following words:

Austria and France may desire the Canal but England, but Russia, let the Great Powers come to an understanding and demand it of me and I am prepare to execute it. Egypt does not lack men, I can employ my whole army.

Mohammed Ali died in 1849 without granting permission to either scheme. He was succeeded by his grand son Abbas Pasha who being an "Anglophil" granted a concession in 1851 for the construction of a rail road from Alexandria to Cairo. The railway project was completed in 1854 under

51. Ibid., p.49.
the supervision of Robert Stephenson. As a result of British opposition neither Mohammad Ali nor his successor Abbas had granted concession to the Canal project. This situation prevailed until Ferdinand de Lesseps, a French engineer, with whom the new viceroy of Egypt, Mohammad said had been connected in his youth, secured the first concession to build the Suez Canal in 1854.

After the death of said Pasha De-Lesseps expressed his grief in the following words, which revealed the integrity of their friendship:

"I am grieved to the heart, not on account of my enterprise, in which I have the most serene confidence, despite all the difficulties which may arise, but because of cruel separation from a faithful friend who for more than a quarter of century has given me so many proofs of affection and confidence."

It has been said that, "Lesseps' triumph derived as much from persistence as from personal friendship with said."

The concession which was granted on November 30, 1854, replaced with several alternatives and modifications by the Act of concession of 1856. It had become the basis upon which the company's right to exploit the Canal rested until it was nationalized by the Government of Egypt on July 26,

54. Ibid.
57. Ibid.
1956. The company which Lesseps was authorized to form for the purpose of building of a canal through the Isthmus of Suez to connect the Mediterranean and Red Sea, was named as the Compagnie Universelle due Canal Maritime de Suez. The duration of the concession was 99 years from the date of the opening of the canal, after which it should revert to the Egyptian Government. The capital of the Company was to be offered for subscription to all the nation of the world. The president was to be appointed by the Government of Egypt, from amongst the share holders. Ten per cent of the net profits were to go to the founders, 15 per cent to the Egyptian Government and 75 per cent to the share holders. From the financial point of view the act of concession was most disadvantageous to Egypt. Edward Dicey, a British author, has commented that, "never has there been a concession so profitable to the granted and so costly to the granter as that given by said to the Suez Canal Company".

The concessions granted to De Lesseps was bound to Sultan's ratification before the work on the canal be started. The canal project was officially sanctioned but this legal flaw provided a golden opportunity to the British

Government headed by Palmerston to make every possible move to prevent the digging of a canal. As a result of British opposition Sultan's ratification was delayed for more than a decade. Mean while Said Pasha died and was succeeded by Ismail. With this change Lassèps was not discouraged and having over come most of the difficulties, he secured a new concession with Ismail on January 30, 1866. Finally, this convention was ratified by the Sultan, in March 19, 1866.

Eventually, Suez Canal was completed and formally opened in 1869 for navigation. The opening of the Suez Canal brought about an abrupt change in the British policy towards the Canal and it also stimulated her interest in Egypt. West Asia in general and Egypt in particular had become a key area of European diplomacy. Moreover, the formation of Israel had turned West Asia into a battle field, and even to day has not ceased to shake the region.

Just after its opening, Suez Canal established as one of the most important lines of communication and transportation in the world. Britain's predominance in the trade with India and Far East made her dependent upon the Suez Canal which had largely reduced the time and expense of shipping to and

62. Ibid., p.612.
63. Obeta, op. cit., p.2
from India, then Britain's most important colonial out post as compared to the longer and expensive route via the Cape. British government soon realized her wrong policy to oppose such a grand project, which was proved so advantageous to her commercially as well as strategically. Failing to invest in the Canal company, however Britain did not have any voice in the company's policy. Palmerston was often criticized for his lack of far sightedness regarding the Suez Canal. The Canal was obviously under the domination of a single great power the France, the very thing of which Palmerston had formerly been afraid. Her Majesty's Government had to manoeuvre hard to win the battle, which which she had already lost. When Disraeli held the office of the Prime Minister in 1874, he immediately began to explore the prospects of acquiring control over the Suez Canal. He was lucky enough to get this opportunity in 1875 when debt ridden Ismail Pasha decided to sell his stock in the company. Disraeli seized the occasion promptly and purchased Egyptian shares of the Canal company representing 44% of the company's

64. Qayyum, op. cit., p.4.
66. Ibid., p.420.
67. Hurewitz, op. cit., p.177. See also Obieta, op. cit., p.7.
69. Hurewitz, op. cit., p.177.
capital for four million pounds. This was considered one of the boldest financial and political contributions in the world of history. In all over Britain "there was a joyful recognition that the empire had gained greatly both in prestige and practical advantages". It was proved correct in the near future. The purchase of the shares led to the reimposition of foreign control over Egypt. She was no longer free in her home as well as foreign affairs. Ismail pasha was deposed by the Sultan under the pressure of the British Government and his son Tewfik Pasha was appointed as the new viceroy of Egypt. At this juncture the Anglo-French rivalry was minimized because both had two interests in common - "the freedom of the Suez Canal and the proper administration of Egyptian affairs".

Arabi's Nationalist revolt and Britain's occupation of Egypt

The growing foreign interference aroused "native sentiments and Islamic religious zeal" in Egyptian people. Dissatisfaction prevailed in the Egyptian Army, which led to an anti-foreign movement, which rapidly came to a head under the leadership of Colonel Arabi. This took a form of revolt.

72. Ibid.
73. Ibid., p. 49.
74. Ibid.
against the authority of the Khedive and foreign intervention in Egypt. Arabi's revolt was crushed by British forces and the final show down was completed on September 13, 1882, when General Wolseley defeated Arabi at Tel-el-Kebir. Arabi's revolt provided an excuse to the British Government to justify her occupation over Egypt. Although the main purpose behind this move was to control the Suez Canal. From 1882 to 1956 British forces remained in Egypt to protect the Canal, thus maintaining virtual control over this strategic water way. After Arabi's revolt Great Britain became a de facto authority of Egypt, although de jure she still was under the Suzerainty of Ottoman Empire. This situation prevailed until 1914 when the British Government unilaterally declared Egypt a protectorate, free from the Suzerainty of Turkish Sultan. Britain was conscious enough to realize that the other European powers did not take her move in a good taste. "France by her own action had lost for ever her status in Egyptian affairs". In these circumstances it had become inevitable for Great Britain to reach an agreement with other powers to preserve the freedom of Canal for the passage of all ships in any circumstances. Eventually,

A compromising formula was adopted by accepting French proposal and on October 29, 1869 nine major powers - UK, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Spain, Russia, Italy, Turkey and the Netherlands signed a convention in Constantinople defining the international status of the Suez Canal. The article I of this convention read:

"The Suez Maritime Canal shall always be free and open, in time of war as in time of peace, to every vessel of commerce or of war, without distinction of flag. Consequently, the High Contracting Parties agree not in any way to interfere with the free use of the Canal, in time of war as in time of peace. The Canal never shall be subjected to the exercise of the right of blockade."

The Constantinople convention was meant to resolve the Suez Canal controversy. In fact, this was far from being the reality. History of the Suez Canal reveals that "the conventions and treaties regarding the Canal had clearly lost even their limited worth" during the wars.

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Egypt, Under British Protectorate

Upto the time of the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the chief aim of the British Government, as regards Egypt was to prevent France from obtaining a dominant position in Egypt. In the latter half of the nineteenth century protection of this "imperial life line" had become the principal objective of British foreign policy in the Middle East. Prior to World War I, Britain usually looked upon Ottoman Turkey as a guarantor to protect her interests and communications in the Middle East. From 1883 to 1907 the Egyptian Government had been dominated "by one of the ablest empire builders of modern history", Sir Evelyn Baring, who in 1891 became Lord Cromer. During his period Sudan was reconquered by a joint Anglo-Egyptian force at the Battle of Omdurman on September 2, 1898. The establishment of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium enhanced the British position in Egypt further. At the turn of the century, "Egypt had for all purpose become part and parcel of the British empire".

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His successors, Sir Eldon Gorst (1907-1911) and Lord Kitchener (1911-1914), continued to exercise unrestricted power in Egypt. The British Government repeatedly claimed that her occupation of Egypt was a temporary affair but virtually "she was becoming more and more a fixture" with the Turkey's entry on the side of the central Powers in World War I, "Britain found her traditional strategy in the Middle East in ruin".

This brought about a radical change in British political strategy. She began to encourage the growing national and anti-Turkish feelings of the Arab subjects of Ottoman Empire. The Suez Canal had become so vital to the British Government that nothing short of actual British control over Egypt "would assuage the anxiety felt for its security." To achieve this end martial law was imposed in Egypt and taking advantage of the crucial situation, which was created after Turkey's siding with Germany, Britain unilaterally announced the end of Turkish suzerainty and proclaimed a protectorate over Egypt on December 19, 1914.

On December 20, 1914 Abbas Hilmi Pasha was deposed from Khediviate and the British Government offered the title of Sultan to Hussein Kamil Pasha, the brother of Tawfik.

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89. Schenfield, op. Cit., p.53.
90. Magnus, op. Cit., p.5.
"Egypt became a British Protectorate in name as well as fact". 94

Although Egypt had been occupied by Britain from 1882, the establishment of Protectorate was humiliating to Egyptians and wounded their national pride. Martial law, censorship, forcible recruitment of labour, rising prices, presence of foreign officials and troops, 95 Wilson's Fourteen Points 96 and the Anglo-French Declaration of November 7, 1918, promising independence to the Arab countries all these contributed to intensify the nationalist movement which was growing in Egypt.

In the words of Schonfield, nationalism in Egypt "had been vocal before the war but now they organised their wolves into the wafd" 98 under the dynamic leadership of Naguib Pasha.

Wafd and British Government never reached to an agreement regarding independence, although under prevailing conditions 99 Britain had to realize that she could not maintain her

96. Magnus, op. cit., p.27.
98. Schonfield, op. cit., p.75.
interest without giving some concession to Egypt. By the end of 1921 the situation became more complicated, and General Allenby, the High Commissioner in Egypt, urged the abolition of Protectorate. Ultimately, on February 28, 1922, the British Government issued a unilateral declaration announcing the abolition of the protectorate and recognizing Egypt as an independent sovereign state. The declaration left the following points to the discretion of his Majesty's Government:

(a) The security of the communications of the British Empire in Egypt;
(b) The defence of Egypt against all foreign aggression or interference, direct or indirect;
(c) The protection of foreign interests in Egypt and the protection of minorities;
(d) The Sudan.

Sultan Fuad, who had succeeded his brother, Hussein Kamel in 1917, was proclaimed the King as Fuad the First. King Fuad was satisfied, but the nationalists, particularly the wafid, never accepted this partial independence. Egypt had been a British Protectorate from 1914 to 1922 and even until

1936 certain aspects of the Protectorate continued. 104
During the period between 1922 and 1936 various political parties were formed in Egypt but no political party got so much popularity than wafd. 105 As a result of wafd opposition, negotiations for a treaty on Britain's dictated terms were failed. 106 The status of Sudan and presence of British troops in Egypt were two main obstacles between the way of agreement. This situation continued until 1936.

The Anglo Egyptian Treaty of 1936

The dead lock over Anglo-Egyptian alliance ended in 1936. With the beginning of 1936 various major changes took place in the Egyptian political scene. In April 1936 King Fuad died. He was succeeded by his son, Farouk, still a minor at school in Switzerland. In parliamentary elections, which were held in May 1936, "Wafd won a resounding victory at Poll". 107 Nahas Pasha, who led the wafd since Saad el died in 1927, had again become the Prime Minister of Egypt. Above all, the Italo-Abyssinian war (1935-1936) provided an opportunity to both Egypt and Britain to bargain at this

106. Ibid., p.479., see also The Middle East ; 1950, pp.81-82.
occasion taking their respective interests in view. The rise of Mussolini threatened British and Egyptian Governments alike. In view of the prevailing situation both Governments decided to reach an agreement. On March 2, 1936, conversations began between Egypt and His Majesty's Government to conclude a treaty with more satisfactory terms. 108

For the first time all political parties unitedly represented Egypt at this occasion. Finally an Anglo-Egyptian treaty of twenty years duration was signed in London on August 26, 1936. 109 The treaty placed Egypt under new obligations in return for some concessions. It contained the following main provisions:

(1) The military occupation of Egypt by British forces was terminated;

(2) Egypt and Britain entered into a military alliance, according to which England was bound to defend Egypt against foreign aggression while Egypt was supposed to place her communication facilities at Britain's disposal in case of war;

(3) The treaty provided for the removal of British forces from Cairo and Alexandria, but empowered Britain with a limitation of 10,000 land forces and 400 pilots to station in the Suez Canal zone until the Egyptian army was in a position to ensure the security of the Canal;

(4) It also provided for the unrestricted immigration of Egyptians into the Sudan;

(5) Britain promised Egypt to support her in securing membership of the League of Nations as well in the abolition of the capitulation;

(6) The military clauses of the treaty were to be valid for twenty years, while any modification proposed by either party could be considered after the expiration of a period of ten years.\textsuperscript{110}

The treaty has been considered as an important landmark in the history of Anglo-Egyptian relations. Bilateral character of the treaty satisfied the Egyptians, who previously objected the unilateral decision of the British Government regarding the independence of Egypt. Legally Egypt came under the category of sovereign states but factually Britain's predominant position in Egypt remained intact.

In the words of Lenczowski, Britain's de facto control of the Suez Canal which was obviously the primary aim of the British Government in Egypt, "obtained juridical confirmation by the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936".\textsuperscript{111} In this treaty it was recognized that the Canal was an integral part of Egypt, and the purpose of the British forces stationed "in the fairly small area called the canal zone",\textsuperscript{112} was to safeguard the

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., pp.204-211.
\textsuperscript{111} Lenczowski, Op. Cit., p.615.
\textsuperscript{112} Guywint and Peter Calvocoro, Middle East Crisis, (Aylesbury, 1957), p.37.
Suez Canal. The British forces were to be withdrawn from the Canal zone at any time after 1956 when the Egyptian army was supposed to be capable of protecting the canal. During World War Second, "Britain virtually alone had defended the strategic Suez Canal region" from the repeated attacks of powerful Nazi forces towards Egypt.  

At one occasion Hitler discussed the war strategy with Admiral Reuter, the Chief of his Naval Staff, in the following words:

"The Suez Canal must be taken. It is doubtful whether the Italian can accomplish this alone; support by German troops will be needed. An advance from Suez through Palestine and Syria as far as Turkey is necessary. If we reach that point Turkey will be in our power."

Egypt had become a vital strategic factor for the British, and later Allied base in the Middle East.  "Cairo was a real hub of Allied diplomatic and economic activity." In fact, the British Government misused the sacred treaty in securing a base in Egypt to maintain her military power throughout the Middle East. Both World

117. Ibid.
wars have proved that Britain virtually violated the provisions of Constantinople convention of 1856 "by stationing warships in the Canal, by refuelling, and by taking on and landing war material and troops at canal ports and canal zone". On both occasions Britain freely used the Canal for her own benefit while her enemies were refused access to the canal. For their parts, Germany and Italy had made repeated attempts to seize the Suez Canal, but without success.

It is irony of the fact that in the near future when Egypt had done the same against Israel, she was accused of having violated 1856 convention by Allied powers. Egypt justified her action "by analogy to the Allied practice in the first and second world wars and by Article 10 of the 1856 convention".

The end of world war II, had changed the pattern of international politics in west Asia. Prior to the second world war, the United States kept her away from active participation in the Middle Eastern affairs. During all these years Russian interference had been minimal. Inter war developments, and the new discoveries of oil resources brought U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. to west Asia in a big way. They emerged as the new masters of the west Asian region. The clash of interests of the two super

120. Bowle, op. Cit., p.5.
Powers further complicated the situation. The post war weaknesses of Great Britain made her unable to meet new challenges. After the withdrawal from Palestine in 1948, British Government immensely desired to remain in Egypt to protect her interest in the region. On the other hand the Egyptians wanted to emancipate herself from the British imperialism. As the time went by, Egypt's nationalism got momentum, and became more assertive towards the demand of the revision of Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936. These developments came to head when President Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal, which ultimately resulted into the tripartite aggression in 1956, against the Egypt.
Chapter II

CREATION OF ISRAEL: ITS IMPACT ON EGYPT'S NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Creation of Israel is the result of a historical train of events that began during World War I. Legally, the state of Israel came into being on May 15, 1948, but factually it was the communication which came to be known as the 'Balfour Declaration' of 1917, promising British help in the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine. It was always interpreted by the Jews as a clear British commitment to a policy of handing over Palestine to them. The policy of supporting the Jews was not totally based on humanitarian grounds as asserted by most of western countries, but it was on account of Jewish support for Allied war aims. There were a number of forces and factors, which led Great Britain to make contradictory promises to the Jews and Arabs with regard to Palestine.

Israel came into existence as a result of a number of expedient and diplomatic policies followed by the super

Powers during the two world wars. West Asia, has always been a centre of attraction to all major powers due to various factors but most important one are the geographical proximity to oil resources, important communication lines, faith and ideology, which contributed to the strategic importance of this region. The area is a highly important communication hub. It is a land bridge between three continents - Europe, Asia and Africa. "It is a symbolic and emotional area", here are situated the shrines of three of the world's great religions. Christians, Muslims and Jews have all claimed their ancestral heritage to this land. The Pan Arab and Pan Islam movement flourished here, "its influence extended west ward to Morocco, deep into Africa, east ward to India".  

The opening of the Suez Canal in 1969, and the establishment of the British Empire in India provided new dimensions to the commercial and strategic importance of the west Asia.  

It was the land where Zionist movement got momentum and succeeded to achieve its primary goal the creation of a Jewish state in the heart of palestine. The creation of Israel opened a new chapter in the history of world politics

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4. Ibid.  
Power vacuum was filled by one big power or the other, so that the whole area had gradually become a centre of international diplomacy.

**War Aims and Political Strategy of Great Britain**

Prior to the nineteenth century Great Britain had no great political influence in this region, although she was considerably interested in other matters like commerce and trade. With the beginning of the nineteenth century British commercial interest transformed into political interest. When the first World War broke out in 1914, Great Britain was deeply involved in the Arab world and in contact with the various political forces and factors. During the war British concepts regarding the Middle East underwent a radical change.

On the eve of First World War when Turkey joined the Central Powers, Britain and her Allies became seriously alarmed about the strategic implications of the combined military action of Turkey and Germany. Earlier British Government had usually looked upon Ottoman Turkey as a friendly power to protect her interests and communication in Egypt. The situation had completely changed after Turkey's entry into the

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war. In response the British Government began to encourage the growing national and anti-Turkish sentiments of the Arab subject of the Ottoman Empire. British diplomacy was to detach the Arabs from the hold of Turkey. She was anxious to mobilise the opinion of the Arabs in favour of Western allies. Keeping all these prospects and possibilities in view, Britain had promised to support the independence of the Arab areas of the Ottoman Empire if they would revolt against their Turkish masters. The Arabs saw their chance to emancipate themselves from Ottoman overlordship.

World War I had led to a general political consciousness among the Arabs. This consciousness gave birth to Arab nationalism. Prior to the war, in Islamic countries the word nation connoted a religious community. The development of the nation states, as it is understood in the Western world, has been a recent concept to the Arab world. After 1914, Arab nationalism "became more politically oriented".

British diplomacy to secure Arab's help in her war efforts had been succeeded. After some hesitation, Arab decided to join the Allied camp. Before joining the Allies they wanted satisfactory promises from the side of Britain.

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This resulted in a series of letters exchanged between
Sherif Hussein of Mecca and Sir Henry McMahon, the British
High Commissioner in Egypt. Hussein promised to support
the Allies against Turkey, an ally of the German Kaiser.
Throughout the war the Arabs kept 'his' word. General
Allenby, Commander-in-Chief of the Expeditionary Force,
described that Arab help had been "invaluable".

After the First World War, the Allied Governments had
not fulfilled their promises made to the Arabs and "divided
the region among themselves".

The Arabs living for centuries in the back word Ottoman
Empire did not have any political experience. They were insufficiently aware of the "dynamics and subtleties of in-
ternational diplomacy and ignorant of how to present their
cause effectively". In fact, they were unable to comphend correctly McMahon's correspondence drafted in very
language.

11. Hussein A. Hassouna, The League of Arab States and
Regional Dispute : A Study of Middle East conflicts,
(New York, 1975), p.241. For details see Hurwitz,
p.8.
13. Richard W. Mansbach, Yale U. Ferguson and Donald L.
Lepert, The Web of World Politics : Non State Actors
in the Global System, (New Jersey, 1976), p.71. See
Six months after McMahon’s assurances regarding independence of the Arab states after the end of the war, followed the Sykes-Picot agreement. This was an agreement between the British, French and Russian Governments, which embodied mutual understanding as to the portions of the disintegrating Ottoman Empire that each country intended to claim at the end of the war.15

The Sykes-Picot agreement, therefore, was clearly a breach of the Pledge with Hussein Sherif of Mecca. Hussein did not know about it until December 1917. The Bolsheviks, after coming into power in Russia discovered the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement in the archives of the Russian Foreign Office and published it to the world.16 It therefore led to controversy but the British government was shrewd enough to make the Arabs satisfy.17

The Balfour Declaration: 1917

During First World War Britain was badly in need of financial assistance. The year 1916 was disastrous for the Allies.18 It was presumed in Great Britain that her support for Zionism "would produce a new ally in the form of world Jewry".19 Zionist movement, which had defined its aim at the

17. Ibid.
First Zionist Congress in 1897 as the creation for the Jewish people of a home in Palestine achieved significant progress in England, and obtained formal British support during World War I. This was done under the dynamic leadership of Dr. Chaim Weizmann, a Russian born Jew who was a lecturer in Chemistry at Manchester University in England. He proved to be wise enough to seize this opportunity. He contributed to the British both morally and materially in return of British support for the Zionist cause. At that time two major developments took place in international politics, which proved to be favourable for the Zionist movement. The first was the Russian revolution of 1917, the second, America's entry into the Allied camp. Taking into account all these factors, the British Government decided to support the Zionist cause without giving any weight to those promises already made with the Arabs.

On November 2, 1917, Arthur James Balfour, British Foreign Minister, addressed the following letter to Lord Rothschild:

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of his Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to and approved by the Cabinet.

His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their

22. Lenczowski, *Os Cita*, p.79.
best endeavours to facilitate the accomplishment of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

I shall be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.23

This "ill-fated"24 letter is popularly known as the Salfour Declaration. This declaration had been described as a document in which "one nation solemnly promised to a second nation the country of a third".25 Thus, what ever might have been the stress and strain of war under which the Salfour Declaration was issued, whether to secure the entry of United States in the war against Germany or to get financial support from the Jews, "it is difficult to avoid the impression that the British Government blundered into the Palestine in 1917".26

Hussein's confidence in the British Government was slightly shaken at the publication of the Salfour Declaration but later revived after the assurance given by Commander E.S. Hogarth, on behalf of His Majesty's Government.27

This situation could not prevail longer, "in October, 1918, Arab doubts about British intention began to rise again and Arab unrest grew." 28

Establishment of the British Mandate Over Palestine:

Until 1918, Palestine was a part of Syrian Provinces of Ottoman Empire. Turkish rule ended as a result of the military occupation of Palestine by Allied Forces. After the war the question of the future of Palestine and other Arab countries occupied by the Allied Forces was the subject of discussion at the Paris Peace Conference opened on January 18, 1919. At that time every partner of the Allied wanted to share the prize of victory, and it was not possible to comparison with their conflicting interests. Eventually, a remedy was found in the form of 'Mandate'. The covenant of the League of Nations was drawn up by the conference and signed at Versailles on June 28, 1919. Article 22 of the Covenant which was adopted on April 25, 1919, provided for a mandate system originally proposed by General Smuts. 29

The problem still existed as to who should exercise the mandatory powers in specific areas. 30 In order to solve the problem, President Woodrow Wilson, proposed to appoint an

28. Khoury, Up, Cit., p.9
30. Lenczowski, Up, Cit., p.86.
Inter Allied Commission to visit Middle East to ascertain the wishes of the people "directly concerned". 31 France refused to participate in this Commission and the British representative withdrew. Ultimately, with the approval of the Supreme Council at the Paris Peace Conference the United States appointed Dr. Henry C. King and Mr. Charles R. Crane to the Commission of inquiry. Between May and July 1919, these two American Commissioners made a six-week tour of Syria and Palestine and conducted their investigations. 32 The Commission presented its reports to President Wilson on August 28, 1919. Lenczowski, has remarked that "the report was too blunt and too frank to please either France or Great Britain". 33 The report was not rejected, but deliberately neglected. Further more, when Peace conference met at San Remo, it adopted the measures which were exactly opposed to these recommendations.

Thus, what ever might had been the intention of British Government in 1917, no one could deny the fact that the happenings of the Port World War I had made her position suspicious, especially in the Arabian eyes. The King Crane report, though made in 1919, still attracted the attention of various scholars and men of knowledge. It had become a great

31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid., p. 90.
source to justify the allegations made by the Arabs to the British Government.

It would be interesting to note that -- President Wilson, who approved the Balfour Declaration and happened to be a great supporter of Zionism had declared in his fourteen points,\(^{34}\) that the population of every country should be free to choose its own form of governments. It looks very difficult to realize that Wilson, "must have believed that the majority of the people of Palestine were already Jews".\(^{35}\) Wilsonian Principle of self determination was not accepted and, perhaps, it was more surprising that when the Paris Peace Settlement was made, no American delegates were present there.

However, the imperialists' dream was realized when the Supreme Council of Allied Powers met at San Remo on April 24, 1920, and decided about the future of the territories occupied by the Allied Force. France was given Syria and Lebanon while Great Britain was allotted a mandate over Iraq and Palestine.\(^{35}\) The terms of mandate over Palestine were not settled yet.\(^{37}\) The terms of mandate over Palestine,

\(^{34}\) For Wilson's Fourteen Points See Magnus, Op. Cit., p.27.
as observed by Temperley, were settled by the British Government "in consultation with Zionist representatives". 38

The Zionist claim to an historical title to Palestine was first advanced by the Zionist Organization to the Peace Conference opened in Paris in 1919. In its memorandum of February 3, 1919 to the Supreme Council of Allied Powers at the Peace Conference, they demanded the recognition of the "historic title of the Jewish people to Palestine and the right of the Jews to reconstitute in Palestine their national Home". 39

However, the final draft over Palestine mandate which was approved by the Council of the League of Nations on July 24, 1922, was in accordance with the terms proposed by the Zionist Organisation previously. 40

About the position of the Palestinian Arabs, J.J. Glubb had remarked:

The word Jew or Zionist issued twelve times in the mandate, but the Arabs, who form ninety three per cent of the Population, are not mentioned at all. 41

Another writer, Henry Cattan, had also pointed out that "the parties most concerned, the Arabs of Palestine, were not even consulted". 42

Therefore, the fact could not be denied that mandatory agreement was totally based upon the Jewish interest. In the Arab’s eyes, the inclusion of Balfour Declaration in the text of Mandate was an act of “pure imperialism, a mortgaging by Britain of the future of a land to which she had no rightful claim”. 43

Despite Arab resentment and protest, the mandatory administration was finally established, which soon granted permission to the Jewish immigration into Palestine. 44 British government appointed Sir Herbert Samuel as the first High Commissioner of Palestine, who was definitely a pro Jew. He adopted a lenient and favourable policy towards Jewish people. As the time went by, more and more Jewish immigrants were granting permission to enter into Palestine. They had a definite plan about their future in Palestine and to materialize this, they wanted Palestine to remain under the British mandate, until large scale immigration could bring them in majority. They started to purchase additional land to make room for the increasing number of immigrants. The Jews of all over the world began to unite for the collective efforts to achieve their goal.

The establishment of the mandatory administration did not provide for an independent state to the Jews. But they enjoyed many advantages over the original inhabitants of Palestine. The Arabs, who were already hostile over the denial of independence by British and France after the World War I, became more annoyed with the unrestricted Jewish immigration into Palestine. 45

It was rightly said that: "the British Government opened the gates of Palestine to official and illegal Jewish immigration". 46

An official statistical data of the mandate had provided that:

The number of Jews at the time of the British occupation of Palestine in 1916, was 56,000, or 8 per cent of the total population. Four years later, and under the armed protection of British army, the number of Jews was raised to 83,794, or about 12 per cent of the total population. By 1944 the number of the Jews had reached 554,000, or 31 per cent of the total population. At the time of the establishment of Israeli-State, in 1948, the Jewish population figure was 650,000, this at a time when the natural increase among the Arab population was higher by 1 per cent than of the Jewish population. 47


47. Ibid., pp.25-26.
Norman Bentwich, a Zionist Jew who held for several years the office of Attorney General of Palestine during the British Mandate, had said that "Palestine of the Mandate was the womb of the Jewish creation". Before 1918, the Arabs and Jews were in very good terms in Palestine. "The Arabs did not oppose the Jews as a religious entity", nor they did object to the immigration of Jews into Palestine "as long as they came without political motives".

The years between 1918 and 1948 saw the growing Arab nationalism and political Zionism side by side. At the initial stages the Arabs opposed the pro Jewish policy of Great Britain by rather democratic means. They resorted to violent methods only "when appeals, protests, arguments, demonstrations and strikes failed".

It was a reality that in all those years neither Britain nor France and America bothered about the hue and cry of the Arab world, instead, "they lent sympathetic ears to the Zionist arguments". The British mandatory administration of Palestine even forgot the tenuous safeguards laid down in favour of the original inhabitants of Palestine both in Balfour Declaration and in the mandate itself. Through

52. Henry Cattan, Op. Cit., p.28., For details see Article (2) and (6) of the British Mandate for Palestine, July 24, 1922.
out the British Mandate, Palestine was the scene of constant disturbances and turmoil. "The British thought of themselves as the liberators of the Arabs from the Turks—but the Arabs thought of them as the new Turks". 53

The Arab nationalism which was directed against Turkey during World War I, was diverted towards Britain and France after 1918 and finally towards the Jews. By 1933, the Arab bitterness reached a peak when the persecuted Jews from all over the world started rushing towards Palestine not because they were in need of a refuge, "but in order to fulfil the political aspiration of a major ideological movement called Zionism". 54 Hitler's "psychotic hatred" 55 against the Jews made the situation of Palestine more aggravated. No western countries, so called liberals came forward to give refuge to the helpless Nazi victims. Instead, the countries of western Europe and America began to support the Zionist movement to tooth and nails and pressurized the mandatory administration to permit the entry of more and more Jews in Palestine. This resulted into a new wave of Jewish immigration into Palestine and caused further unrest.

The first out break of violence in Palestine occurred in April 1920, the second in May 1921, the third erupted in August 1929, and during the period between 1936 and 1939, an all out rebellion broke out which was followed by a general strike. The Arab nationalism in Palestine was inspired by the success of the nationalism in Egypt, Syria and Lebanon in winning concessions from Britain and France.

S.A. Morrison had described the intensity of the Arab nationalism in the following terms:

The complexity of the situation was accentuated by the fact that nowhere in the world was nationalism more intense than in Middle East, and nowhere was it more deeply seated than in Palestine.

The disturbances in Palestine, therefore, continued and became more complicated to deal with, because it became a matter of prestige for the neighbouring Arab States. The feeling of indignation was intense in Syria, Transjordan and Iraq. This move of the neighbouring Arab countries had to have some practical value, particularly at a time when

the clouds of Second World War were gathering. Britain was anxious "not to antagonize the Arabs whose hostility might have adversely affected" her war efforts.

It was interesting to note that only in 1939 the British Government remembered the promises she had made to the Arabs during the World War I. Even on November 5, 1936, when the Peel Commission was just to arrive in Palestine to investigate the causes of unrest, the mandatory administration granted permission for further Jewish immigration. The Royal Commission spent three months in Palestine. Six months later, on July 7, 1937, the Commission's report was issued. It recommended the termination of the mandate and partition of the Palestine into three positions. A Jewish state was to occupy the coastal strip and Galilee, the British control was remain from Jaffa to Jerusalem, and the remaining portion of the country was to be united to Trans-Jordan.

The Palestine Arabs rejected any form of partition and even the Jews were reluctant to accept the idea of

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Partition at this stage because they were still a minority. The Arab resented violently to partition of Palestine. They also decided to challenge the authority of British Mandate. Throughout August and September, organized guerrilla warfare from both sides resulted in the loss of many precious lives. The mandatory government tried to control the situation by taking repressive actions against the Arabs. On October 1, 1937, the Arab Higher Committee was declared illegal. The prominent and active members of the Committee were arrested or deported. In order to avoid his assest, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem escaped to Lebanon. From Lebanon he directed the activities of Arab guerrillas in Palestine. Later on, the exiled Mufti reached to Berlin and Broadcasted his appeal to the Arabs in favour of Germany and her allies. The Arab rebellion reached its peak in 1938. More and more British troops were poured into Palestine to deal with the aggravating situation. But despite heavy casualties inflicted on Arabs by British troops, the rebellion did not end until the spring of 1939.

65. Ibid., p.154.  
Meanwhile, the British Government appointed a technical Commission, headed by Sir John Woodhead, to work out the partition plan recommended by the Royal Peel Commission.68 The new Commission landed in Palestine on April 27, 1938 and remained in the country until August 3, 1938. The Commission found that the implementation of the partition plan as recommended by Royal Commission, was not possible due to the wide dispersion of the Arabs and Jews all over Palestine.

The Woodhead Commission, therefore, suggested a modified scheme of Partition but it was rejected by the British Government itself. Instead His Majesty's Government invited all the concerning parties to attend the London Conference which was to be held during February and March in 1939, to find out a solution of the Palestine problem.69 The London Conference ended without any positive result.

Both the Arabs and Jews were adamant to accept nothing less they had demanded. As for the Arabs, they were justified for their claim because they had inhabited the Palestine centuries ago. But the validity of the fantastic claim of the Zionists was still doubtful, and it had become a challenge to all peace-loving nations.

Our late Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, expressed the similar view while she was criticising the unprovoked Israeli invasion of the Lebanon. She said:

India had genuinely sympathised with Jews when they were harassed in Europe. But we did not support the Jewish homeland at the displacement of Palestine.\(^70\)

During the years, immediately after the First World War, there were possibilities to bridge up the gulf between the Arabs and Jews. But the double dealing of British Government widened the gap between the two communities and made the situation uncontrolable. After each new crisis British Government used to send an inquiry Commission to Palestine to find out the Arab grievances.\(^71\) The recommendations of these inquire Commissions had never been materialised due to the various practical difficulties.

The year 1939 brought about a radical change in the world politics. During this period a number of international developments took place which brought the Arabs in a bargaining position. Between 1922, which may be considered as the beginning of the mandate, and 1938, just prior to World War II, Jews enjoyed a better position than the Palestine Arabs.

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71. In particular, the *Palin Commission of 1920*, the *Haycraft Commission of 1921*, the *Shaw Commission of 1930*, the *Royal Peel Commission of 1937*, and the *Wood head Commission of 1938*. 
This position was changed when "Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy began to threaten British interests in the Middle East". British Government was in a quandary, she had to satisfy two conflicting nationalism in Palestine to gain their support in the approaching war. This situation was exploited by Germans and Italians in their war efforts. The unhappy Arabs seemed to be more inclined towards Italo-German propaganda which was intentionally accelerated in the Arab East. Realizing the international developments and anxious to retain Arab good will in the region so vital to British imperial defense, embarrassing Chamberlin Government published the White Paper on May 17, 1939, announcing a new policy for Palestine. The new policy adopted by the British Government representing a considerable victory for the Palestinian Arabs, had become challenge to the Zionist movement. The whole of the Jewish world was united "in its opposition and in declaring this act to be not only wrong but also utterly devoid of moral or legal validity". They considered it as a betrayal of the promises given to them by the British Government.

They accused Britain to follow a policy of placating Arabs to regain their support in the approaching war. In the United States of America and in many other countries, influential Jews started to protest against the enforcement of British White Paper led to controversy among British officials themselves. 75

On the other hand, the Arabs too, having a bitter experience in the past did not want to be cheated again. Although a few moderate Arabs appreciated the British policy and considered it a "modest victory" over the Jews. The majority of the Arabs and the Arab-Higher Committee, however, rejected it.

Jews needed the freedom of unrestricted immigration to Palestine because of their constant misery and suffering, while the Arabs demanded its absolute termination. 77 As for Britain, it was against her war strategy to allow unlimited Jewish immigration in Palestine. Germany aware of the fear and frustration of the British Government, started dumping more and more Jews into Palestine. To the Zionists Palestine was the only country where the Jews might flee in time of peril.

Remembering how violence and terrorism were proved to be the most effective weapons in the past to pressurize the British Government in Palestine, the Zionist launched a war of terror and destruction, against the British officials and service personnel. Simultaneously, they propagated their activities on the political front. But this time the centre of gravity of the Zionist movement outside Palestine shifted from London to Washington. It was believed that in U.S.A, a well-knit and financially sound Jewish community had its say in the Press, Public and parties. They could impose their preferences in making and unmaking the U.S. Governments.

When the Second World War broke out in September 1939, the Jews supported the British cause, not because they were friends but due to realization that "the fight against Hitler was a fight for their life". Although, no relaxation took place in Zionist propaganda or activities directed against Britain and White Paper. The Arab policy was not nearly as clear cut as during the First World War. Upto World War II, Zionist never demanded the establishment of


a Jewish State in Palestine. It was done in May 11, 1942, when a Zionist conference was held at the Biltmore Hotel in New York. At this conference a programme was chalked out, commonly known as Biltmore. Programme in which the Zionist openly demanded "the establishment of Palestine as a Jewish Common wealth". It also denounced the British white Paper of 1939, which limited the Jewish immigration in Palestine.

Prior to World War II, United State's role in the Middle Eastern affair was minimal. After 1939, this role seemed to be enlarging. By the end of Second World War, the U.S.A. had become deeply involved in the Middle Eastern region. Norman Bentwich a Zionist Jew had written that, "Palestine was now not a purely British, but an Anglo-American Problem".

Of course, America had solved the problem by ignoring the rightful claim of Palestine Arabs, and supporting the creation of State of Israel. It proved to be a wonderful solution which in the result had created an over burning problem in the West Asian region, therefore, whatever Britain had done during World War I, America had repeated.

it during World War II. The President Roosevelt and his successor, President Harry Truman, made a number of contradictory promises to Arabs and Jews which aggravate the Palestine situation further.

In August 31, 1945, President Truman, extending strong support to Zionist cause, addressed an appeal to the British Prime Minister Attlee for the immediate admission of 100,000 Jews refugees to Palestine. In response, Ernest Bevin, the British Secretary of State for foreign Affairs asked America to join with his government in an investigation of the Palestine Problem. The U.S. Government accepted the proposal which provided a new dimension to the entire problem. A joint Anglo-American committee of inquiry, appointed by Prime Minister Attlee and President Truman, was composed of six Britishers and six Americans. The report of Anglo-American committee was a disappointment and failed to obtain the approval of both the Arabs and the Jews.

The U.S.S.R. had given its prediction prior to the submission of Committee's report that "it was going to play a mischievous role in the Near East".

The Palestine Problem Before the United Nations 1947-1948

In 1947, the British Government, exhausted by war efforts found herself unable to deal with the problem of Palestine any more. Throughout the war years and even after, the Arab Jewish problem was exacerbated by the smuggling of arms and the large scale illegal Jewish immigration into Palestine. Unable to permit any further Jewish immigration into the Palestine, subject to strong pressure of U.S. Government supporting Zionist aims, harassed by the Zionist campaign of violence, and frustrated by world wide criticism, the British Government put the problem in the lap of United Nations. It was finally announced by the British Government in the Parliament on February 18, 1947.

The question of the future Government of Palestine was the subject of discussion at two sessions of the General Assembly. On May 15, 1947, the Assembly appointed a Committee of 11 member states to examine the problem of Palestine. The committee was known as the United Nations

Special Committee on Palestine. The U.N. submitted its report to the General Assembly in September 1947, containing two plans—a majority and a minority plan. The 'Majority Plan proposed partition of Palestine into an Arab State and a Jewish State with economic union, Jerusalem was placed under the U.N. administration as an international city. While the 'Minority Plan' suggested a federal state of Palestine composed of two states, Jewish and Arab, each enjoying local autonomy. At that time, "President Auren used his personal and official influence" to secure a U.N. vote in favour of partition of Palestine as "suggested by the majority Plan". As a result of political pressure, the General Assembly passed a resolution on November 29, 1947, recommending a modified scheme of partition by a vote of 33 to 13 with 10 abstentions. The adoption of the partition resolution was proved as fuel to the fire of the Palestine problem. Serious clashes between Arabs and Jews occurred in Palestine which resulted into the death of a number of innocent persons. "The Zionist forces which were

carefully trained and armed during the mandate, began to fulfill their role allotted for that hour." Among the atrocities inflicted on the Arab population of Palestine the massacre of Deir Yassin on April 9, 1948, was the heinous one.  

Plan  

The 'Majority' was received with enthusiasm and satisfaction by the Zionist, while both 'Majority' and Minority' Plans' were rejected by the Arab Higher Committee. The Arab States argued that under Article (10) of the U.N. Charter, the General Assembly was impoverished to recommend but not to enforce the partition plan.  

Egypt's Involvement in the Palestine War of 1948-49:  

The Arab states, (Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Trans-Jordain, Syria, the Lebanon and the Yemen) as members of the Arab League, rushed to support their brothers in their struggle against the partition of the Palestine. They had temporarily forgotten their differences and joined hands to face the Zionist and imperialist threat. In this battle,  

Egypt as a founder member of the League of Arab States, played a leading role to defend the cause of Palestine. Prior to the formation of Arab League, preoccupied with her own national problems, Egypt had shown little interest in the Palestine Problem. "International politics and the problem of getting rid of the British", said an eminent author, "consumed the energies and attention of Egyptian leaders between World War I and II".

From 1682 the British Government had controlled Egypt. Her foreign policies were guided and her army was controlled by the British officials "either directly or indirectly as advisers". The end of World War II and its later manifestations had changed the role of Egypt completely. Egypt could not escape the impact of the partition of Palestine.

The British Government, as well as the United Nations, were not unaware of the happenings. On April 16, 1948, a second special session of the General Assembly was convened.

101. Ibid.
to reconsider the Partition Plan. Both the Security Council and the General Assembly revealed that “some Governments questioned the Wisdom of the Partition Plan”. Yet even a final decision concerning Palestine Problem, the British Government, somewhat confused as what to do in these circumstances, announced the termination of its Mandate and with drew their administration and all their forces from Palestine on May 15, 1948.

A few hours before the expiry of the mandate, David Ben Gurion, “with the support of the United Nations”, proclaimed the establishment of the Jewish State under the name of Israel. The United States of America and Russia had recognized Israel immediately after its foundation. On May 12, 1949, she became the fifty-ninth ember of the United Nations.

The Creation of the State of Israel was followed immediately by a general Arab attack. Robert Stephens had observed:

The anger was not merely over the fact of partition and the creation of a Jewish state but also over what was regarded as the widely unfair nature of division.

105. Henry Cattan, op. cit., 37, p.75.
110. Robert Stephens, op. cit., p.73.
The joint forces of Egypt, Jordan, Iraq and Syria entered into Palestine "in order to save the country for her Arab inhabitants". 111

These countries plunged into the war against the creation of Israel mainly due to the "emotional fervour and sentiments", 112 although they were "without supplies, without training, without organisation and without discipline". 113

The Israelis, who were better armed and fighting desperately for their survival, "launched a violent counter offensive". 114 As a result, the joint forces were defeated badly by the Zionist forces. Unfortunately, the Arabs, instead to prevent partition of Palestine, provided an opportunity to the Jews to occupy a greater area of territory, which was allotted to the Arabs under the U.S., partition Plan. 115 In fact, since its creation Israel had adopted a policy of expansionism. In order to annex more and more territory Israelis had started to terrorize the Arab population of Palestine. They were uprooted and dispossessed from their home land to satisfy the aspirations of Zionist.

111. Khouri, op. cit., p. 73.
112. Shah Abdul Jayyum, op. cit., p. 84, see also J.B. Glubb, op. cit., p. 289.
113. J.B. Glubb, op. cit., p. 287.
It was a conspiracy of the Great Powers to choose Palestine to pay the price of "European Crimes against the Jews". This was done under the supervision of Dr. Ralph Bunche, successor of Bernadotte. In the first half of 1949 four Armistic Agreements were signed by Israel, with Egypt on February 24, 1949, with Lebanon on March 23, 1949, with Jordan on April 3, 1949, and with Syria on July 20, 1949. This however had not prevent Israel from launching an attack on the Egyptian front and occupying the whole area of the Negev.

117. Harish Chandola, 'While Beirut Burns', Indian Express, (Express Magazine, August 1, 1982).
118. Sani Hadawi, op. cit., 18, p.116
119. See Lenczowski, op. cit., p.399.
120. Sani Hadawi, op. cit., 54, p.7.
"The history of the Armistice Agreements", said Henry Cattan, "was marked by numerous flagrant breaches committed by Israeli armed forces". But generally it was believed that "though marked by numerous violations, the Armistic regime prevented major hostilities until 1956".

**Effects of Palestine War (1948-49) on Egyptian National Politics:**

The humiliating defeat in Palestine war had a profound and immediate effect on Egypt's national politics. It hastened the revolutionary process which had already begun in 1919 and subsided as a result of 1936 Anglo-Egyptian treaty and the Second World War. At the same time, it also heightened the corruption, cowardice, and "criminal incompetence of the man ruling Egypt". Throughout the war Egyptian Government misguided its own people by giving them wrong informations about the facts. When they knew the truth they were shocked and humiliated. "A lost war and a national humiliation nearly always produce domestic upheaval". It also proved to be correct in Egypt.

126. Henry Cattan, *op. cit.*, 37, p.120.
The old regimes which were dominated by French and British imperialism, were now being challenged by a new generation whose aims included not only to achieve complete national independence but also to bring about social and economic reform in Egypt. The younger generation was aware of the rapidly changing situation in the Middle East and throughout the world. They saw that France had gone from the Middle East altogether and America and Russia had begun to take a serious interest in the area.\[131\] They also realized that in the Palestine war Egypt's policies were faulty and military strategy was wrong. The lack of unity and rivalry of the Arab states were the major causes of their defeat.\[132\]

The revolutionary thinking of the younger generation were inspired by the preachings of extremist groups. Fascist influence appeared in the Socialist Party, formerly known as Green Shirts' Organization, while Muslims Brother hood, combining extreme nationalism with Islamic fundamentalism, developed a terrorist wing and threatened the established authorities.\[133\] These groups were active in the anti Government and anti west campaign. In November 1948, Mokrashy Pasha

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dissolved Muslim Brother hood (El-Ikhwanet Muslemin) and its branches closed. On December 28, 1946, he was assassinated by a Muslim Brother. Two months later the Supreme Guide of Muslim Brothers, Sheik Hassan el Banna, was also assassinated. Uncertainty, frustration and anger caused the out break of violence and destruction in Egypt. Likhshoy C. Chatterji had described:

Between the Palestine war and the out break of revolution, Egypt hopped from one political crisis to another; Prime Ministers changed with a rapidity and facility which bewildered the public. Anti British feeling was intensified by the anti-Israeli sentiments growing in Egyptians. They demanded the evacuation of British forces, with out conditions from their country, and rejected the Sircly-Bevin agreement initiated on October 25, 1946, for a conditional withdrawal in 1949. The delaying policy of British Government irritated the Egyptians further. As the time went by, they became more and more suspicious about the British intention regarding evacuation of Egypt and the unity of the Nile Valley. "This political disillusion and social and economic

135. Likhshoy C. Chatterji, Middle of the Middle East, (New Delhi, 1973), Vol. II., p.106.
discountent produces a ferment which needed only a leader
to give it a revolutionary force. The leader who arose
was Gamal Abdul Nasser, the Chief architect of the coup de'
et al of 1952.

Nasser and his colleagues had been dreaming a revolu-
tion to overthrow "imperialism, monarchy and feudalism", which were haunting Egypt since very long. They did not
get an opportunity until 1949. The revolutionary movement
which began "in embryo form in 1942" was seriously or-
organised after the humiliating defeat in the Palestine and
resulted into the death of Egyptian Monarchy.

138. Ibid., p.49.
139. Ibid.
Chapter - III

THE JULY REVOLUTION: 1952

The Egyptian revolution of 1952, and the subsequent events which ultimately led to the British and French invasion of Egypt were the direct consequences of the Arab defeat in Palestine war. "The loss of Palestine", said Erskine B. Childers, "was a great disaster with far reaching results for the very existence of the Arab nation". The Egyptians felt more humiliated than any other Arab country because "They were expecting a quick victory and were over whelmed by the news of their defeat". The young soldiers, who returned from Palestine had a better experience of war. They saw their friends dying miserably due to inadequate medical facilities. The supply of essential commodities was irregular while arms were obsolete and in some cases defective. Often grenades blew up in their hands and caused the death of many soldiers. More over, senior officers had given them meaningless and contradictory orders, which made the situation bad to worse. Despite all their efforts Egyptian army.

had to face a humiliating defeat in the Palestine war. When they knew about the arms scandal, involving King and the parliament, they were shocked. This news that "the King and the Government themselves were making money out of buying defective arms" provoked the revolutionary thinking of young army officers (Free Officers) who were already watching for the right moment to strike. It also evoked resentment in Egyptians. "They were unanimous in fixing the blame on King Farouk." The young Egypt became increasingly hostile to the Old regime, which had neither succeeded in getting rid of British totally nor it had made any progress in the socio-economic fields. The Egyptian intelligentsia began to realize the inevitability of a revolution to overthrow the corrupt and oppressive royal dictatorship. No doubt, Egypt had a progressive and educated society which understood the needs and many of the ways in which Egypt's social and economic problems could be solved. But political power remained in the hands of those who were inefficient to face the new challenges of Post war Egypt. Egypt needed a firm and stable government, which it did not have.

6. Ibid., p.79.
Abrogation of the 1936 Treaty

The wafd which had again returned to power in 1950, "realizing some past mistakes", tried to reform in certain fields. The foundation of Egypt’s first social security scheme for widows, orphans, disabled and old, was laid in 1950. The wafd government under Nahas Pasha “began its long drawn out struggle with Britain”. The Free Officers’, as they had now begun to call themselves, gave it their full support “from behind the scene by helping to train commandos to fight in the canal zone”.

The bright prospects of winning the conservative party under the leadership of Churchill in the approaching British Parliamentary elections had made the question of treaty revision most urgent. The Egyptians were aware of the fact few weeks ago Churchill had criticized the Labour Government for adopting a lenient policy towards Egypt. Throughout 1950 Nahas Pasha tried to settle the twin burning issues of Egyptian politics, the with drawl of British forces from

See also Sydney Nettleton Fisher, op. cit., p.693.
12. Ibid., p.40.
Egyptian Soil, and the unity of the Nile Valley. Egyptians had become irrevocably to see any British soldier in their country. It was a tragedy that both Britain and Egypt had adopted a policy of reprisal which created new problems. The out break of Korean war in June 1950 had a great impact on the Western search for ways to develop a "Situation of Strength" in the Near and Middle East. 14 With the emergence of Soviet Russia it had become more important than ever for the Western countries to keep the Middle Eastern region in their grip. During two world wars, Egypt, due to its peculiar geographical location, had been proved as a vital military base for the Allied forces. After the withdrawal from Palestine it was against the British strategy to leave Egypt. It was the background in which Anglo-Egyptian talks regarding the revision of 1936 Treaty began. In November 1950 Nahas Pasha formally requested the British Government to leave the Sudan and the Suez Canal zone. 15 Meanwhile British Government with U.S. support had succeeded to find out a remedy to remain in Egypt. The United States, Britain, France and Turkey projected a scheme to establish a joint allied force in the Middle East, similar in scope to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. 16

On October 8, 1951, while the proposals for the regional security pact were on the way, Nahas Pasha, compelled by nationalist's fervour and the interactability of the British Government, unilaterally abrogated the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936 and the 1899 Sudan Condominium Agreement. Four days later, on October 13, 1951, the western Powers, in the name of the United States, Britain, France and Turkey presented proposals to Egypt for a Middle East Defence Organisation (MEDO) of which Egypt would be a founder member. British Government announced that if Egypt would accept this proposal, she was ready to abandon the Anglo Egyptian treaty of 1936. The four powers suggested that an international commission be appointed to supervise the preparation of the Sudan for self-government while ensuring Egypt's rights in the waters of Nile. On October 15, the Egyptian Government rejected these proposals and simultaneously the draft decrees presented by Nahas Pasha for abrogation of the 1936 Treaty and the 1899 convention on the Sudan, were approved by the Egyptian Parliament proclaiming Farouk as the "King of Egypt and the Sudan".

MEDO plan was dismissed by the Egyptian Government on the ground that it would have meant an occupation of the Canal zone by four powers instead of one. It was also a matter of concern that Egypt was invited for a regional security pact by four powers, one of whom was occupying Egypt against her will from 1952, another of whom, France, reluctantly withdrawn her troops from Syria and Lebanon, under the pressure of Britain, while the third, Turkey was a country from whose suzerainty the Egyptians had struggled for a century and a half. Egypt along with other Arab countries had to pay a high price to free themselves from their Turkish masters. The fourth was U.S.A, which had played a vital role in creating the State of Israel.

The Cairo Riots

The bold step taken by Egyptian Government encouraged the activities of volunteer guerrillas, of students, Muslim Brothers, communists and other extremists' groups, who attacked the British forces and raided British residential areas. Anti British demonstrations had begun in Cairo and Alexandria soon after the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty was abrogated by the unanimous vote of Egyptian parliament. The abrogation of the Treaty did not really shake off Britain's position regarding the Suez and the Sudan, but it satisfied the ego of the

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23. Ibid.
Egyptians to some extent.

The Conservative party which came into power as a result of general elections held on October 25, 1951, adopted a harsh and uncompromising attitude. The British Government declared that the unilateral abrogation of the Treaty was illegal, and the 1936 Treaty and the Condominium Agreements of 1899 were still in force. The U.S. Government, supporting the British stand, upheld the validity of the Treaty and the Sudan Agreements.

As a result of these developments tension between Egypt and Britain increased. The worsening internal situation of Egypt "reached a stage which could be called anarchy." By the beginning of 1952 the guerrilla warfare and the British reprisal in the Canal Zone became more serious. The British Commander in Egypt, General Erskine, with a new Churchill Eden Government behind him, handled this situation "with ruthless energy." On January 19, 1952, Ismaila, a chief town and base on the canal, was converted into a battle field. The fighting continued for six days. At last, on

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27. N.C. Catterji, op. cit., p. 106.
January 25, 1952, Ismailia was captured, and an Egyptian auxiliary force was wiped out by the British forces. In the course of the battle more than sixty Egyptians were killed and seventy-two wounded. 29 This ghastly act committed in Ismailia "lit the fuse which exploded in Cairo". 30 The next day, on January 26, 1952, rioting occurred in unprecedented manner. 31 There was a mass hysteria which the Wafd government was incapable to control. The various "radical organisations" 32 and the hostile students organised demonstrations, which soon turned violent. In this holocaust which erupted in Cairo, more than 700 establishments mostly associated with British and other Europeans were burnt down, at least thirty people lost their lives, and several hundred others were wounded. 33 Shepherds Hotel, Barclay's Bank, the Turf Club, where twelve people, including nine British civilians were brutally murdered, Groppi restaurants, and the Cirecral and Chemia department stores were among the buildings which were destroyed by the angry mobs. 34 By the time the Egyptian army was called to bring the situation

32. Ibid., p.368.
under control, most of the central Cairo was put on flames. The smoke from burning buildings, human flesh and commodities "was already rising in a thick pall over the city". The streets of Cairo "were covered with broken glass, the blood of victims and the trampled debris of fashionable stores".

The British ambassador in Egypt, Sir Ralph Stevenson, was in a very embarrassing position. He could call British forces stationed at Canal Zone to bring the situation under its control. But at the same time he was aware of the fact that a "British take over in Cairo would be a political disaster, putting the clock back seventy years". He had to wait for the kings' action. He knew that the situation had become so grave that the king had no way out except to order the Egyptian army to intervene to save his own position.

After much destruction had been done, King Farouk summoned the Egyptian army to intervene in order to protect the life and property of British and other foreign nationals. He had delayed action because he was not sure about the loyalty of the Egyptian army. He had been afraid that it might mutiny.

36. Ibid.
against him and was relieved when the Egyptian army did its task well. With in three hours the situation was under control. It was discovered later that the King's relief was temporary and his doubts were not baseless. "The army" it is said "had obeyed the King only because its own plan for revolt had not by then been completed."39 Martial law was introduced that evening and a curfew was imposed for an indefinite period in Cairo. Next day, on January 27, King Farouk dismissed Nahas government and brought back Ali Maher a reputed "Strongman" of Egyptian Politics40 to form a new Government to maintain law and order in the country. The dismissal of wafd government was not merely the need of the time but the result of the humiliation which King Farouk had gone through due to Nahas Pasha in the past.41 Ali Maher formed an independent government and tried to improve the prevailing situation in Egypt. At the same time he tried "to keep in touch with the wafd, the king and the British"42 government. He also expressed his will to reopen discussion with the four powers on the question of Middle East defence.43 But Ali Maher Pasha was not prepared "either to dismiss parliament or to be harsh enough with the wafdists".44

Disagreement with the King arose on these issues and ultimately he had to resign from the office of the Premier on March 1, 1952. Ali-Maher was replaced by Ahmad Neguib El-Hilali, a former Minister of Education who had resigned from the wafd party in protest against its corrupt practices. Hilali was an intelligent man but he lacked political insight. He agreed with the King to dissolve parliament and to exile Sirajuddin, the wafd Secretary General by putting the entire responsibility of the "Black Saturday" on the wafd government. Any person who found guilty in the Cairo riots was punished. Ali-Maher had taken lenient view in all these matters although he denounced of those who were responsible for the Cairo tragedy. He did not want to break the national unity at any cost. He knew that it would make his position weaker to deal with the British Government successfully. Contrary to that, Hilali tried to win the support of the nation by assuring that he would eradicate corruption from public life. His promises of a clean and stable government did not serve the purpose. Temperamentally Hilali was an educationist and not a shrewd politician. In fact, his Government was a weak Government with no support from the palace, parties or public. By knowing the weaknesses of Hilali's Government the Great Britain did not modify her stand on the question of the Sudan. Hilali failed in his mission and resigned on 28 June.45

**Revolution & Republic**

By the time Hilali's Government came to an end, King Farouk's 'True-self' was exposed to the people. He was the most hated person in the eyes of his subjects. By the passage of time his unpopularity increased. The stories about his sinful life had become public. Peter Mansfield has written, that "the handsome and widely popular boy-king had been transformed into a cartoon satire of middle aged debauchery". During the period from January 1932 onwards Egypt had gone through a very confusing state with various forces waiting for their opportunity. But the main battle was now openly started between the King and the revolutionary army officers. They were waiting for long for a right moment to over throw imperialism, monarchy and feudalism, and rescue Egypt from Chaos. The revolutionary Committee in the army continued to watch the situation very seriously. Robert Stephens has written that the secret organization inside the army which was later known as the 'Free officers' "began in embryo form in 1942, held its first organised meetings in 1944 and became more seriously organized after 1949". These officers were nearly all young men.


who had fought the Palestinian - Israeli war of 1948-49. The Palestine war "was a bitter but valuable and maturing experience"48 for them. The humiliating defeat in Palestine war had changed the political outlook of the younger generation completely. They knew that it was King Farouk who was mainly responsible for their humiliation, despite the opposition of the Egyptian Prime Minister Neguib Pasha and General Neguib, Farouk himself decided to send the Egyptian army to the war. His decision was merely "a response to that taken by King Abdullah of Transjordan".49 The out come of the war proved that Farouk decision was faulty. He had played with the lives and honour of the Egyptian army to satisfy his own ego.

Economic crisis, political instability, confusion, feeling of insecurity frustration, anger and hatred had been the main reasons, which changed the very nature of the Egyptian political system.

King Farouk was not unaware of the revolutionary activities of the 'Free Officers'. But he underestimated the gravity and intensity of the movement.

Nasser, the Chief architect of the Egyptian revolution was the shrewdest man among the 'Free Officers'. He had engineered the whole plan wisely and secretly. He knew

that when the time came "they would need a senior officer with a well known name who would act as their figure head and give their movement weight and respectability at home and abroad".50

Nasser found the man in General Neguib who was very much popular in the army as well as in the public. General Neguib was elected as the President of the Revolutionary Committee in January 1952.

The existence of the revolutionary movement became widely known, but not the names of its leaders.52 Suspicious King Farouk dissolved the military club on July 15, 1952 and took steps to deal with the suspected army officers. The revolutionary committee had thus chosen the right time to strike. Secret meetings were held to finalize the programme. In the beginning Revolutionary Executive Committee had feared that Britain might intervene to protect the King but it did not happen. British Government had a wrong impression that "it might be easier to deal with soldiers than with wily politicians".52

On July 23, 1952, a group of young army officers under the leadership of General Neguib seized power in Cairo.

51. Peter Mansfield, op. cit., 11, p.40.
52. Wint & Calvocoressi, op. cit., p.41.
Nasser, "the real head of the army revolt" remained in the background. On July 26, the Egyptian army surrounded the royal palace in Alexandria, and pressurized the King to sign an immediate abdication in favour of his infant son, Ahmad Fuad II. The revolutionary officers invited the veteran politician Ali Maher to form a government under their control. The King had no way out, signed the official document of abdication. Farouk sailed to exile the same day. General Mohammed Neguib was made commander in Chief of the armed forces and head of the military junata. A Regency council was formed in August. A new cabinet with General Neguib as Prime Minister was substituted for that of Ali Maher. Real power, however, remained in the hands of nine officers who formed the Revolutionary Command Council. On December 10, 1952, General Neguib announced the abolition of the 1923 Constitution and the postponement of the elections for three years. On January 16, 1953, all political parties were dissolved. On June 18, 1953, monarchy was abolished and the personal property of the royal family was confiscated. Egypt declared a Republic with Neguib as the President and Prime Minister as well as Chairman of the Revolutionary command Council. Beside Neguib there emerged a very important person Colonel Gamal Abd al Nasser who was remained in the background for some time.

53. Ibid.
He was appointed Deputy Prime Minister of Interior. Despite Neguib’s enormous popularity, the people of Egypt began to realize the man who counted was Gamal Abdul Nasser.

A struggle for power soon developed between Neguib and Nasser. “Nasser was in an increasingly strong position to establish his own authority and defeat the challenge of any rival”. As a result, Neguib submitted his resignation on February 25, 1954. When the news of his resignation spread, Egyptian public became violent because they were psychologically attached to him. In order to avoid an awkward situation Neguib was pressurized to withdraw his resignation.

By April 1954 sharp differences arose between pro Neguib and pro Nasser groups which took a serious turn. Ultimately, on April 7, 1954, Neguib resigned and was succeeded by Gamal Abdul Nasser. Neguib was put under house arrest. Nasser was now master of Egypt. He tightened his grip over administration immediately. Muslim Brotherhood, which was taking active part in national politics was banned. Its leaders and many thousands of its followers were arrested. Any person who conspired against Nasser was punished. It is said that “Nasser had been a revolutionary ever since, and his whole outward look and style had been influenced by this fact”.

Immediate Objectives of the Revolutionary Regime

The revolutionary regime which came into power and ended the reign of the Mohammad Ali dynasty had three immediate objectives to be achieved; to get the British out of the country, to solve the problem of Sudan and reform Egyptian Society.

The new leadership had to eradicate corruption, bribery, favouritism which had brought a bad name to the monarchical regime. Majority of the Egyptian people welcomed the change. They had expressed their happiness over the overthrow of King Farouk. They wanted full independence of their father land without any foreign, especially British influence. They were expecting a lot from the new regime.

The new Egyptian leadership had given the first priority to the third objective. They had devoted all their energies to-wards domestic improvement. "They realized that their movement would lose all its appeal and motivation if it failed to deliver something sound and worth while in terms of economic betterment and improvement in public service". 57

Within two and a half years all these three problems were solved with different success. Regarding the question of Sudan, they did not get what they had an ambition for.

57. Shah Abdul Jayyum, op. cit., p.179.
They had to drop their previous demand of 'Nile valley
Unity' and accepted a second solution which they had
thought better at that time.

An Anglo-Egyptian agreement was signed on February 12,
1953, which ended the Condominium Government and leave the
question of Sudan to be decided by the Sudanese themselves.
According to this agreement Sudan was to pass through a
transitionary period of three years, during which it would
develop self-governing institutions preparatory to its final
emancipation. At the end of three years it was up to the
Sudanese to decide their future national status. Egyptian
expectation that they would like to remain united with
Egypt was disappointed.

The Anglo-Egyptian agreement on the Sudan, enabled the
two governments to concentrate on settling their disputes
over the Suez Canal base. In the Suez negotiations, and
in those on Sudan US pressure contributed substantially to
the ultimate result. "It was achieved" said Norman Finer
"only after the strongest pressure on the British by Dulles
and Eisenhower". During his visit to Cairo and other capi-
tals of the region in May and June 1953, Secretary Dulles

61. Norman Finer, Dulles Over Suez: The Theory & Practice
analized the gravity of the political situation prevailing in Egypt.

Guy Wint and Peter Calvocoressi had observed:

American policy was vacillating, but a basic American belief was that the prime element in the transactions was the struggle of nationalism against imperialism, in which American sympathy ought to be at least partly on the side of nationalism.62

The negotiations between Egypt and Britain were conducted in three stages namely: "imformal" April 27, May 6, July 30, October 21, 1953, "heads of the agreement", July 11-27, 1954, "final" or technical stage", October 19, 1954. The first attempt towards a settlement had been failed due to uncompromising attitudes of both the parties.63

Meanwhile, Egyptian politics had gone through a change. Nasser took over as the new ruler of Egypt. Both the countries started negotiations again in a new atmosphere with a note of hope and a promise of better adjustment. After a prolonged and "frequently interrupted"64 discussions the "Heads of Agreement" were signed on July 27, 1954. Details of the procedure regarding evacuation of the Suez Canal were decided later, and finally the agreement came into force on

63. J.C. Hurewitz, op. cit., p.383.
64. Lenczowski, op. cit., p.509.
October 19, 1954.

The 'Agreement' provided for the abrogation of 1936 'Anglo-Egyptian Treaty', complete with withdrawal of British forces from Egypt with in twenty months from the date of signature, maintenance of the Canal base by British civilian technicians under the control of Egypt. Egyptian Government allowed the re-entry of British forces in Egypt if there were an armed attack by any outside power (except Israel) on Egypt or on any other Arab country which had signed the Arab collective security pact in 1950, or on Turkey. The duration of the agreement was to be seven years. Egypt's sovereignty over the Suez Canal was recognized and freedom of navigation under Constantinople Convention of 1853 was guaranteed.65

The Anglo-Egyptian Agreement of 1954, enhanced the popularity of Nasser in Egypt. Although a section comprising communist and Brother hood militant was critical to Nasser's moderate policy giving some concession to the British Government. They denounced him as a "tyrant" and a "collaborator with the west".66 Nasser had told John Foster Dulles during his official visit to Cairo in May 1953, that "the only communist threat to Egypt emanated not from the Soviet Union but from the local communist parties".67

On October 26, 1954, an attempt on Nasser's life was made while he was explaining the Agreement at a huge public meeting in Alexandria. Fortunately the shot missed and God saved his life. He controlled himself with in moments and went on speaking.68

The Egyptians in general were happy of the British withdrawal. They realized that Nasser had retained their national pride their dignity.

According to Kedouri:

The freeing of Egyptian territory from British military and naval forces, which the monarchical regime was unable to bring about, became a feather in Nasser's cap.69

His regime undertook land reform and industrialization and made an overall attempt to bring Egypt under the category of modern nation states.70 The new Eisenhower Government which came to power on January 20, 1953, analyzed the post world war II developments very seriously. His promise of American "importunity" in dealing with the Middle East gave new hopes to the Arabs. The creation of state of Israel with the strong support of Truman's Government made the US position suspicious amongst the Arab world. The reorientation of the United States policy towards

the Middle East had had its economic, political and strategic interests in the background. "Some onlookers in Britain believed that they could detect behind the American liberalism the interest of oil circles and would be imperialist in America, who saw in the" Anglo-Egyptian "conflict an opportunity to replace British by American influence". The new revolutionary regime of Egypt enjoyed American approval from the very beginning. United States diplomatic support helped the new government to achieve its overriding political objectives. "Dulles believed he had made a good deal with Nasser". In order to promote her friendly relations with Egypt the U.S. had granted $ 40 million in economic aid after the signing of the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement in 1954. Abba Eban had written that the announcement of the Washington's new policy towards the Middle East "which consisted of avoiding the traditional emphasis on friendship with Israel" was "an effort to win Arab smiles".

In the post war years Britain was gradually losing its military and political power to maintain its authority in the Middle East. "Suez had become the test of Britain's survival as a great power" in which her strategy failed.

72. Herman Finer, op. cit., p.16.
"Britain in 1954 have given up with grace what she could no longer hold by force." 75

The collapse of Britain's Middle Eastern policy, the intensification of the cold war and the exaggerated application of the strategy of containment to more and more new areas of the world by the new republican government of Egypt, compelled America establish military pacts with Middle Eastern and Asian countries. 76 America's concern over continuing Soviet threat to western influence in the Middle East was expressed by Dulles in his address to the American nation on January 27, 1953. He stated:

In the Middle East, we find that the communists are trying to inspire the Arabs with a fanatical hatred of the British and ourselves. That area contains the greatest known oil reserves that there are in the world, and the Soviet interest is shown by the fact that Stalin, when he was negotiating with Hitler in 1940, said that the area must be looked upon as the centre of Soviet aspirations. If all of that passed into the hands of our potential enemies, that would make a tremendous shift in the balance of economic power. And further more this area also has control of the Suez Canal and that is the portion of the world... which has long been guarded and called the life line which made it possible for Europe to be in communication with Asia. 77

75. Ibid., 86.


At that time Britain and America were so obsessed with their plan for the formation of Middle East Defence Organization against the potential Soviet threat in the region, that they failed to realise that the Arabs in general and Nasser in particular "discounted the Soviet threat and considered Western dominance the greater danger". The US government supported Free Officers republican revolution in Egypt against King Farouk in the hope that the new leadership might accept their old proposal for a defence pact.

It was in this kind of atmosphere that Secretary Dulles had raised the rejected MEDO idea again with Colonel Nasser, who also equally contradicted the idea. Nasser was of the view that external defence alliances "would be political suicide for the new regime". His primary concern, according to Nikshoy C. Chatterji was the success of the Revolution he headed; he did not expect any ideological threat to Islam.

Nasser appeared to be more adamant in his opposition to the very idea of western defense alliance than that of monarchical regime of King Farouk.

It was stated that "this immediate rejection angered the United States Department but was received with gratification in Moscow". The Soviet Union and Israel were the two main countries which reacted unfavourably and even harshly to any friendly relations between the United States and Egypt, which was emerged as a leading power among the Arab States after the Second World War. By the end of 1954 Egypt's relation with the western powers deteriorated over defence issues. Their worsening relations benefited the Soviet Union and Israel directly. Both the countries took full advantage of this situation.

After Egypt's rejection of the proposed MEDO plan, Dulles had pursued the idea of a 'Northern Tier' alliance which was soon forwarded by Britain. "It was to include those northern non Arab Middle East states" having a greater danger of Soviet penetration, and "were agreeable to creating such a pact on their own initiative".

Turkey, which was one of the four powers, along with Great Britain, France and the United States that projected a scheme for Middle East defence in 1951, again joined the same powers to reintroduce the old idea of Western defence.
alliance with the new leaders of Egypt, Egypt again rejected
there proposals as it did in 1951. Majority of the other Arab
states followed the Egyptian lead. Among the Arab leaders who
were inclined to the idea of western defense alliance, the
name of Huri as Said, a strong man of Iraq, was prominent.
Apart from economic and defense considerations, Huri as-
Said, "who too dreamed of Arab unity" 84 found a personal
enemy in President Nasser. Both Hashemite dynasties of
Iraq and Jordan were nervous of Nasser's growing popula-
 ration in the Arab world. Charles D. Crennans, had written
that "in some ways the conflict was a revival of the old
Egyptian. Hashemite rivalry", 85 which resulted into a humili-
ating defeat in 1948-49.

Both the US and British Governments knew that Iraq was
the "weakest link in the Arab Unity Chain". 86 Ultimately,
the US and British diplomacy worked and they succeeded in
bringing the Iraq to join the pact. On January 6, 1955
Turkish Prime Minister visited Baghdad on his way back
from Cairo. On January 12, 1955, the Iraqi Government
announced its decision to conclude a military alliance
with Turkey which already had a pact with Pakistan against
the possible threat of Soviet Union and India. Nasser called

84. Chatterji, op. cit., p.123.
85. Charles D. Crennans, op. cit., p.142.
86. Faiz S. Abu-Jaber, op. cit., p.79. See also Robert
Stephens, op. cit., p.80.
an emergency meeting of Arab premiers and foreign Ministers on January 22, to condemn Iraq's action which "would destroy Arab solidarity in international politics, would there by weaken the Arab League security system and would accordingly curtail in the West the bargaining influence of Egypt" the League's dominant member. 87 He denounced the pact as a neo-colonial threat 88 to Arab independence. The Prime Ministers' conference did not affect Iraq's decision. The Turco-Iraqi alliance was formally signed on February 24, 1955 and came to be known as Baghdad pact. Britain joined it on April 5, Pakistan on September 23, and Iran on October 25, 1955. 89 The United States which was the real originator of the project and supported it financially and militarily never formally joined it. It was to avoid Arab resentment in general and Egypt in particular. The US Government was aware of the ill feeling which began to develop among the Arab after these developments. The American backed Iraqi action "aroused the ire of not only Nasser and his governments but Arab nationalists throughout the Middle East". 90

It was thus an important turning point in the history of Middle East affairs. The developments which took place after the conclusion of Baghdad pact were embarrassing to

89. J.C. Hurewitz, op. cit., p.390.
90. Faiz S. Abu-Jaber, op. cit., p.84.
the west. Nasser from the very beginning of his accession to power dreamed of Arab unity. In 1955, he shifted his attention from domestic reform to a militant pan-Arab policy. Baghdad Pact challenged his policies and threatened his role as a leader of the Arab world. His reaction was sharp. In April 1955, an Asian-African conference of non-aligned states was held at Bandung in Java. Nasser attended this conference, and here he came into contact with Chou-En Lai, the Prime Minister of China, Tito, the President of Yugoslavia, Sukarno, the President of Indonesia, and Nehru the Prime Minister of India. It was at this conference that Nasser enunciated "positive neutralism" as the main principle of his foreign policy. The United States did not like this move, while the Soviet Russia took full advantage of the worsening relations between Egypt and the Western powers. Russia backed more and more Arab nationalist demands inside and outside the United Nations. Before 1950 the Soviet influence in the Middle East world was not very considerable.

Faiz S. Abu-Jaber had written that:

> Whether the American backed Iraqi action was wise, or whether the persistent American policy of viewing the Middle East Primarily in terms of defense against the Soviet Union was correct, was hard to answer at the time. But the subsequent reaction of Egypt, aggravated by the perennial Egyptian and Arab dispute with Israel, and the western role in the Palestine question, all helped to call up the very Soviet "devil" the west was seeing to deter.


Calvocoressi, expressed the same view by saying that "the machinery of the Baghdad alliance propelled Russia forward". The Gaza Raid of February 1955 further promoted the Russian involvement in the Arab world. Establishment of closer ties between Arab world and the Soviet Union Challenge the Western Supremacy in the region. As a result of US-Soviet rivalry, "the Middle East was brought fully into the nexus of the cold war". In fact, the active Soviet and American involvement in the Middle East and the supply of sophisticated arms to both the Arabs and Israelis heightened the already charged situation in the region.

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93. Wint & Calvocoressi, op. cit., p.51
Chapter IV

Prelude to the Tripartite Aggression: 1956

The new Egyptian leadership, which came into power as a result of July revolution 1952, soon realized that their hope of good relations with the western powers was superficial. Their relations with the west including the United States began to deteriorate mainly over the question of joining the US sponsored anti Soviet military pact and the question of arms much needed to Egypt for her defence against the possible threat of Israel.¹

Having suffered the humiliation of defeat in Palestine war in 1948 and accepting the painful reality of their weaknesses, Nasser and his colleagues wanted to acquire modern arms to rebuild the Egyptian army. By the Tripartite Declaration of 1950, the United States, Britain and France attempted to control the supply of arms to Israel and the Arab States.² The aim of three powers' Declaration was to preserve the 'Armistice Agreements' concluded in 1949 after the Palestine war. On February 28, 1955,

just after three days of signing of Baghdad Pact, and exact-
ly a week after Ben-Gurion's return to the government
as defence minister, Israeli armed forces attacked Egyptian
military installations in the Gaza strip, killing thirty-
eight Arabs and wounding thirty-one. The Gaza Raid was the
first invasion of Egyptian controlled territory which "had
serious and lasting consequences". It is considered the
"most fateful" incident in Middle East history. Since
long, Nasser had been trying to acquire arms from the
west. He had achieved very little success in this regard.
Western countries did show promptness in granting economic
aid but adopted a delaying policy over the question of sup-
plying arms. The Gaza raid had revealed that "Israel was
freely acquiring arms from the west regardless of the
1950 Tripartite Declaration". Nasser was aware that
the western powers pursued anti-Egyptian policies due
to his refusal to join western military alliance. Accord-
ing to Khouri:

The United States, anxious not to arouse
Arab antagonism, agreed to sell Israel only
a limited amount of small arms. At the same
time, however, American officials quietly
encouraged other countries, especially Canada
and France, to sell Israel the latest war planes
and other heavy equipment.

4. Guy Wint and Peter Calvocoressi, Middle East Crisis,
5. Fais S. Abu Jaber, American-Arab Relations from Wilson
6. Fred J. Khouri, op. cit, p. 203. See also Nikshoy C.
   C. Chatterji, Middle of the Middle East, (New Delhi,
   1973), pp. 138-139.
The Gaza raid, however, exposed the weakness of the Egyptian army. Now it has become a question of Nasser's prestige to obtain more armaments and train his army to deal with an aggressive Israel.

The revolutionary regime, which came into power in 1952, devoted all their energies primarily to internal economic, social and political reform and considered the palestine question as a secondary one. The new Egyptian leadership comprising 'Free Officers' were opposed to Israel, but they did not want confrontation at this stage.

The February 28, assault was proved to be an "alarm bell" to the Egyptian Government. Egypt needed arms quickly for her self defence. Initially Nasser approached to the traditional western sources. Having failed in the attempt, "he completed arrangements before September to obtain Soviet arms through Czechoslovakia". As a result an arms race between Israel and Egypt had been started which heightened the crises atmosphere in the

7. Ibid., p.201.
Middle East for years to come.

The developments which were taking place in Egypt after 1953, had a disturbing effect on Israeli government. Ben Gurion and his supporters were of the view that the emergence of a strong Egypt, would in the long run pose a great danger to Israel's security. "A vacuum in the Middle East" created by the British evacuation of the Suez Canal zone, "was highly injurious to Israel's interest." The entry of Iraq into the western sponsored Middle East defence system created fear among the Israelis. They believed that it weakened the guarantee to Israel under the Tripartite Declaration of 1950. The Jewish lobbies in UK and USA tried to prevent supply of arms to the Arab world.

It has already been pointed out that prior to February 1955, the revolutionary regime in Cairo did not pay much attention to Israel. It was the Gaza Raid which radically changed the situation. At this moment Nasser decided "to give defence priority over development". He realized the Zionist designs against Egypt and its wider implications for the entire Arab world. Unable to obtain

arms from the Western countries on conditions compatible with the aims of the Egyptian revolution, Nasser moved slowly into the Soviet Camp.

Robert R. Bowie had written that the Gaza Raid of February 1955 opened the way for Soviet entry into the area. 12

"The Czech arm deal was negotiated and consummated in secrecy,"13 In a broadcast on September 27, 1955, 14 Egyptian Prime Minister, Colonel Nasser, made a sensational announcement that a commercial agreement had been signed under which Czechoslovakia would supply arms to Egypt in exchange of cotton and rice.

On October 2, 1955, Nasser made a major speech before an armed forces exhibition in Cairo. 15 In his speech Nasser explained the circumstances that compelled him to go Eastward. He said that Egyptian Government (RCC) had taken this step after its repeated failure to obtain arms from all the three western countries.

12. Robert R. Bowie, op. cit., p.10
He went on to say:

France always bargained with us. She bargained with us over North Africa. She says to us, we will give you arms on condition that you should not criticize our position in North Africa, and on condition that you relinquish your 'Arabism', that you relinquish your humanitarianism and on condition that you should keep silent and close your eyes when you see the massacres in North Africa.

Nasser Continued:

This is the story of France and now I'll tell you the story of America. From the time of Revolution we asked for arms and we were promised arms. And what was the result? The promise was a promise circumscribed with conditions. We would get arms if we signed a mutual security Pact. We would get arms if we would sign some form of alliance. We refused to sign a mutual security Pact. We refused to sign any form of alliance. And my brothers, we could never get a single weapon from America.

As for Britain he said:

England told us that she was ready to supply us arms. We accepted gratefully. What was the result? England provided us with a quantity of arms which was not sufficient to achieve the goals of this Revolution.16

Nasser alleged that the western powers denied arms to Egypt (they always attached the unacceptable conditions for the supply of arms and it was considered as an indirect refusal by Egypt) which at the same time Israel was acquiring arms from Britain, France, Belgium, Canada, Italy and

from various other states.

It was also pointed out that the western news papers had been propagated that the Israeli army was stronger and better equipped and could easily defeat the Egyptian army and all the Arab armies combined.  

Nasser claimed that the Egyptian Government was in possession of secret British and French military intelligence documents which confirmed that the three western powers (UK, USA, & France) had been arming Israel for months. It was also alleged that the British Government as well as France and the United States had a prior knowledge of Israel's intentions to invade Gaza strip an Egyptian controlled territory. They encouraged Israel to do that in the hope that it might --- bring Egypt into their feet. But the later developments proved them wrong.

Nasser's allegations were soon confirmed by other sources. In these circumstances Egypt had to seek arms wherever she could get them. Czechoslovakia offered arms to Egypt without attaching any condition as a pre-requisite for the supply of arms. Egypt accepted this offer without delay.

It was understood that without the agreement of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia would not have sent arms to Egypt.\(^{20}\) It was later admitted by Nasser himself that the deal was in fact with Russia not Czechoslovakia. "Soviet-Arab relations in the inter-war period were extremely nebulous".\(^{21}\) In 1947 Soviet Union had voted in favour of the UN resolution for the partition of Palestine. "Soon after the establishment of the state" of Israel, said Laqueur, "the first unfriendly commentaries began to appear in the Soviet press".\(^{22}\) Russia extended her support in favour of the Arabs as against the Israelis. According to Fair \textit{et al.}, Abu-Jaber:

Soviet favour began to shift in favour of the Arabs in general and Egypt in particular, since Egypt was the leader of Arab opposition to the western defence system since 1951.\(^{23}\)

Before 1955, it was done mainly through the agencies of the United Nations.\(^{24}\) The events which were taking place in 1955 and on, brought Soviet Russia from the periphery to the heart of the Middle East. Their Soviet arms deal "ensured that hence forward the Middle East could no longer be regarded as a purely western sphere of influence".\(^{25}\) Thus Russian

\(^{21}\) Abu Jaber, \textit{op. cit.}, p.90.
\(^{23}\) Abu Jaber, \textit{op. cit.}, p.95.
\(^{24}\) \textit{Ibid.}, pp.93 & 102.
involvements in a big way in the Middle Eastern affairs intensified the cold war between the two super powers in the area. A.G. Naidu had written:

The rivalry of the two super powers and the thrust of their respective policies conducted in their own interests contributed to instability and hostility in the region.26

As a consequence of increasing Soviet penetration in the Middle East the Arab Israeli conflict became "inter-twined with the East West struggle".27 Initially the Russian involvement in arms deal with the Egyptian government had nothing to do with the Arab-Israeli conflict. In the words of Lequeur:

For the Russians this was a side issue; their main purpose was, of course, anti-western. But the arms shipments directly affected the political situation throughout the area; tension continued to grow and the Soviet Union gradually became involved in the Arab-Israeli confrontation as well as in other local conflict.28

The announcement of the Egyptian Czech arms deal had an immediate and electrifying effect on the rest of the Arab world, even Masser's critics among the Arab rulers

hailed this move. The Arab countries which had resented against the restriction imposed upon them under the Tripartite Declaration of 1980, now had become alarmed on hearing the news that --- Israel was obtaining arms secretly from the western countries. They admired Nasser's decision which as a result ended their dependence on the western powers for its weapons. They considered that Nasser had taken a bold step by refusing "to submit to an arms control system imposed by the western powers which seemed to leave the Arabs at the mercy of the Israeli army". Nasser had found a way out which no Arab leader had dared to do. It enhanced Nasser's prestige and popularity in Egypt and throughout the Arab World.

As a result of this new development Egyptian Government succeeded to conclude defence agreements with Syria and with Saudi Arabia in October, 1955. In April, 1956 a similar military pact was signed between Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the Yemen. Egypt assumed the leadership of the Arab world and Nasser emerged as the chief spokesman of Arab nationalism. The failure of the Templers mission to bring Jordan into

32. The December, 1955 the Governments of Turkey and Britain made an attempt to bring Jordan into the Baghdad Pact. In this connection the British Government dispatched General Tempier (Later Field Marshal) to Amman to discuss the proposal. The proposal could not be materialized due to split in the Government over this issue. It was accompanied by widespread strikes and demonstrations. General Tempier had to return empty hand to London. For further details see *Keegan*, (January 14-21, 1956, pp.14646-14647. see also Erskine B. Childers, *The Road to Suez*, (London, 1962), pp.140-144.
Bagdad Pact in December, 1955, and the dismissal of the British Commander of the Arab Legion, General Sir John Bagot Glubb, by King Hussein in March 1956 had further revealed Nasser’s growing influence in the Arab States. British Government openly accused Nasser for the expulsion of Glubb Pasha—a distinguished British soldier from British connected Jordan. It happened at the time when the British Foreign Secretary, Selwyn Lloyd, was visiting Cairo. Lloyd was informed by Nasser about the Glubb episode. The Foreign Secretary took this news in a very bad taste. It was wrongly concluded that Nasser indirectly instigated King Hussein to dismiss Glubb from his post and more over Nasser intentionally gave this news to Selwyn Lloyd in order to humiliate a senior Minister of the British Government. Nikshoy C. Chatterji had written:

Glubb Pasha’s dismissal brought Britain, France and Israel together in opposition to their common antagonist.

However, adverse political developments accelerated the drift between Egypt and the western powers. The British Prime Minister Sir Anthony Eden, considered Nasser as “a dangerous and irreconcilable enemy of all British interest.


34. N.C. Chatterji, op. cit., p.148
in the Middle East, an enemy to be brought down before he did more serious damage".35 France and Israel both had a vital interest in weakening the position of colonial Nasser in the region. Israel saw Russian arms deal (arranged by Nasser) as a challenge to its supremacy and an obstacle in her expansionist programme. In March 1956 Tunisia and Morocco became independent. "Inevitably, Algeria became more precious" to36 France. Despite of all her efforts French Government had failed to suppress the Algerian revolt. "Behind the Algerian resistance France saw increasingly the hand of Egypt".37 It was a known fact that Nasser helping the Algerian rebels with arms and radio propaganda. The US Government was directly hit by the Russian involvement in the Middle East affairs, Herman Finer wrote:

In one single stroke, in one adept thrust, the Soviet Union had vaulted over the Juggled Pact, over the Northern Tier of Countries, and after centuries of un-successful effort had jumped brazen and powerful plumb into the Middle East.38

Nasser had become an object of hostility and press attacks. Western news media attempted to portray Nasser as a communist, anti-west and a great enemy to both Israel and the west.

36. E.S. Childers, op. cit., p.146
37. Wint & Calvocoressi, op. cit., p.65.
Aswan Dam Project

Ever since the revolutionary regime came into power, Egypt's economic development had been constituted as one of the essential objectives of the Egyptian foreign policy. In addition to the land reform, the anti-corruption drive and the withdrawal of the British troops, the new leadership wanted to achieve something more. It was very typical of Nasser's personality that besides his desire to rule over Egypt, he was especially keen to win over the heart's of the Egyptians. Nasser knew this fact very well that he still "did not touch spontaneous popular affection as General Neguib had done". 39

Among the projects high on the priority list which the new regime wanted to materialize was the construction of a high dam on the Nile near Aswan. The idea dated back to the old regime. It was in 1948 that an Egyptian engineer named Adrian Daninos, presented a project for a high dam at Aswan. 40 Farouk regime did not pay much attention in this regard. Late in 1952, the idea was again brought to the attention of the young officers of the Egyptian Revolution who were busy in finding out the ways and means to improve the economic condition of Egypt. The Revolutionary council accepted the idea immediately. At the end of

1952, Daninos, was sent to Italy, France, Britain and the United States to discuss about the feasibility of the High Dam project. In this connection ten international engineers met in Cairo in early 1953 and after examining the blue print they unanimously reported that the project was feasible. As planned, the Dam was to be 365 feet in height, three miles long and it was to create an artificial lake to serve as a reservoir. It was a grand project. It would take several years to build and the total cost of the dam calculated approximately was beyond the capacity of the Egyptian financial resources if she could not get outside assistance.

Colonel Nasser was very much interested in the Aswan High Dam project. He was convinced that it would provide a remedy for Egypt's pressing economic problem. Calvocoressi had described the reason behind Nasser's ambitions in the following words:

Nasser had been naturally concerned because, although in the Arab lands outside Egypt he was admired as the symbol of the Arab aspiration towards unity, he had not known the knack of winning the affection of Egyptians. General Naguib had been much more popular. But if Nasser could build the dam, something as vast as the Pyramids and much more useful, he would at least be accepted as the father and benefactor of his country.

41. Quoted in Abu Jaber, op. cit., p.152.
43. Wint & Calvocoressi, op. cit., p.66.
Egyptian Government started to negotiate with the western countries to provide economic and technical assistance for the construction of the dam. Western countries did show little interest in this regard due to adverse political climate prevailing in Egypt. "Egypt's interest in the dam gained momentum in the fall of 1955, following the conclusion of the arms deal with the Soviet". As more and more Soviet arms followed into Egypt the possibility of the western financial aid to the High Dam project became negligible. The news hinting that the Soviet Union had offered finance for the dam was more of a propaganda kind. Factually, Nasser wanted the High Dam aid to come from the west so as to avoid a further heavy dependence on communist block which might endanger his policy of non-alignment. The Soviet aid propaganda "undoubtedly helped precipitate the western decision to make offers to Egypt". However, in December 1955, the United States with Britain, together with the International Bank (I.B.R.D.), offered to help finance Egypt's Aswan Dam. The proposals provided for the initial loans and grants of $ 56 million from the United States, $ 14 million from the United Kingdom, and $ 200 million from the World Bank. When Nasser got the details, he did not like the conditions imposed by the World Bank. He was also dissatisfied with the terms of the grants to be made

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45. Ibid., p.512.
by the U.S. and Britain. The money offered to him came to $270 million. But Nasser needed $400 million from foreign countries, because it was estimated that the project would at least have cost $1.4 billion. In February, 1956, Eugene Black, President of the World Bank visited Cairo and discussed about the project with Nasser. Eugene Black tried to persuade the Egyptian President to accept the offer. Finally, Nasser accepted the world Bank’s conditions, but he requested to make certain changes in the terms of grants. The United States and Britain, although not happy with the anti western attitude of Nasser, promised that they would give "sympathetic consideration" and additional sum the project required. The U.S. said it would "try to help".  

In April 1956, Marshall Nikolai Bulganin Prime Minister of the U.S.S.R., and M. Nikita Khrushchev, First Secretary of the Soviet Communist party, during their visit to Britain made a suggestion that the United Nations should impose an arms embargo on the Middle East.  

It was contrary to Nasser’s strategy. Without delay, Nasser had recognized the government of Communist China on May 16, 1956 Calculating that if Russia would refrain he could obtain arms from the new source. "The reaction


47. For details see Keesing, (May 7-14, 1955, April 21-28, 1956, April 28-May 5, 1956), pp.14191, 14829, 14833.
of the United States was very similar to Britain's resentment at Glubb Pasha's dismissal but not so vocal.\textsuperscript{48} It provided an excuse to the US Government which had already considering to withdraw its Aswan Dam offer. The U.S. President and Secretary were having trouble in Congress in granting loan to Egypt. The Jewish lobby of the US Congress was trying to persuade the Administration to pressurize Egypt to lift the ban on Israeli shipping through the Suez Canal. The Cotton lobby of the Southern Senators feared that the construction of a High Dam near Aswan developing the Nile would increase in Egypt's cotton production and might eventually ruin the South's cotton market. Moreover, there was a strong anti-neutralist sentiments in the Congress which was shared by Dulles himself.\textsuperscript{49}

Meanwhile, the date of final evacuation of the British troops from the Canal zone area under the Anglo-Egyptian agreement of 1954, came nearer. The last British soldier left Egyptian soil after 74 years of occupation on June 13, 1956, four days before the expiration of fixed date to avoid humiliation. The Egyptian Government celebrated the occasion on a very grand scale. Dmitri Shepilov, the new Soviet Foreign Minister, visited Cairo from June 17-22, 1956, and was present at the celebrations.

\textsuperscript{48} N.C. Chatterji, \textit{op. cit.}, p.148.
\textsuperscript{49} \textit{U.S. News and World Report}, (February 8, 1957), p.84. See also E.B. Childers, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.155-156.
During his visit Shepllov discussed on various matters, but did avoid to say something about the Russian intention regarding the Aswan Dam aid. Eventually, Nasser, now an elected President of the Egyptian Republic by a popular franchise, instructed Ahmed Hussein, Egypt's ambassador in Washington, to accept the proposed American offer. This decision was made public by Hussein on July 17, 1956, when he arrived in Washington after consulting with Nasser. He was anxious enough to conclude the agreement as soon as possible. To his sheer astonishment, on July 19, Dulles handed him a statement announcing withdrawal of the American offer. The statement said:

Developments with in the succeeding seven months have not been favourable to the success of the project, and the U.S. Government has concluded that it is not feasible in present circumstances to participate in this project. Agreement by the riparian states has not been achieved, and the ability of Egypt to develop adequate resources to assure the projects' success has become more uncertain than at the time of offer was made.

The government of Britain followed suit. The world Bank's offer, which had been conditional on Anglo-American support, lapsed automatically. It was commonly believed that the main motive for refusing aid was political as distinct from the economic one. At the time of US withdrawal of Aswan Dam


offer, followed by Britain and the World Bank, President Nasser was in Belgrade in Yugoslavia, holding a meeting with Marshal Tito and Prime Minister Nehru. As soon as Nasser arrived at the Cairo airport on July 20, 1956, he was informed about the refusal of the loan by the waiting officials. Nehru had accompanied him back to Egypt. The US Government took this decision at the time "when the three neutralist leaders were in conclave". Calvocoressi had written that "by its timing and its manner, as much as by its content, this was a stinging public rebuff to Nasser". Another famous writer D.A. Farnie had also pointed out that "Nasser objected not to the withdrawal of aid but the insulting manner in which the refusal was conveyed and especially to the explanatory slur upon Egypt's economic reputation". Nasser's reaction was harsh. While speaking at the opening of a new oil pipe line from Cairo to Suez on July 24, 1956, he bitterly attacked the US Government, Egyptian press, and new media had burst into a "savage recriminations". Dulles was accused of showing bad faith, of breaking a promise, of being a cheat.

53. Wint and Calvocoressi, op. cit., p.69.
55. Herman Finer, op. cit., p.55.
Besides Arab States, the majority of the Afro-Asian countries criticized the US and British Governments for their open diplomatic blackmail. Pandit Nehru, who was with Nasser at the time the news was given, angrily denounced the US action. No one could read the mind of an emotional revolutionary who was deeply hurt and publicly insulted by the imperialist powers. There was talk of 'Slapping Nasser down for his neutralism.' The western powers unitedly conspired to undermine the growing prestige and popularity of President Nasser, who day by day was becoming a danger to their future planning in the Middle East. Nasser had become the focus of world attention. "People began to place bets on the name of Nasser's successor". 56

On July 22 came the reports of some remarks made by Shepilov in Moscow explaining that the USSR did not regard the question of financing the Aswan Dam as an "urgent problem" though his government would help other Egypt's economic programmes. 57 Nasser's position became suspicious because his government repeatedly hinted that Russia had expressed her willingness to help in financing the High Dam project but he did not accept this offer. In his sheer frustration Nasser recalled the history of Egypt's economic and political setback in the hands of imperialist powers. This recollection

56. E.B. Childers, op. cit., p.162.
of events created an idea in Nasser's mind and soon he reached on a conclusion.

Nationalization of the Suez Canal

In a memorial speech at Alexandria on July 26, 1956 at the occasion of fourth anniversary of the Egyptian revolution President Nasser dramatically announced that the Egyptian Government had nationalized the Suez Canal Company. In the same announcement he had declared that the revenues from the Canal would go toward the financing of the Aswan Dam Project. The Company's share holders would be paid fully in accordance with the last closing prices on the Paris Bourse on July 25, 1956. It was also stated that the navigation in the Canal was to be unaffected by the takeover of the Canal. Nasser had announced this in an angry speech, it was one of the memorable speeches of his life. Indeed, the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company, twelve years before the actual date of the expiration of the Canal's Concession, was the act of an angry leader who was humiliated and punished by the western powers for his defiance of their policies. The western powers, consciously or unconsciously, had touched Egypt on the most sensitive nerve her bankruptcy which in

58. For the Full text of Speech and Nationalization Law see Khalil Muhammad, The Arab-States and the Arab League: A Documentary Record, Vol. II., (Beirut, 1962), pp.742-772.
1875 had provided Disraeli, Prime Minister of Britain, a golden chance to purchase Egypt's forty-four percent shares in the Canal Company for four million pounds. The original value of the Egyptian shares was sixteen million pounds. It was considered a fateful date in the economic as well as political history of Egypt. Robert R. Bowie had described the immediate motives which President Nasser wanted to achieve by Nationalization of the Suez Canal Company in the following words:

He wanted to retaliate for the Western refusal to finance the Aswan Dam and to provide an alternative source of financing; to demonstrate Egypt's independence; and to exploit nationalism and xenophobia at home and in the Middle East as a whole. For these purposes, the decision to nationalize and the speech announcing it were intentionally provocative, turbulent, and defiant.59

Dulles' provocative withdrawal of the Aswan loan offer, and Nasser's angry response, both events were unexpected by the concerning governments.

The attitude of the general Arab and Afro-Asian countries towards Egypt's decision to nationalize the Suez Canal Company was favourable. King Hussein of Jordan, in a message of congratulations to President Nasser, said: "The shadow of imperialistic exploitation is beginning to disappear from the

Arab World". The Lebanese Parliament passed a resolution welcoming Egypt's move and declaring the Lebanon's full support to Egypt. The Libyan Prime Minister, Mustafa Bin Halim, described the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company as a strong step towards safeguarding Egypt's interests. According to him it was a purely internal matter of Egypt and no outside power was entitled to interfere. Even Nasser's opponents among the Arab-rulers and with in his own country had strongly appreciated his bold action. Childers had described the jubilation of the Egyptian public in the following words:

In fact, by this courageous act President Nasser had won over the hearts of Egyptians.

**Reaction in the West**

The countries most directly hit by the take over of the Canal were Britain and France, who owned the overwhelming majority of the company's stock. Of the 6,00,000 shares of the Company, the British Government owned 3,53,204 and

French share holders over 4,000,000*. Since the Israeli's famous bargain in 1875, the Suez Canal Company was totally dominated by the western powers. In his speech, President Nasser described the Suez Canal Company as an "exploiting" company and a "state within a state". The nationalization of the Suez Canal contributed to the deterioration of the already tense relations between Egypt and the western powers. Nasser's action was received in the western capitals, particularly in London and Paris, with rage and anger. Britain and France strongly protested against the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company. They accused Nasser of his arbitrary act and compared him with Mussolini and Hitler. They claimed that the act of nationalization was a violation of the international character of the Canal and that it jeopardized the freedom of navigation. They threatened to use force against Egypt if the later did not listen to them.

The nationalization of the Suez Canal Company had not been the only cause of the Anglo-French hostility against Nasser but it provided the kind of opportunity which the two governments needed to justify their action against him. In 1982 Britain viewed Colonel Arabi as a potential threat to her imperialist goal. He and his supporters were destroyed.

by the British forces at the place of Tel-el-Kabir. Arabi’s revolt provided an excuse to the British Government to justify her military presence in Egypt which remained till 1956. The main objective behind this move was to control over the Suez Canal. After Arabi’s revolt Britain had become the dominating authority in internal as well external affairs of Egypt. However, in the year 1956 adverse political developments intervened again, and Egyptians under the dynamic leadership of Colonel Nasser began to question the presence of the British troops in their country. But the days had gone when British Government occupied Egypt by force. In 1954 the circumstances and political atmosphere compelled Britain to sign an agreement with Egypt under which her forces had to leave Egyptian soil by June 20, 1956. It was done under the strong pressure of the US Government which for its own reasons wanted to placate Egypt.

Bagdad Pact was another source of conflict between Egypt and Britain. Nasser not only refused to join this pact but he continued to propagate against it. To counter it, he concluded bilateral defense alliances with Syria, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. He also succeeded in his effort


67. See Herman Finer, op. cit., p.16.

to keep the other Arab countries away from joining the western sponsored defence Pact. The defeat of the Templar Mission had proved this fact in December 1955. In the prevailing circumstances when King Hussein of Jordan in a surprise move dismissed General Glubb from the Arab Legion on March 1, 1956, British Government ignoring Hussein's own reasons for the step, held Nasser responsible for it. Glubb's dismissal was a great blow for Eden's Government.

Nuri es-Said, a personal enemy of Nasser, exploited the already charged situation in his own interest. Jealous of his leading position among the Arab states and his open opposition to the Baghdad Pact, Nuri had consistently trying to get an opportunity to humiliate Nasser. It had often been alleged that behind the humiliating withdrawal of Aswan Dam offer, Nuri-es-Said had played an important role. It was also alleged that he conspired with Eden to make Dulles the real scape goat in the Arabs' eyes. The later events disappointed Nuri, while presented a golden opportunity to Eden, Mollet and Ben-Gurion to destroy their common enemy Nasser.

The nationalization of the Suez Canal reinforced Eden's

69. E.B. Childers, op. cit., pp.140-144., See also Elizabeth Monroe, Britain's Movement in the Middle East: 1914-1956, (London, 63), p.188.
distrust and hostility against Nasser. By this bold step, President Nasser challenged Britain's historic role in the Suez Canal and her wider interests in the Middle East region.

Like Britain, France too was deeply attached to the Suez Canal, which was something of a symbol of its prestige in the area. The takeover of the canal not only ended French imperial legacy with Egypt but it also jeopardized her economic interests. Already hostile with Nasser due to his support to the Algerian freedom struggle, the French Government reacted hysterically over the rightful seizure of the Suez Canal Company by the Egyptian Government. Having suffered humiliating defeat of 1940; Indo-China; Morocco and Tunisia, the French Government did not want to lose her lost hope in North Africa. 72

In March 1956, Pineau, the French Foreign Minister, visited Cairo mainly to persuade Nasser to cease supporting the Algerian rebels, in return for French support of Arab neutralism. 73 The failure of his Cairo mission was exploited by the French Right Wing against the ruling party.

Thus, the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company provided a provocation as well as pretext to France to use force against Egypt. The French Government had become convinced that "disposing of Nasser was the way to defeat the

72 Fred J. Khouri, _op. cit._, p. 211.
73 S.B. Childers, _op. cit._, pp. 146-147 & 173. See Herman Finer, _op. cit._, pp. 41-42.
After the nationalization of the Canal French policy towards Egypt was also influenced by its close ties with Israel, which for her own national interests planning a war against Egypt. France, Britain and Israel had separate reasons of their enmity against Egypt, but they had a common objective the destruction of Nasserism. This coincidence of the objectives of the three governments was responsible for their collusion against Egypt.

The US reaction to the act of nationalization was less severe than that of Britain and France. Unlike Britain and France, neither of US holdings nor her prestige was directly involved in the Suez Canal issue. Although "US shipping was a large Canal user and US business had oil concessions, neither was crucial for the United States economy." 75

Despite bitter opposition to the neutralist policy of President Nasser and his growing ties with the Communist bloc, the State Department was strongly opposed to the use of force against Egypt to vindicate western claims. The US Government saw the Suez Canal crisis in broader perspective. It presumed that in the prevailing circumstances the use of force against Egypt might facilitate Soviet entry in the area, which ultimately would harm American Middle Eastern policy.

75. Ibid., p.29. See also Childers, op. cit., p.211.
The initial pronouncement of the State Department was made on July 27, 1956, in the absence of Dulles who at the time was in Peru. It did refer to the "seizure" of the Suez Canal Company but it indicated that the matter was one of concern mainly to the principal users of the Canal. On July 28, the Acting Secretary of State, Herbert Hoover, had a talk with the Egyptian Ambassador, Ahmed Hassanein, in which he protested not about the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company, but about the "intemperate, inaccurate and misleading statements" which President Nasser had made to the US Government "during the past few days, and particularly in his Alexandria speech on July 26," 1956. After his return to Washington on July 29, Dulles said: "The Egyptian action purporting to nationalize the Suez Canal Company strikes a grievous blow at international confidence". On July 31, the United States froze all assets of the Egyptian Government and the Suez Canal Company pending final settlement of the crisis.

The US Government strongly disapproved Nasser's action but its reaction was indeed quite different from that of Britain and France. Robert R. Bowie had written:

The divergences between the United States and Britain and France emerged almost at once. They differed greatly in their

79. Ibid.
appraisals of the issues, the objectives, and the appropriate means.80

The news of Nasser's seizure of the Suez Canal was broken to the British Prime Minister, Sir Anthony Eden, at a time when he was busy in entertaining his guests—the young king Faisal of Iraq, and his experienced prime minister, Kuri- es-Said, the Chief architect of the Jadad Pact.81 On July 27, in the House of Commons, Sir Anthony Eden denounced Nasser's action and declared that the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company was "in breach of the Concession Agreements" and he referred to it as an 'arbitrary action' which would affect both the operation of the Canal and "wiser questions".82 On the same day after consulting with his Cabinet members, Eden sent a telegram to US president, Eisenhower, informing him about the appraisal and attitude of his government. It was declared in the telegram:

We shall not allow ourselves to become involved in legal quibbles about the rights of the Egyptian Government to nationalize what is technically an Egyptian Company, or in financial arguments about their capacity to pay the compensation which they have offered. I feel sure that we should take this issue with them on the broader international grounds.

In view of the action taken by the Egyptian Government the British Treasury blocked sizable Egyptian accounts in

London on July 26. On July 30 in the House of Commons Eden announced that all British exports of war material to Egypt had been stopped. 84

From the very beginning the Franco-British policy in the Suez Crisis was largely dominated by their common desire to crush Nasser, who was responsible to jeopardize their national interests in the Middle East. According to Bowie, "Eden was quite explicit about his objective more than four months before the Suez Crisis. 85 British government was manoeuvring hard to find out a strong plea to justify ultimate use of force against Egypt. The mere argument that the takeover of the Canal was illegal in disrupting the 'international system' established under the convention of 1888, did not establish the right to resort to force to remedy it.

Moreover, the Labour Party did not support any use of force outside the U.N. framework. Hugh Gaitskell, Leader of the Labour Opposition, in his speech to the House of Commons on August 2, compared President Nasser's diplomatic methods with those of Hitler and Mussolini, but at the same time he warned British Government to avoid a position in which Britain might be denounced as an aggressor by the Security Council. 86 James Layrs see p.36.

86. James Layrs, op. cit., p.36.
In France, the reaction was more united and more vigorous. In Paris the Foreign Minister, M. Pineau, used a harsh language to the Egyptian Ambassador. In his first comment to the act of nationalization, on July 28, Pineau declared that France would "not accept the unilateral action of Colonel Nasser" which was "less legal than political". In a Press statement on July 30, M. Mollet, the French Prime Minister, described Colonel Nasser as an "apprentice dictator". He shared British view of Hitler and Rineland analogy with those of Nasser and Suez Canal. Quoting from Colonel Nasser's pamphlet, the Philosophy of Revolution, (which M. Mollet said should have been entitled 'Main Kampf') the French Prime Minister said that it was apparent that Nasser saw himself in the role of a "hero" and creator of an Arab empire stretching from the Persian Gulf to the Atlantic. He declared that French Government had decided upon "an energetic and severe counter stroke" to the Egyptian dictator, which would take the form of "concerted action by the western allies who are pledged to uphold law and Justice". He stressed that the western powers were not protesting against an ordinary act of nationalization but against the Egyptian Governments'

88. Ibid. See also Keesing, (July 28-August 4, 1956), p.15003.
90. Ibid.
unilateral action in breaking an international agreement. Financial measures against Egypt, identical to those imposed by Britain were also announced by the French Government.91

On August 2, French Assembly, with only the communist dissenting, resolved that President Nasser was "a permanent menace to the Peace" and his actions must be checked by the international community.92 Pineau's speech to the Assembly on August 3, clearly exposed of his government's approach to the crisis.93

The British and French hostile attitude to Nasser's action alarmed the US Government at once. Taking into account of the grave situation, President Eisenhower sent Robert Murphy, the US Deputy Under Secretary of State, to London just to discover the intensity of their seriousness Robert Murphy, arrived in London on July 28. Three Powers discussions on the Suez Crisis were opened in London on July 29, between Selwyn Lloyd, the British Foreign Minister M. Pineau, the French Foreign Minister, and Robert Murphy, the especial envoy of President Eisenhower the Senior officials of the British, French and the US Foreign Offices were also present. The discussions were continued on July 30, when the British Prime Minister, Eden, had separate meetings with M. Pineau and Murphy. After talking with

91. Ibid.
the British and French officials, Murphy drew a conclusion that both the Governments, in order to prevent their national interests, would not hesitate to use force against Egypt. He immediately informed US President about the rising temper of France and Britain. Robert Bowie had quoted Murphy as saying:

*It was left in no doubt (by Macmillan) that the British Government believed that Suez was a test which could be met only by the use of force.*

In the mean time Dulles had come back to Washington from Latin America. He also sensed the Anglo-British uncompromising attitude with the US Government in the Suez Canal dispute. On the personal instructions of President Eisenhower, Dulles flew to London on July 31 to take part in the tripartite discussions on the Suez Canal question.

**Dulles' efforts for peaceful solution.**

Dulles arrived in London in the morning of August 1, 1956. He was accompanied with his legal counsel, Herman Phleger. As soon as Dulles arrived at London airport, the waiting Murphy briefed him about the details. Robert

96. Herman Finer, *op. cit.*, p.68.
Murphy left to Washington shortly after the arrival of Dulles.

Dulles's efforts to resolve the dispute by peaceful means began on August 1, when he went into session with the foreign ministers of Britain and France. During discussions Dulles tried to assure his government's full solidarity with Britain and France in resolving the Suez Canal problem. He also agreed with some of the arguments made by Lloyd and Pinean concerning the gravity of the situation after the nationalization of the Suez Canal by the Government of Egypt. In order to delight them, Dulles spoke of finding a way "to make Nasser disgorge what he was attempting to swallow." At the same time he made it clear that the US Government would like to emphasize the utilization of all the possibilities of deliberation, conference, negotiation and resort ___ to the United Nations and to avoid force altogether.

As a result of Dulles' efforts a tripartite statement on the nationalization of the Universal Suez Canal Company was issued at London by the Government of the United States, the United Kingdom, and France on August 2, 1956. In the statement, the three powers agreed that the Egyptian decision involved "for more than a simple act of nationalization". They claimed that "it involved the arbitrary and unilateral

98. Ibid., p.97.
seizure by one nation of an international agency on which
the economy, commerce and security of the world depends". They alleged that the Egyptian action "threatened the freedom and security of the Canal as guaranteed by the Convention of 1888". In the end they proposed a conference of the signatories to the 1888 Convention and other nations largely concerned with the use of the Canal. The announced purpose was to consider steps to establish "operating arrangements", consistent with "legitimate Egyptian interests", under an "international system" designed to assure operation of the Canal as guaranteed by the Convention. The conference was to be held in London on August 16, 1956.99

Dulles, back in Washington, made two statements on August 3, 1956. "One was a short monologue, the other a radio and television appearance with President Eisenhower".100 The US President introduced the subject while Secretary Dulles explained to the American people the whole background of the "dangerous" situation created by the Egyptian Government.101

Nasser was becoming increasingly alarmed to billicose mood of Britain and France. In order to cool down their

100. Norman Finer, op. cit., p.103.
temper he reaffirmed on July 31\textsuperscript{102} Egypt's intention of maintaining freedom of navigation in accordance with the Constantinople Convention. Despite of Anglo-French refusal to pay tolls to the new Egyptian authority he continued to allow British and French ships to pass through the Canal. He did not want to provide any opportunity to the Government of France and Britain to justify their excuse for military action against Egypt. Erskine B. Childers had been stated:

\textit{Nothing had been said by Nasser, either explicitly or implicitly, threatening to close the Canal to Britain, France, or any other nation apart from the long blockaded Israel.}\textsuperscript{103}

Although, France and Britain had agreed to call a conference of twenty four concerned maritime powers to decide the future of Suez Canal, they did not stop their military movements towards the Malta and Cyprus to materialize their plan in the near future.

From the very beginning the prospects for the success of the conference were not bright. Egyptian Government refused to attend the London Conference. President Nasser's statement rejecting the invitation was issued on August 12, 1956. In his statement he rejected the thesis of the three

\textsuperscript{102} Robert Stephens, \textit{op. cit.}, p.208, see also E.B. Childers \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 212-213.

\textsuperscript{103} E.B. Childers, \textit{op. cit.}, p.195.
powers on the "international character" of the Suez Canal Company and the argument that it formed part of one system with the 1888 Convention. Any attempt to confuse "between the Suez Canal Company and the freedom of navigation" was only intended to find an "excuse for interfering in the internal affairs and sovereignty of Egypt". He described the proposal for the creation of an "international authority" as "collective colonialism". He objected that the London Conference had been convened without consulting Egypt to discuss the future of an integral part of that nation's territory. Instead, President Nasser proposed a conference of the 45 users of the Canal to reconsider the Constantinople Convention of 1888 and to confirm and guarantee freedom of navigation through the Canal. The signed 'Treaty' was bound to be submitted to the United Nations. 104

Meanwhile Nasser established a liaison with the Soviet and Indian Governments to mount up pressure on America. In this regard a number of meetings were held between Nasser and the Ambassador of India and Russia in Cairo.

Krishna Menon, Indian representative to the London Conference enroute from New Delhi to London stopped in Cairo and participated in those meetings. It was rumored that his role at the Conference would be that of spokesman for the absentee Egyptians. 105 Prime Minister Nehru on August 9, 1956, stated in

104. See Khalil Muhammed, op. cit., pp. 783-787.
the Indian Parliament that, "the way Egypt took control of the Suez Canal was not our way ... India respected the sovereignty of Egypt and the question of nationalization was an internal matter for Egypt". M.M. Rahman, described Nehru's attitude in the following words:

It was more important for Nehru and India that the Suez Canal was properly maintained and was not closed irrespective of the authority controlling it.  

The attitude of USSR and India, though not unexpected, had disturbed and mortified the US Government. On July 31, 1956, Khrushchev in his speech before a large crowd at the Lenin Sports Stadium, openly supported Nasser's seizure of the Canal and declared that the action was completely legal. In his opinion Britain and France should not be excited over Suez. He alleged that Anglo-French Governments deliberately exacerbated the Suez Canal issue. He said that "the nationalization of the Suez Canal is an action which the Egyptian Government, as a sovereign state, is entitled to take", and in any way it "does not affect the interests of the people of Britain, France, the U.S., ..., and other countries".


He also condemned Britain and France for their repeated warnings to the Egyptian Government that if Nasser would not undo his action they would use force to achieve their objectives.

The Soviet Press warmly appreciated the Egyptian Government's action. On August 9, it was officially confirmed that Russia was going to attend the ensuing conference with its full solidarity to the Egyptian Government.

By now United States had become fully aware of the communist and third world reaction in case of military action against Egypt. It was against the US Policy to support Britain and France in their military action which they were planning against Egypt. Although "when the USA had been in trouble in Berlin (during the Soviet blockade) in 1948 and in Korea in 1951, Britain and France had unconditionally joined America in resisting the aggressor", Adverse political developments compelled Dulles to adopt a policy (neutrality) which he had strongly opposed few months ago.

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110. Ibid.
111. See Finer, pp. cit., pp.132-133.
112. Ibid., p.116.
113. Ibid., pp.42 & 118.
The first London Conference and
Kennan Mission.

The first London Conference was opened on August 16, 1956. Except Egypt and Greece, all the twenty-two invitees attended the conference. In the conference Dulles played an important role. In his introductory speech on August 16, he traced out the history of Suez Canal and the events leading to the Canal dispute. At the end of his speech, Dulles presented a proposal for an international operating board based on certain principles to govern the Canal system. He did not give much attention to the sovereign rights and interests of the Egyptian Government. The Soviet Union and India opposed the western proposal denouncing that it was not acceptable to Egypt. Instead, Indian delegations submitted an alternative plan which, however, could get only the support of USSR, Ceylon and Indonesia. Eighteen of the twenty-two participating nations, majority of whom dependent upon the western aid, supported the proposal presented by Dulles, with few amendments in it. At the close of the conference on August 23, the Eighteen Powers Declaration was published.

All these nations who favoured the Dulles Plan appointed a committee of five (Australia, Ethiopia, Iran, Sweden, and the United States), headed by Sir Robert Menzies, the Prime Minister of Australia to present and explain the proposal to President Nasser, but it was not authorized to negotiate or discuss alternative proposal. The Menzies mission went to Cairo and presented the Eighteen Power Plan to the Egyptian Government on September 3, 1956. After intermittent discussions and exchange of letters with Nasser the Committee reported rejection of the Plan by the Government of Egypt on September 9, 1956. During the discussions Nasser repeatedly argued that he was entitled to nationalize the Canal and kept on saying that he could not accept such a proposal which was meant to remove the Canal from Egyptian control. In a memorandum on September 10, Egyptian Government expressed its willingness to call a new Suez Conference to resolve the issue of freedom of passage, future development, and equitable tolls, "without prejudice to Egypt's sovereignty or dignity". The repeated assurances given by President Nasser to guarantee complete freedom of navigation through the


119. Ibid., pp.19-20.
Suez Canal, and his readiness to accept most of the guiding principles given in the Eighteen Power Proposal did not pacify western countries to whom any settlement without discrediting Nasser was equal to their defeat.

**Suez Canal User’s Association.**

Even before the departure of the Menzies mission to Cairo, Eden had foreseen its failure. It was revealed by the fact that on August 27 Eden in a cable to President Eisenhower expressed his intention to go to the U.N. Security Council as soon as the five members Commission would return. The U.S. President in his reply to Eden on September 2, opposed the involvement of the United Nations at this stage. He repeated his warnings against the use of force of the threat of force, which, in his view, would ultimately “increase the area of jeopardy”. He expressed his fear of Afro-Asian consolidation with Egypt against the west and above all the possibility of the Russian mischief to exploit the situation. He also discovered that the American public opinion flatly rejected the idea of using force. During the exchange of letters between Eisenhower and Eden, Dulles decided to come up with an alternative proposal. On September 4, Dulles suggested that a Suez Canal User’s Association should be

120. James Kayss, *op. cit.*, pp.103-104.
formed. The SCUA scheme proved an apple of discord between the U.S. and its allies, largely as a result of their divergent purposes.

Dulles diplomacy to give different impression to different people pertaining SCUA was highly injurious. He gave an impression to President Eisenhower that the formation of SCUA was a very mild measure and simply an extension of the Eighteen. Power proposal and its attendant formula for a settlement. It was only a device for collective bargaining with President Nasser. At the same time he tried to assure the British and French Governments that SCUA was meant to be an instrument of coercion against Egypt.

President Eisenhower had to reply Eden's letter of September 6, 1956. After a detailed discussion with Dulles about the SCUA plan he composed a long letter to Eden suggesting that a "slower" and "less dramatic" method should be adopted to defeat Nasser, such as SCUA. The details of SCUA scheme reached Eden on September 10, the day after the formal rejection of 18-powers proposal by the President Nasser. Eden and Selwyn Lloyd after consulting with Mollet and Pineau (although the latter powers were reluctant

122. Bowie, op. cit., p. 43.
123. ibid., p. 44.
125. Bowie, op. cit., p. 128. see also Finer, op. cit., p. 127.
to accept the scheme) accepted the SCUA idea. The SCUA proposal was debated in the House of Commons on September 12 and 13. In his speech Eden made it clear that if the Egyptian Government refused to cooperate with SCUA then "Her Majesty's Government and others concerned will be free to take such further steps ... as seem to be required ... either through the United Nations, or by other means, for the assertion of their rights".127

On September 13, Egyptian ambassador in Washington informed Dulles about his government's objection regarding SCUA.128 The same day Dulles told a press conference that the US Government had no desire to impose the SCUA on Egypt-by force. According to him the SCUA was meant to act as an agent for the users and to seek the co-operation of Egypt under the 1868 convention. He made it clear that the United States had no intention "to shoot our way through" the Suez Canal. If Egypt prevented the passage, the US divert her ships around the Cape.129

The news came as a shock and a disappointment to the governments of Britain and France but to Nasser it was a gratifying surprise.

129. Quoted in Bowie, op.cit., p.44.
From the beginning it was not clear what role the SCUA was expected to play in the Suez Canal dispute. Even the another of the SCUA had not a clear cut idea about its functioning. Dulles proposed SCUA scheme in order to keep the concerning parties busy in the negotiations. The actual intention behind the US delaying policy was not known. Either he wanted to provide an opportunity to Anglo-French Government for their military preparation, or to incite Nasser during this process of negotiations to violence. In the latter case Nasser was to be blamed not the western countries.

On September 15 the western pilots left their canal posts as directed by the company. This measure proved to be futile because Egypt surprisingly "kept the traffic moving without serious delays or disruptions, with pilots recruited at home and abroad". On the same day President Nasser in a speech to Egyptian air force denounced SCUA in a very harsh tone. But the time the western powers were busy in finding out the ways and means to safeguard their national interests in the Middle East, President Nasser was in continuous parley with the Arab nations. During the second London Conference he had a close touch with Russia

130. Ibid., p.45.
131. Herman Finer, op. cit., p.240.
132. Ibid., 247.
and India. Regarding the Soviet Union the Cairo correspondent of the Times reported: "He (Russian Ambassador Kiseley) is in and out of the presidency (Nasser's official head quarters) these days as often as any priest with a convert." Nasser's attitude had become more defiant, and even cocky towards the west as the Egyptians operated the Canal efficiently after the withdrawal of the western pilots.

Nasser's arrogance, Russian's repeated warnings, US fluctuated diplomacy, and the hostile attitude of the Afro-Asian nations, all these factors contributed to the growing frustration of Britain and France. They sensed that the delay would make their task harder. At this stage, Eden and Mollet seemed to have come to a conclusion.

The Second London Conference was held between September 19 and 22, 1956. At the conference fifteen of the eighteen conferring nations adopted the SCUA proposals and projected a further meeting of its formal inauguration on October 1, 1956.

On the opening day of the conference Dulles explained that the purpose of the Association was not to enable "any one or more of us to impose our views upon any of our

133. Quoted in Finer, op. cit., p.246.
134. See Bowis, op. cit., pp.45-46., see Finer, op. cit., p.269, and also Year Book of UN, 1956, op. cit., p.20.
associates”. He made it clear that SCUA was not meant “to coerce Egypt”. This statement was contrary to the original form of the SCUA proposal as presented to Eden and Mollet. They noted that Dulles tone during the conference had been entirely changed. By the end of the first day of Conference they realized that “SCUA was about to fall apart to become an obstacle rather than a help to their rightful claims”.

Their fundamental differences regarding the means and ends paralyzed the SCUA before it was even formally established.

On September 23, 1956, Britain and France without consulting Dulles referred their case to the Security Council. Egypt too made a counter complaint to the Security Council accusing them of actions “which constitute a danger to international peace and security, and are serious violations of the Charter of the United Nations”. The Security Council decided to discuss the Suez Canal issue on October 5, 1956.

On September 25, Eden and Lloyd flew to Praia. They spent two days with Mollet and Pinoau discussing their future

137. Ibid., p. 271. See also Childers, op. cit., p. 223.
138. Ibid., p. 286.
139. Ibid., p. 286.
plans. On his return to London Eden received a letter from
the Premier Bulganin warning him against the course of ac­
tion which the British Government had adopted since July 26,
1956. 140

On October 1, SCUA was formally established. Dulles
141 did not attend the meeting. The day after the formation of
SCUA, the US Secretary of State at a press conference ad­
mitted that there were fundamental differences between the
United States and its allies regarding the problem of the
Suez Canal. He went on to say that although the three Po­
wars had bound to be united over matters like NATO, the
United States was free to take a somewhat independent
stand on other matters relating the problem of colonialism.
He made it clear that America could not identify itself
fully either with colonial powers or with the powers seek­
ing independence. He opposed to any kind of sanction mili­
tary or economic against Egypt. Referring SCUA he said that
now there was a talk about the "teeth" being pulled out of it
but he was not aware of any "teeth" in the SCUA plan.142

Dulles remarks gave an illusion to Nasser and the
entire Arab world regarding the U.S. Middle Eastern Policy.

140. Ibid., p.286.
141. Ibid., p.272., see also Laszewski, op. cit., p.624
142. New York Times, (October 3, 1956), p.8. see also Finer,
p.221.
On October 5, the Security Council met to debate on the complaints made by Britain, France and Egypt. After public debates on the Suez Canal issue the Council went into a secret session with the conflicting parties. As a result, a revised Anglo-French resolution took shape.

The Egyptian attitude at New York was mild. President Nasser was brought under strong pressure, "from his friends and supporters as well as some economic pressure from his opponents, to make a compromise settlements". The Egyptian Government accepted the first part of the Anglo-French resolution consisting of "six Principles" to govern the cooperation of the Canal.

These were:

1. There should be free and open transit through the Canal without discrimination;
2. The sovereignty of Egypt should be respected;
3. The operation of the Canal should be insulated from the politics of any country;
4. The manner of fixing tolls and charges should be decided by agreement between Egypt and the users;
5. A fair proportion of the dues should be allotted to development;
6. In case of disputes, unresolved affairs between the Suez Canal Company and the Egyptian Government should be settled by arbitration.

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144. Year Book of UN : 1956, op. cit., p.23.
These principles were approved unanimously on October 13 when the security Council met in an open session again. The second part of the resolution endorsing international control, the London plan, and SCAU was not acceptable to Egypt. It was voted for by Australia, Belgium, China, Cuba, France, Iran, Peru, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The Soviet Union and Yugoslavia voted against it. As a result of Soviet veto the Anglo-French resolution was lost. Dulles and Manon with Hammarskjold, the Secretary General of the United Nations, again tried to keep the crisis away from Anglo-French forces. The parties were made to agree to resume negotiations in Geneva on October 29, 1956. But the latter events proved that it was the end of the peaceful redress.

145. Ibid., p. 23.
CHAPTER V

TRIPARTITE AGGRESSION: 1956

Causes of Israel's hostility

Ever since the creation of Israel, her relations with neighbouring Arab countries remained tense. Despite the Armistic Agreements of 1949, numerous incidents erupted along the demarcated lines. The Arab countries had never reconciled themselves to the existence of the Jewish state. They were humiliated in the Palestine war of 1948 and did not recover from this shock. The tragic problem of Arab refugees and the stubborn attitude of Israel intensified their hatred against the Jews. As a result, violations of armistice agreements became frequent and were being committed by both sides. During the passage of time serious differences between Israel and the Arab countries grew which resulted into the major clashes involving force. Israel's reprisal raids soon took the forms of planned military actions against the Arab

Among such raids, (until 1955), four had been considered as the major military operations and were severely condemned by the United Nations. These included the sieges of Jaffa (1953), Nahalin (1954), the Lake Tiberias and Gaza (1955). Prior to the Gaza episode "there had been fewer incidents between Israel and Egypt than between Israel and Syria and Jordan." The Gaza raid put Egypt and Israel on a collision course. As a response, Nasser decided to train his commandos, called fedayeen, for the guerrilla-type reprisals against the Israel.

Israel's raids on Gaza strip was promoted by a number of factors "which had nothing to do with the border situation". As a matter of fact Egypt's policies and attitude disturbed Israel more than the policies of any other Arab states. Following the war of 1948, the Egyptian Government, adhering to the general Arab economic boycott of the Jewish State, barred the Suez Canal to Israeli shipping and cargoes. These restrictions, despite the armistices of 1949, did not relax, forcing Israel to use the long route around the Cape. Moreover, Egyptian Government started visiting and searching all ships passing through the Canal suspected of transporting

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goods to Israel. On February 6, 1950, a royal decree listed those items which would be considered contraband of war and thus liable to seizure by the Egyptian authorities, when found on neutral ships going through the Suez Canal. Israeli ships were subject to confiscation if they entered Egypt’s territorial water.\(^5\) Egypt justified her action on various grounds. It was argued that the armistice agreement was not yet a peace treaty, it only suspended the war and therefore the state of belligerency still continued. Thus, as long as this situation prevailed, Egypt was entitled to exercise the rights of a belligerent. Egyptian Government alleged that Israel repeatedly violated the armistice by expelling peaceful Arab populations across the Egyptian border, by raiding certain localities in the neutral frontier zone, and by illegally attacking Egyptian territory.\(^6\) In her self defense Egypt gave an analogy of the Allied practices in the First and Second World Wars.\(^7\) Egypt claimed that both the UN Charter and Article 10 of the 1868 convention provided her such a right to prevent Israeli ships from using either the Suez Canal or the Gulf of Aqaba which if not checked might

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6. Ibid., p.618.

endanger her national security.  

On the other hand, "Israel had repeatedly denounced the closing of the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aqaba as illegal". It claimed the right to use the Canal under the 1888 Convention, and the Gulf under general international law, and asserted that the armistice ended any rights of belligerency for Egypt". On July 12, 1951, Israel brought a complaint against Egypt before the United Nations Security Council. In response to Israel's petition, the Security Council adopted a resolution on September 1, 1951, directing Egypt to cease its interference with the Canal. Despite this resolution Egypt continued to impose its restriction on Israeli and neutral shipping. In 1954 this issue was again brought to the attention of the United Nations. The Soviet Union which by now had abandoned its policy of neutrality in the Arab-Israeli conflict, vetoed the Security Council resolution. On September 28, 1954, Israel tried to test the blocked by sending her merchant vessel 'Bat Galim' through the Canal via the Suez Gulf. The Egyptian authorities seized the ship and detained her crew promptly. The Israeli Government lodged a strong protest with the Security Council.

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Council on September 29, 1954. After a few months, first the crew and then the ship were released, but the seizure revealed that Egypt would not relax her restrictive measures with respect to maritime traffic with an enemy.

Economic boycott, blockade of the Suez Canal and the Straits of Tiran hit Israel's economy badly. Apart from economic strain, there were other developments which had a disturbing effect on Israeli politics. After the Suez Canal Base Agreement in 1954, Israel felt insecure "because the middle east was deprived of the physical presence of a western power round about its borders, exposing it to the wrath of the Arabs". The formation of Baghdad Pact on February 24, 1955, brought Iraq closer to the west. Israel viewed the closeness of any Arab country with the west dangerousto its destiny. Three days after the formation of Baghdad Pact, Israeli armed forces attacked Egyptian military installations in the Gaza strip, killing 38 and wounding 31 Egyptians. It was purely a provocative act in order to create nuisance to divert the attention of big powers. The tragic incident of Gaza compelled Egypt to obtain foreign

arms to deal with Israel's well trained and better equipped army. Egypt preferred to seek arms from the west. Failing in that attempt it turned to the Communist bloc and before the end of 1955 concluded a deal with Czechoslovakia. It was seen by Israel as upsetting its balance of power in the region. After the Gaza Raid Egypt adopted a policy of reprisal. As a result, the frequency and intensity of fedayeen raids against the Israeli borders increased. This matter was again and again brought to the attention of the United Nations, but neither the warnings of the Security Council nor the Truce Commission proved effective to stop Egypt's hostile actions against Israel. In October 1955 Egypt concluded defence agreements with Syria and Saudi Arabia and in April 1956 a military pact was signed between Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the Yemen. These agreements were looked upon by Israel as Egypt's military preparations to reconquer the Jewish territory. Nasser's growing popularity among the Arab and Afro-Asian countries after the Bandung Conference in April, 1955, constituted a potential danger to Israel.

The attitude of the major western powers especially Britain and the United States was not clear cut. They had chastised Arabs in 1947 and now they were trying to balm their wounds.

Collusion of Israel, France and Britain:

In this background, the out break of the Algerian rebellion in November 1954, provided an opportunity to Israel to exploit Nasser-phobia of the French Government. Their scheme worked out, and they succeeded in establishing a close liaison with the French Government. In 1954 a Franco-Israeli arms deal was concluded in contravention of the Tripartite Declaration of 1950. France had viewed Israel's help valuable in liquidating Nasser, as he was the main cause of her troubles in North Africa. Israel, on the other hand saw France as her permanent ally who would provide moral as well as material support in her deeds. After the conclusion of the Egypt-Soviet arms deals in September 1955, Israel had become more alarmed than ever. To counter it, Israel had made a second big arms deal with France in November, 1955. By 1956, France became the strongest political supporter of Israel in the United Nations and her major supplier of the most advanced military weapons, including fighter planes and tanks. Nikshoy C. Chatterji had observed:

Officially, France agreed to sell a limited number of war planes to Israel but these had a tendency to multiply like rabbits when they reached Israel.


After Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal Company on July 26, 1956 the major western governments began to develop a strong hostility against him. France and Israel had been collaborating against Nasser from 1954. The year 1956 had provided them a rare opportunity which they did not want to miss. Both France and Israel knew that the British Government was in favour of action against Egypt but she was hesitant due to the US opposition. In parliament the Labor party also opposed the use of force against Egypt. 20

From the beginning of the Suez Crisis, France was trying to persuade Britain to act independently without giving much weight to Dulles' efforts. Regarding SCUA, the French Foreign Minister, Christian Pineau, had said that it was merely a device of postponement, not a genuine attempt to find a settlement. 21 But — Britain was not yet ready to move without US backing or at least of her acquiescence. After the failure of the Anglo-French resolution in the Security Council British attitude had been changed. At this moment Britain decided to follow the French lead towards independent action. The British and French leaders were not happy with the outcome of the Security Council proceedings. They concluded that the six principals could not be

20. For details See Bowie, op. cit., pp. 24-25.
regarded as a serious commitment. Thus in the mid October, both Britain and France were ready to intervene militarily for the assertion of what they thought to be their rights in the Suez Canal Company.

Since August 1956, the Director General of the Israeli Defence Ministry, Shimon Peres, had been in close contact with French military and defence officials. While the negotiations for a peaceful solution were going on between the contending parties, the French Defense Minister, Maurice Bourges Manoury, visited Israel to seek her cooperation in the military action which his government was planning against Egypt. The French national interest was focused on the overthrow of Nasser, after the empty handed return of Pineau from Cairo in March, 1956. In the last week of September, the Israeli Prime Minister, Ben Gurion, informed France that Israel would participate in a joint operation. French paid the cost of Israel's cooperation in the form of heavy military equipment. In order to materialize their plan, a direct radio connection was installed between the Military of Defense in Paris and Tel Aviv. On October 19

1956, France and Israel reached a formal agreement to make war against Egypt in collaboration.

France was least concerned about her position among the Arabs as Algeria had already eroded it. But this was not true in case of Britain. Britain needed the friendship of Iraq and Jordan to maintain her influence in the region. The Conservative Governments knew this fact very well that "Nasser's enemies condone a direct British French attack on him, but they could hardly forgive Britain for joining forces with Israel". By this time Britain had become aware of the Franco-Israeli-collaboration. But yet she was bound to be hesitant about collusion with Israel. On October 11, Israel had launched a severe reprisal raid on Jordan at Galqilya which was strongly criticized by the British Government. Jordan at once appealed for help from Egypt, Iran and Britain which had a defensive agreement with the former. By this act Israel intended to divert the attention of President Nasser from Israel's plans to attack Egypt. It was also presumed that British Government to avoid an uneasy situation, would cooperate Israel in her military action against Egypt. Israel tried to extract

28. Norman Finer, op. cit., pp.308-327-332. See also Bowie, op. cit.,
the greatest possible benefits from this unique situation created by Egypt’s nationalization of the Suez Canal.  
Israel was determined to achieve a number of objectives besides destroying fedayeen bases and Egyptian military installations. She hoped to force an end of the Arab economic boycott, and opening of both the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aqaba to her shipping, and the negotiations of a peace settlement with Egypt on Israel’s dictated terms.  

After the failure of the third London Conference, two French emissaries, Albert Gazier, Minister of Labour and acting Foreign Minister in Poincaré’s absence at the United Nations, and General Maurice Challe, Deputy Chief of Staff, went to London on October 14, and informed Eden about the Israeli plan to attack Egypt with the co-operation of France. 30 On October 16, 1956, Lloyd and Eden flew to Paris and had a long and secret discussion with Mollet and Poincaré. There had been much suspicion and speculation about this meeting. It was alleged that at this meeting some form of collusion was arranged bringing Britain into the accord already existed between France and Israel. 32 Although both Britain and France denied this

31. Wint & Calvocoressi, op. cit., p.78. See also Finer, op. cit., pp.315-327.  
allegation but the latter developments revealed the facts.

Soon after his return from Paris Eden made certain changes in his Cabinet. "Chief among them was the move of Sir Walter-Monckton from the Ministry of Defence to the relatively obscure post of paymaster General". The timings and the stages of assault were to be fixed in the next meetings. Ben Gurion himself, accompanied by Moshe Dayan, Israeli Chief of Staff, arrived in France on October 22, to conduct the final negotiation with Mollet and Pineau. On the next day British Foreign Secretary, Selwyn Lloyd came from London to take part in the negotiations, along with a senior Foreign Office official, Patrick Dean. A Secret meeting between the officials of France, Israel and Britain was held in Sevres, which continued till October 24. In this meeting they agreed on plans and roles in the coming Israeli attack on Egypt on October 29. Finally, the agreement was signed by Ben Gurion, Pineau, and Patrick Dean on October 25, 1956.

On October 21, the Jordanian election took place, which brought the pro-Nasser forces in power. As a result on October 25 a joint Egyptian, Syrian Jordanian military command was announced, with the Egyptian Commander in Chief

33. Wint & Calvocoressi, op. cit., p.78. See Finer op. cit., p.333.
35. Finer, op. cit., p.345.
to be its head if there were any major fighting with Israel. This move was exploited by Israel in justifying her assault against Egypt.

Israel was further encouraged by an international situation favourable to her. The Soviet Union got involved with Hungary and Poland. On October 19, the Poles had forced the Soviet Marshall General Pokossousky out of the Polish Communist Party's Politburo, had brought back Gomulka as the head of the party. They ignored Soviet warning to suppress their revolt by force. On October 22 the Hungarians revolted against Soviet domination following the example of Poland.36

The diversion of Soviet's attention from the Middle East to the Eastern Europe provided a golden opportunity to Britain, France and Israel. These events had disturbing effects on the United States. And moreover at a time when presidential election was due with in few days. As the polling date of the US presidential election drew nearer, a communication gap between America and the three countries directly involved in the Suez Crisis had become apparent. It was also believed that this situation offered Ben-Gurion a hope that President Eisen hower, a candidate for election, would dare to risk antagonizing Jewish voter by opposing, Israel's invasion.

By this time intelligence departments of USA and USSR warned their respective Governments about the Tripartite agreement which took place between October 22 and 25.\(^37\)

In this connection President Eisenhower sent several personal messages to Ben Gurion asking him to show restraint and warning to use of force which would ultimately disturb the peace of the whole world.\(^38\)

**Israeli Invasion of Egypt**

On October 29, Israel invaded Egypt. Israeli paratroops of the air borne brigade were dropped at the eastern end of the Mitla Pass, about forty miles east of the southern end of the Suez Canal. At the same time, Israeli ground forces crossed the frontier into southern Sinai at three points. They captured the Gaza strip, ejected the Egyptians from the coast of the Gulf of Aqaba, occupied the Sharmel-Sheikh facing the strait of Tiran, and penetrated deep into the Sinai Peninsula. Their actions were swift and well planned. At some key points, such as Abu Agaila, and Mitla Pass, Israeli forces faced strong resistance form Egyptians, but ultimately they had over come with the backing of France and Britain.\(^39\)

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38. The Times, (London, October 29, 1956)., See also Finer *op. cit.*, p. 364.
As soon as the news of Israel’s military action against Egypt broke out, world opinion became adverse to Israel. Having seen the devastating consequences of the aggression, which might be converted into the world war III, the US Government had become alert. Abba Eban, Israeli ambassador to US, expressed his ignorance about the happenings, when he was asked by William Rountree, the Assistant Secretary of the United States, Dulles summoned the British and French charges d’affaires to his office, because there was then no British Ambassador in Washington, (the British Ambassador Sir Roger Makins had been replaced by the new Ambassador, Sir Harry Caccia, who had not yet arrived) and Alphand, the French Ambassador, was out of town. Dulles told them that an immediate appeal to the United Nations was necessary, but Anglo-French charges d’affaires were unable to say any thing without their governments' consultations. Winthrop W. Aldrich, the US Ambassador to Britain, was also instructed to discover in London what was happening to the Middle East. Aldrich could not get an appointment with Lloyd as the later was busy in a cabinet meeting. On the same day Henry Cabot Lodge, the US Ambassador to United Nations, wrote a letter to the President of the Security Council, Cornut Gentille, requesting the convening of the Security Council as soon as possible.

40 Herman Finer, op. cit., pp.353-358.
Meanwhile the US President sent urgent messages to the British Prime Minister asking him for support.41 The US Government had denied any fore knowledge of Pinseau's expected arrival in London in few hours to join in handing over the Anglo-French ultimatum to both Egypt and Israel. They alleged that the British Government even did not hint either about the ultimatum or her intention to oppose the US resolution in the Security Council.42 The very evening Cabot lodge had a meeting with Sir Pierson Dixon, the British Ambassador to the United Nations, to discuss the proceedings of the Security Council regarding the explosive situation in the Middle East. During discussion when lodge mentioned about the Tripartite Pact of 1950, Dixon promptly announced that "the Tripartite Declaration had lost its value and had no current validity".43 Dixon requested a delay of the Security Council meeting, which was not accepted. Although Lloyd succeeded to get the US draft resolution modified which had named Israel as an "aggressor". Instead, Israel's action was charged as a "violation of the armistic agreements".44

The Security Council met on October 30, 1956, to

41. Ibid., p. 359.
43. Ibid., p. 360.
44. Ibid., p. 367.
consider the US resolution introduced by Henry Cabot Lodge. This resolution (S/3710) called upon Israel and Egypt immediately to cease fire; called upon Israel immediately to withdraw its armed forces behind the established armistice lines; and called upon all members to refrain from the use of force or threat of force in the area in any manner inconsistent with the purpose of the United Nations; to assist the United Nation in ensuring the integrity of the armistice agreements; and to refrain from giving any military, economic or financial assistance to Israel so long as it had not complied with this resolution. The US draft resolution was submitted and put to vote at the 749th meeting of the Security Council. Seven nations voted in favour of the resolution. These included: China, Cuba, Iran, Peru, the Soviet Union, the United States and Yugoslavia. Australia and Belgium abstained from voting. France and Britain voted against it. Since the Anglo-French votes operated as a veto the resolution was lost. To justify their action they declared that they could not support a resolution that condemned Israel only. They even tried to justify Israel's action.

For Soviet Union it was a rare opportunity to oppose Britain and France with the cooperation of the United States.

Following the US lead, the Soviet representative, Sobolev, on behalf of his government presented a simple cease fire resolution in the Security Council which was also vetoed by Britain and France. 46

The French representative had definite instructions from his government to veto the resolutions condemning Israel. France had some time before promised Israel the use of the veto, if necessary. The British Government, for the sake of allied solidarity, (which was most required after the US opposition) was bound to follow the French suit. Sir Pierson Dixon had given a number of arguments in justifying his government action in the Security Council.

The Egyptian spokesman, Omar Loutfi, demanded in the Council that Israel be branded as an aggressor'. He also demanded the expulsion of Israel from the UN. It was the demand which Russia too had asked for.

Security Council permitted Abbe-Eban to give his government's version regarding Israel's military actions against Egypt. Eban detailed the wrongs committed by Egypt and even exaggerated. 47

**The Anglo-French Ultimatum**

Meanwhile Mollet and Pineau arrived in London to discuss the next move (already decided) with Eden. 48

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46. Piner, op. cit., p. 382.
47. Ibid., pp. 376 & 381.
48. Ibid., pp. 358-359.
On October 30, while the Security Council meeting to consider the Middle East Crisis was going on, the Anglo-French Governments issued their prepared ultimatum to Israel and Egypt demanding the cessation of the hostilities, the withdrawal of their forces to a distance of ten miles from the Suez Canal and to allow British and French forces to stay at the key points in the Canal Zone. They declared that they would occupy Port Said, Ismailia, and Suez by force if these conditions were not met within twelve hours. As self-appointed guardian of peace, they claimed to be acting to "separate the belligerents" and ensure the safety and availability of the Suez Canal. Regarding the Anglo-French ultimatum Childers had written that "it seemed to invite Israel to advance westward to wards the Canal deeper into the Egyptian territory, before Israel must even cease fire." George Lenczowski, another prominent writer of the Middle Eastern affairs was of the view:

There ultimatum, if successful, would have rewarded the aggressor by conceding to him the still unoccupied areas of the Sinai Peninsula up to ten miles from the Canal while penalizing the victim of aggression by demanding total evacuation of Egyptian troops to the western side of the Canal.

49. Lenczowski, op. cit., p.518., see also Wint and Calvocoressi, op. cit., p.80.


51. Lenczowski, op. cit., p.516.
The Soviet representative, Arkady Sobolev, used this news in justification of his allegation that "Israel must have been encouraged to attack by those aggressive circle who were trying to find some pretext to move their forces into the Middle East."

On October 31, while speaking in the House of Commons, Eden claimed the right for Britain to discharge its "national duty" without necessarily waiting for the agreement of the United State. In the same meetings Lloyd had gone further by referring the Article 51 of the UN charter which provided for the right of Self-defense. He argued that self-defense "undoubtedly included a situation where the lives of the State's nationals abroad are in imminent danger". At this issue House of Commons debated and voted on the Government Policy. Majority supported Eden's stand. In National Assembly the result was more encouraging.

On the same day President Eisenhower spoke on television and radio on the Middle Eastern situation. In his address he expressed the grave concern of the US government over the turn of events. He made it clear that the US Government was not consulted in any way about any phase of the Anglo-French action. He discarded his government policy

52. Finer, op. cit., p.368.
54. Quoted in Finer, op. cit., p.379.
in the current Middle East crisis. He sent a number of messages to Eden through different channels warning him about the possibility of Russian involvement. US warnings proved less effective in case of Britain and France.

The Anglo-French military action against Egypt.

It was a known fact (Eden also knew it) that Nasser would not allow stationing of British and French troops at the Suez Canal. Before the expiry of deadline Egypt's reply was conveyed to British Ambassador, Sir Humphry Trevelyan, in Cairo. Egypt had rejected the ultimatum. Israel accepted it on the condition that Egypt accept it as well. General Dayan recorded in his diaries:

The ultimatum does not worry Israel, we are not within ten miles of the Canal and we have neither interest nor plans to come closer to it ... It is clear that the whole purpose of the ultimatum is to give the British and French governments a pretext to capture the Canal zone by military force, doubtless the Egyptians will not willingly agree.

British Government had warned General Charles F. Knightley, Commander in Chief of the allied forces in the operation in


Egypt, in anticipation. At the expiration of twelve hours Anglo-French bombers began attacking Port Said and other Egyptian airfields on October 31. It was preparatory to the landing of French and British troops in the Canal Zone. Their military operation against Egypt continued till November 6 in spite of the repeated requests of the United Nations to cease fire.

The Egyptians had been taken by surprise. At the time, the Israelis invaded Sinai, Egyptian Commander in Chief, General Amer, was away on a visit to Syria and Jordan to discuss about the joint command. As a matter of fact, for many hours after the initial assault Egypt was unable to comprehend its true nature and extent. Nasser was aware of the Anglo-French threat, but he was totally ignorant of their collaboration with Israel. He realized the seriousness of the Israeli invasion only when Anglo-French air operations began against Egypt. Now apart from Israel he had to face two major European powers with vastly superior forces. Knowing the weaknesses of the Egyptian forces and disappointed by the lack of the Russian practical assistance Nasser accepted the reality. After the Anglo-French

attack he ordered a general with drawal of all Egyptian forces from Sinai and Concentrated them over the main strategic centers. He thought that if any territory had to be lost it was better it should be the empty Sinai Desert, than any of the rest of Egypt, especially the Delta and the Suez Canal Zone.62 The forces in the Gaza strip and Sharmel-Sheikh were also told to surrender at a suitable moment to avoid further casualties. As a retaliatory act, on November 1, Egypt broke off diplomatic relations with British and France, Seized their properties and blocked the Suez Canal by sinking the ships and demolishing the bridges.63

By November 3 the task of Israeli forces had been completed. Israel had got more area than it had planed to capture. Israelis were not primarily concerned with the Canal. Their main interest lay in completing their own war aims, the most important of which was to gain control over Sharmel Sheikh and the Straits of Tiran,64 before international pressure forced Israel to accept a cease fire. Now they were in a safe position. Israel might accept the cease fire order at any moment. Her speedy victory had made Britain and France disturbed

62. Ibid., pp.230-231., see also Calvocoressi, op. cit., p.81., and Hugh Thomas, op. cit., pp.143-144.
although they themselves were responsible for it. After achieving her goals Israel was no more interested to continue hostilities. Taking the note of the complex situation the Anglo-French Governments made some changes in their original planning. At the same time they pressurized Israel not to accept cease fire until the Anglo-French landing in Egypt.

On November 5, Anglo-French paratroops and sea borne forces landed in Port Said and Port Fuad. Port Fuad was surrendered on the same day. Battle in Port Said was continued in which the Egyptian army was supported by a considerable number of armed civilians. However, Franco-British forces overcame the Egyptian resistance and on November 6 Port Said was completely in their hands. After capturing Port Said the allied forces began to advance down the Canal towards Ismailia and Suez. Britain and France intended to capture the whole of the Canal before the United Nations and the United States could end their military action. They failed to achieve this end. By the time they reached El-Cap, a village, twenty five miles further up the Canal, they had to accept the UN cease fire. Mollet wanted to proceed. He asked

65. E.S. Childers, op. cit., p.257.
to be tenacious for another few hours so that their forces could reach the Suez.\textsuperscript{67} They need no more than twenty four hours to occupy the whole canal. But Eden was under great strain, he could not go further. In Parliament and outside Labour leaders continuously attacked his Government for violating the U.N. Charter, jeopardizing the American alliance and the Commonwealth, colluding with Israel, and deceiving Parliament. Even his own party members, who were initially in favour of action, had now become critical to his policies. Eden's two loyal associates, Sir Anthony Nutting, Minister of State in Foreign Affairs, and Sir Edward Boyle, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, had resigned from their posts in protest in between November 3 and 5 respectively.\textsuperscript{68}

In his letter to Eden, Nutting, who was representing Britain in U.N., justified his action by saying that it had become impossible for him to defend the Government's position at all as the Israeli invasion and the Anglo-French attack were parts of the same "nefarious plan" to destroy Egypt's growing strength and newly won independence.\textsuperscript{69} World opinion condemned U.K. France and Israel for their aggressive act in Egypt.\textsuperscript{70} Russian warnings and US pressure had become

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{67} Finer, \textit{op. cit.}, p.429. , RR. Bowie, \textit{op. cit.}, p.76.
\item\textsuperscript{69} \textit{The Hindustan Times}, (November 4, 1956). \\
\item\textsuperscript{70} \textit{The Hindustan Times}, (November 2, 1956). \\
\end{itemize}
intense and above all the economic strain was unbearable to Britain. In these circumstances Eden could not comply with Mollet's request to prolong the fighting. And on the other hand it was impossible for Mollet to go without British Collaboration.

**Peace Making Efforts**

Britain and France used or misused their veto power against the two resolutions submitted by USA and USSR in Security Council on October 30, calling for an immediate cease fire between Israel and Egypt. Unable to act effectively due to the Anglo-French opposition, the Security Council approved a Yugoslav's proposal to call an Emergency session of the General Assembly under the "Uniting for Peace" procedure adopted on June 27, 1950. Sir Pierson Dixon (Britain) and M. Louis de Guiringuau (France) challenged the legality of this resolution but no judicial answer was provided to them by Humann.

As soon as the General Assembly met on November 1, the US Secretary of State, Dulles, (the President Eisenhower asked him personally to go before the Assembly to represent the United States) moved a resolution (A/3256) urging an

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immediate cease fire, the withdrawal of Israeli and Egyptian forces behind the armistic lines, a general embargo on the entry of military goods into the area of hostilities, and immediate steps to reopen the Canal after a cease fire. The U.S. draft resolution was submitted and put to vote at the 562d meeting of General Assembly on November 2, overwhelming majority (64) voted in favour of this resolution. Britain, France, Israel, Australia, and New Zealand voted against it. Portugal, South Africa, Belgium, Canada, Laos, and the Netherlands abstained from voting.

In his introductory statement Dulles narrated the story of Egypt's violations in regards of 1936 Convention the U.N. Charter and the Security Council resolution of 1951. He said:

We are not blind, that what has happened in the last 2 or 3 days comes out of a murky background. These provocations, serious as they are, cannot justify the resort to armed force which has occurred with in the last 2 and 2 days, and which is going on the night.

He also narrated the story of the nationalization of the Suez Canal and the efforts made by the United States and the United Nations to find out a peaceful solution of the problem. At this point Dulles told the Assembly that "peaceful process had not been exhausted" and that the violent armed attack by three of our members upon a fourth was a "grave error", contrary to the principles and purposes of the U.N. Charter.73

A Chinese delegate had pointed out the weakness of the U.S. resolution by saying that a cease fire and withdrawal, while essential, were not a sufficient response. "We want to stop the war; at the same time we must work hard to remove the cause of war." President Eisenhower in his television address on October 31 gave the answer of his objection. He said that the first thing is to stop the fighting as rapidly as possible. His point of view was further elaborated by Dulles in his statement to the General Assembly on the evening of November 1. In this regard he said:

Peace is a coin which has two sides— one of which is the avoidance of the use of force and the other is the creation of conditions of justice and in the long run you cannot expect one without the other ... There needs to be something better than the uneasy armistices which have existed now for these eight years between Israel and its Arab neighbours.

Immediately after the voting, Lester Pearson, Canadian Minister of External Affairs, put forward an idea of a U.N. force to keep Arab Israeli borders at peace while political settlement could be worked out. Before putting this idea in the Assembly he took Britain and the United States into confidence. Taking into account of Pearson's suggestion, Eden

in the House of Commons, and later Pierson Dixon in the
U.N. debate repeatedly said:

If the United Nations were willing to
take over the physical task of maintaining Peace in the area; no one would be
better pleased than we. But Police act­
ton must be there to separate the belli­
gerents and to stop the hostilities.77

Initially the U.N. Secretary General doubted about
the workability of Pearson's Plan. He feared that such a
proposal might be rejected by Arab Afro-Asian, and Commu­
nist states. Hammarsjold thought it over seriously only
after the realization that the British, French and Israel
were not yet ready to accept the Assembly's resolution
997(ES-1), recommending an immediate cease fire. Amongst
the four belligerents only Egypt had agreed to abide it
on the condition that if "attacking armies cease their
aggression".78

Moan while; Dulles who arrived back to Washington
suffered a severe attack of abdominal pains which was dia­
gnosed as a cancer. On November 3 he was admitted in Walter
Reed Hospital to be operated upon. In his absence Herbert
Hoover, JR., as an acting Secretary of States enacted the

77. Quoted in Herman Finer, op. cit., p.650.
US Policy concerning the Middle East crisis. Hoover had a personal disliking to Eden. On November 1, President Voroshilov and Premier Bulganian had sent letters to Sukarno, the President of Indonesia and Nehru, the Prime Minister of India, in connection of calling an emergency session of the second Bandung Conference (first was held in April, 1955) to demand withdrawal of Britain, France and Israeli forces from Egypt.

The formal intervention of the Anglo-French forces in the Israeli Egyptian battle (Supporting the aggressor) proved as fuel to the fire. When on Saturday, November 3, the General Assembly met again, the Arab, Afro-Asian and the Communist states demanded immediate withdrawal and sanctions. The nineteen Arab-Asian nations introduced a draft resolution, written in a very strong and condemnatory language, in the Assembly. It urged the General Assembly to take effective measures for the implementation of the US resolution adopted by 64 nations of the World on November 2. It was put to vote on November 4, and was adopted by 59 to 5, with 12 abstentions.

On November 3, the US delegate Cabot Lodge, adopting a somewhat allied posture, submitted two draft resolution, one for a five member committee to take place of the old Conciliation Commission, and the other for a three member committee responsible for the clearance of the Suez Canal and the implementation of "Six Principles". The Soviet Union opposed the resolutions on the ground that they did not solve the main purpose. In the meantime, a Canadian resolution (in the name of Canada, Colombia and Norway) was submitted to the General Assembly requesting Secretary General to produce within forty eight hours a plan for the establishment "with the consent of the nations concerned, of an emergency international United Nations Force to secure and supervise the cessation of hostilities in accordance with all the terms" of Resolution 997(ES-1). The General Assembly adopted it on November 4, by 54 0 votes and 19 abstentions, including Britain, France, Israel, Egypt and the Communist bloc.

Before accepting any resolution of General Assembly providing for an immediate cease fire among the belligerents and withdrawal of their forces from Egypt, Britain and France wanted to achieve their desired goal—the destruction of Nasser and occupation of the Suez Canal. At this

82. Finer, op. cit., p.403.
moment they had achieved only a partial success. In order to complete their destructive objectives in Egypt, Sir Pearson Dixion wanted a delay in voting for a few more days, but he had failed in his effort. To justify his Government's stand Eden sent a telegram to President Eisenhower in which he stated:

If we drew back now chaos will not be avoided. Every thing will go up in flames in the Middle East you will realize, with all your experience, that we cannot have a military vacuum while a United Nations force is being constituted and is being transported to the spot. That is why we must go on to hold the position until we can hand over responsibility to the United Nations.84

He declared that since it was entirely uncertain whether the UNEF would be accepted by Israel and Egypt, but England and France had decided to proceed with their action.

On November 4, Secretary General submitted a report to the General Assembly in compliance with the resolution 998(ES-1), and before any Anglo-French paratroops landed in Port Said and Port Fuad, the Assembly had approved Resolution 1000 (ES-1), establishing U.N.E.F. and its executive framework and affirming Hammarskjold's decision not to include in it any contingents from permanent members of the Security Council.85

84. Quoted in Finer, op. cit., p. 413.
By this time (having crushed the Hungarian revolt) the attention of the Soviet Russia had been completely diverted towards the Middle East. On November 5, the Soviet Prime Minister, Bulganin, sent a cable to the President of the Security Council demanding an immediate meeting of the Council to discuss "new aggression" and the defiance of Israel, Britain, and France with the General Assembly's resolutions. Simultaneously with this cable he sent threatening notes to the governments of Britain, France and Israel. The language used in these letters was somewhat identical. He warned the three countries that the Russian Government was determined to crush the aggression and establish peace in the Middle East with other members of the United Nations. In case of their non-compliance with the cease fire order any more, the war might spread to other countries and would become a third world war. Consequently the Soviet press began to talk of "volunteers" to help Egypt. On the very date, Bulganin, approached President Eisenhower with proposal to use naval and air forces, together with other U.N. members to stop war in Egypt and to restrain aggression. 86 Eisenhower promptly rejected Bulganin's idea. In his reply to Bulganin's letter he stated that it was an "unthinkable" suggestion and an effort to divert world

attention from the Russian crimes committed in Hungary.

He continued that "the world body has called for a cease
fire—a withdrawal of foreign troops and the establishment
of a United Nations force to stabilize the situation, pend-
ing a settlement". In this situation, "neither Soviet nor
any other military forces" should enter the Middle East area
except under United Nations mandate. 87

President Eisenhower had taken the note of Soviet
threat very seriously. His fear of Soviet involvement was
further intensified by Charles E. Bohlen, the U.S. ambassa-
dor to Moscow. He sent a message to the US Government about
the hostile attitude of Russians, and recommended the quick-
est possible cease fire in the Middle East" to avoid the
Communist "threat of a considerable military action". 88

World pressure had also been formidable. Especially, Krishna
Menon, Indian delegate to U.K., the Soviet Union, the Arabs,
the Asian nations who followed Nehru's lead, gave loud tongue
to the tripartite aggression. 89 Their sharp reaction to the
Anglo-French Israeli invasion against Egypt had boosted up
Nasser's morale. Every Arab government, even that of Iraq,
had been constrained to declare its support for Egypt. 90 The blockage of the Suez Canal and the disruption of oil shipments had created a great problem in the West European countries. In these circumstances when all the efforts of the United States and the United Nations had been failed to stop the Anglo-French hostility in Egypt, Eisenhower and Dulles decided to use economic sanctions against these countries. It proved an effective measure to bring the aggressors on their knees, because "the need for U.S. assistance for the pound and for oil was too great to resist". 91 Meanwhile both Egypt and Israel had agreed to a cease fire. 92 On November 6, while Anglo-French forces were fighting to occupy the whole of the Suez Canal, Eden was called on the telephone by Eisenhower. The US President Pressurized Eden to give the order to cease fire at once, in the other case the British Government would be deprived of American solidarity. Before this phone call when Macmillan the Chancellor of the Exchequer, asked Washington for substantial economic support, he was told that "a loan would be available, but on the imperative condition that a cease fire be announced by Britain by mid night of November 6". 93 On the same day


91. R.H. Bowis, op. cit., p.64.


the U.S. Ambassador in Paris, A.C. Douglas Dillon, conveyed his governments' message to Prime Minister Mollet.

The gist of the message was:

If you continue in your wrongful action, do not count on the United States. The only proper action is through the United Nations. You must stop your intervention in Suez, and if you do not, you can not count on our support. 94

Eventually, under the pressure of the United States, the United Nations, the world public opinion, and above all the Soviet propaganda to support Egypt by all her means, compelled France and Britain to accept cease fire, even though their forces had not yet occupied the whole of the Canal. The Anglo-French forces halted about the twenty miles south of Port Said on the night of November 6, before the dead line given by the U.S. Government. 95 Meanwhile, Hammarskjold submitted his second and final report to the General Assembly on the establishment of U.N.E.F. in accordance with the Resolution 998(ES-1), and Resolution 1000(ES-1) adopted on November 4 and 5 respectively. 96 As all the four belligerent countries had accepted cease fire, a United Nations Force was promptly brought into existence. Before the final

94. Ibid., p.432., see also Huges Thomas, op. cit., p.159.
95. R.R. Bowio, op. cit., p.76.
selection of the U.N. contingents, offered from various countries, Hammarskjöld consulted Nasser for his consent. The countries which had offered their troops to the U.N.E.F. included India and Pakistan. The Egyptian President while accepted Indian offer had refused to include Pakistan troops in the U.N. Force as he "never forgive Pakistan for joining the Baghdad Pact". India had also been a member of the Seven nations advisory committee which was established to assist and advise Hammarskjöld in implementing plans for the U.N. Force. The Egyptian Government did not want to include Canadian Personnel in U.N.E.F. but it later agreed to accept Canadian logistical and medical support unit. Hammarskjöld and Burns had a number of meetings with Nasser and Pawzi, the Egyptian Foreign Minister, in Cairo to seek their cooperation and discussed with them the basic points for the presence and functions of the U.N. Force in Egypt. The first contingents of U.N.E.F. arrived in Egypt on November 15, 1956.

After accepting the unconditional cease fire under the strong pressure from all sides, the governments of Britain,

100. A. A. Bowie, op. cit., p. 80.
France, and Israel now tried to set certain conditions for the withdrawal of their forces from Egypt. Since each of the three countries had had a separate motive for attacking Egypt, their conditions for withdrawal differed too. On November 7 the General Assembly passed two resolutions one of which (Resolution 1001/ES-1) established an Advisory Committee composed of one representative from each of the following countries: India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Canada, Brazil, Colombia, and Norway. The Committee was to function under the Chairmanship of the U.N. Secretary General. 102 The other resolution introduced by Afro-Asian members, (Resolution 1002/ES-1) affirmed all previous resolutions of the General Assembly particularly those providing for the Emergency Force, withdrawal of Israeli forces behind the armistic lines and total evacuation of Egyptian territory by Britain and France. 103 The Muslim members of Baghdad Pact, (Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Pakistan) and the Arab League members had also exerted pressure for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Anglo-French troops. In case of Britain the pressure from some of the Commonwealth countries was strong. The Soviet Union gave further warnings to Britain, France and Israel and demanded their unconditional withdrawal from the Egyptian soil without delay. It was also declared that in case of non-compliance with her demand,

102. Ibid., pp. 674-675.
103. Ibid., p. 676.
the Soviet Russia might go to any extent. The Soviet Press, Radio, and Television were making tremendous propaganda of it.\textsuperscript{104} There was an intentional delay in unlocking the Canal (although it was damaging economically to Egypt herself) and pipe lines, which made the oil problem in western Europe acute. British oil reserves were depleting rapidly and her industries might grind to a half with in a few months. They pleaded for oil supplies but yet "there was no indication when or whether the United States intended to implement its emergency plans for increasing the quota of western hemisphere petroleum available to Europeans."\textsuperscript{105} Economic strain had become unbearable. Eisenhower and Dulles hoped that this critical situation might hasten a British and French decision to evacuate their forces from Egypt. Nasser was not unaware of Anglo-French position. He decided to use blockage as a chief weapon against a prolonged British and French occupation. He declared that Egypt would not allow the salvage operation to begin without the total withdrawal of the foreign troops from Egyptian soil.\textsuperscript{106} By this time Britain and France had completely exhausted Pressure from all side was continued. On November 23 when the General Assembly met again to its regular session the question

\textsuperscript{105} R.R. Bowie, \textit{op. cit.}, p.62.
of the Suez and Middle East was put to debate. The Indian
delegate Krishna Menon, along with twenty Afro-Asian repre-
sentatives presented a draft resolution to the General
Assembly calling upon France, Israel and Britain to comply
"forthwith" with resolutions 997(ES-1) and 1002(ES-1) of
November 2 and 7, 1956. The "Forthwith" resolution was adop-
ted by a vote of 63 (including USA) to 5 with 10 abstentions.107

Ultimately, under the combined pressure of the various
factors and forces the British Government informed the US of-
officials on November 23, 1956, that it was ready to withdraw
unconditionally from Egypt.108 As soon as this news came to
Washington, Hoover was ordered to provide all sort of help
to Britain without her formal announcement. Formal announc-
cement of the withdrawal decision was made by the acting
Prime Minister of Britain, R.A. Butler as Eden had gone to
Jamaica on November 23, taking a long leave from his office.
It was latter announced that Eden's physicians had advised
him to go on rest (or to avoid further humiliation) which
was much needed to him.109 The French Government followed
the British suit. The withdrawal of Anglo-French forces
from Egypt was completed by December 23, 1956.110 Israel

108. R.R. Bowie, op. cit., p.83. For details see Current
Documents 1956, op. cit., p.700.
p.239., Hugh Thomas, op. cit., p.167.
110. Ibid., p.461., Bowie, op. cit., p.84.
withdraw reluctantly under the strong pressure exerted by the United States, the U.N., and Soviet Russia. During the months of December, January, and February, the General Assembly adopted a series of resolutions demanding an immediate and unconditional Israeli withdrawal. Israeli forces withdrew from Sinai Peninsula in stages. Their withdrawal from Sinai completed in January 1967 and the vacated area was occupied by the United Nations Force.111 "But from there the Israelis refused to move until they received assurances that neither Egyptian military nor civilian control would be restored in the Gaza strip and the UN ESC would take over and stay at sharm el shaikh".112 Those two areas were the strategic gains to Israel. By capturing Gaza Israel prevented fedayeen raids, and by gaining sharm el shaikh and straits of Tiran it could make use of port of Eilat which became immobilize after Egypt closed Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli or Israel bound shipping.113 On January 23, 1957, the Israeli Prime Minister Ben Gurion, declared in the Knesset that the Israeli forces would not withdraw from either sharm el shaikh or the Gaza strip until it had the guarantees it demanded. The Zionist lobby in USA had exerted a strong pressure on Eisenhower to

accept the Israeli demands, Abba Eban, the Israeli foreign minister, had a number of meetings with Dulles (who had fully recovered by now and joined his office) and, discussed about the 'guarantee' which was the pre condition of Israeli withdrawal from Egypt. In the meantime Hammarskjold tried to persuade Nasser to accept the presence of United Nations Force in these areas. Hammarskjold succeeded in his efforts.

After having satisfied with the assurances given by Eisenhower and Dulles in public as well as in private meetings regarding the rights of Israel in the Gulf of Aqaba and protection against attack from Gaza, Israeli Foreign Minister, Golda Meir, announced Israeli withdrawal in General Assembly on March, 1957. In the next two or three days, General Dayan and General Eshkol reached agreement on the technical details of the withdrawal. Israeli forces completed their withdrawal from Gaza and Sharm el Shaikh by the end of first week of March. The UN Forces were stationed in the Gaza strip, along the Sinaí demarcation line and in key spots along the Gulf of Aqaba. Israel had rejected the proposal that UN Forces should be deployed on both sides of demarcation lines to prevent incidents.

115. Ibid., pp.182-184.
The Suez Canal, which had been blocked by the Egyptians, was cleared by a UN salvage fleet and reopened at the end of March 1957. By May 1957, all states except Israel were again using the Canal. The Egyptian Government in March and finally in April declared her policy regarding the management and operation of the Suez Canal. The end of 1956 war weakened every prospect of establishing international control over Suez Canal. The only guarantee for the Canal users would be Egypt’s promise to their rights under the 1888 Constantinople convention on freedom of navigation. Thus, whatever the gains Israel had achieved from the tripartite war against Egypt, there is no doubt that Britain and France failed to acquire any diplomatic or strategic advantages from it.
Egypt has seen many invasions, mainly due to its unique strategical location in the global system. Its geo-political and strategic significance, and the convenient trade routes have always attracted the attention of the European Powers. Napoleon expressed the same geo-strategic concept of Egypt by saying that 'Egypt was the most important country'. The construction of Suez Canal had added a new commercial factor in the strategic importance of Egypt. Soon after its opening in 1869, Canal had become so vital for the flow of exports, imports and shipping of Great Britain (who originally opposed this project), that she started thinking in terms of political domination over Egypt. Failing to invest in the Canal Company however, Britain did not have any voice in its affairs. The year 1875 had provided a rare opportunity to the British Prime Minister, Disraeli, when debt ridden Ismail Pasha sold 44% of company's share to him for the four million pounds. It had been considered the first and important achievement of Great Britain over the Suez Canal. Since then the British Government had got an excuse to intervene in Egypt's domestic matters as a self appointed guardian of the Suez Canal. British defensive policy, regarding the Suez Canal continued until 1956, when the United Nations, and world pressure, forced her to withdraw from the Egyptian territory. In the past, Britain had
justified her military interventions in Egypt on the plea of defense of the Suez Canal. But in 1956, world was no more ready to accept the Anglo-French justification to their 'Police action' in Egypt. Both Britain and France used the nationalisation of the Suez Canal by the Egyptian President, Jamal Abdul Nasser on July 26, 1956, as a pretext for their aggression, although, it was not the sole reason of their hostility against Egypt. It would be more appropriate to say that the nationalisation of the Canal was only an important link in the Chain of events leading to the tripartite aggression against Egypt. The crisis had no fundamental connection either with Suez or Sinai as claimed by the aggressors. The imperialist forces had been trying to crush Nasser even before the nationalisation of the Canal. They also knew this fact very well that after the end of the Suez Canal Company's concession in 1968, Egypt was not bound to renew it. It was Egypt's legal right to dominate over the Suez Canal as it was situated within the Egyptian territory. In fact, Nasser's policies of nationalism, Pan Arabism, and antiwesternism, which had taken the whole of the Middle East into their grip, were more damaging to imperialist interests in the area than his action of nationalisation of the Suez Canal. After the July revolution of 1952, Nasser had emerged as the central figure in the Middle Eastern Policies. His popularity in Egypt as well as in the Arab world continued to grow. In a short span of time Nasser succeeded to bring the majority of the Arab nations into a crusade against
imperialism and colonialism under the banner of 'Positive neutrality' a concept which he had brought back to Egypt in April 1955, from the Bandung Conference. His anti western attitude was further revealed by his strong opposition to the Baghdad Pact.

Egypt's struggle to emancipate herself from the western domination was not a new concept. The spirit of Arabi's nationalist revolt against the domination of Britain and France in Egypt had never died in Egyptians, although physically it was crushed by the British army in 1982. Since then Britain had established her virtual control over Egypt. The developments which had occurred during and after the First world War, had further extended the Anglo-French domination in the Middle Eastern region. In order to seek Arab's help, which was much valuable to their war strategy, Britain and France exploited the growing national and anti Turkish sentiments of the Arab subjects of the Ottoman Empire. Arabs were promised full independence in return of their support to Allied war aims against the policy of their Turkish masters. But at the end of War, Britain and France distributed the Arab parts of the Ottoman Empire among themselves according to Skyes-Picot agreement, instead providing them full independence as they had promised in a series of letters with Hussein Sharif of Mecca. The Anglo-French Governments established their control over the Arab areas under the shadow of Mandates, treaties, and Protectorates, avoiding to make them out right
colonies or imperial dependencies of the Arab lands, only
Hefaz and Yemen, the most backward amongst the Arabians,
were left free. This was the turning point in the history
of Middle East. The Arab nationalism which originally deve-
loped against the Turkish overlordship was now diverted towards
the growing Anglo-French domination in the Middle Eastern re-
gion. The Arab Intelligentsia and nationalist leaders began to
suspect the imperialist motive behind the Balfour Declaration
providing a national home to the Jewish people in Palestine.
Amongst the Arab World the nationalist sentiments grew more
intense in Egypt and Syria. The British Protectorate which
was established over Egypt in 1916 was questioned by the new
breed of Egyptian nationalists. By 1919 the nationalist move-
ment of Egypt was given a revolutionary fervour by a group of
extremist leaders. At the beginning of 1922 the British Govern-
ment realized that it could no longer be possible to maintain
her interests without giving Egypt some concessions. This re-
sulted into a unilateral declaration of Britain, issued on
February 26, 1922, announcing the abolition of the protec-
torate and recognizing Egypt as an independent sovereign
state under a constitutional monarch. The declaration of
independence, however, did not change the dominating posi-
tion of Britain in Egypt. The British Government had reserved
her position by attaching certain conditions to the independ-
ence of Egypt. British troops and officials were still all
over Egypt in large numbers and did not cease to intervene
in Egypt's domestic as well as foreign affairs. This pseudo-independence never satisfied the Egyptian nationalist leaders. The Wafd party, which had gained much popularity amongst the Egyptians under the dynamic leadership of Zaghlul Pasha, adopted a tough attitude regarding the status of Sudan and the presence of British troops in Egypt. These had been the two major issues over which the Anglo-Egyptians relations remained tense. Britain immensely desired to stay in Egypt in order to protect her imperialist interests in the region, while Egyptians demanded the total independence from the British Control, to preserve the sovereignty of their nation. The conflict between the Egyptian nationalism and European imperialism continued until the outbreak of Italo-Abyssinian war. The growing danger of Mussolini in the surrounding areas, threat and the Anglo-Egyptian Governments alike. Under the common fear both Britain and Egypt adopted a compromising attitude to resolve their problems. As a result of this change an Anglo-Egyptian treaty of twenty years duration was signed on August 26, 1936. The treaty placed Egypt under new obligations in return for some concessions. Thus, the nationalist revolution which had begun in 1919, was subsided after the conclusion of 1936 treaty.

The temporary relief in the Anglo-Egyptian relations provided by the 1936 treaty soon ended after the 1945. In the post Second World War period a number of developments
took place which brought about a radical change in the Middle Eastern politics and particularly in Egypt. These developments included the changing pattern of international political system in which America and Russia emerged as the new dominating powers of the world, change of the governments of the countries directly involved in the Middle East crisis, partition of Palestine against the wishes of the original inhabitants of the country, humiliating defeat of the Arabs at the hands of newly created state of Israel, independence of the majority of the Arab and Afro-Asian countries, which hitherto were controlled either by Britain and France, and growing political consciousness and nationalism among the new generation, who by now, had become fully aware of the Machiavellian characteristics of the western powers. Creation of Israel had provided a major proof of their suspicions against the western intentions regarding the future of the Middle Eastern region. The young generation was no more ready to compromise with even those old regimes which had been collaborating with the imperialist powers since the end of the First World War. In this charged situation, humiliating defeat of the Arabs in the war of 1948, mainly due to the faulty decisions of the Arab kings, who were more interested in establishing their supremacy over each other than to practical unified action to save as much as possible of Arab Palestine, proved to be the last straw. During the Palestine war, the policies of Arab Kings were largely promoted by their traditional
rivalries among themselves. These unhappy events further provoked the antiwestern and anti-monarchial sentiments of the younger generations. The riots and revolutions which occurred in Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq, in the forth coming years, and resulted into the destructions of old regimes and in some countries assassinations of their rulers having pro-western tendencies, were the direct consequences of the creations of Israel and the subsequent Arabs defeat in the war of 1948. Among the Arab world more radical changes took place in Egypt, since the government in Cairo had considered itself the leader of the Arab struggle. Throughout the war the Egyptian public was cheated by their leaders providing them wrong informations of their quick victory. When they knew about the realities their humiliation and disappointment knew no bound. They also knew this fact well that it was King Farouk who inspite of Nokrashi Pasha’s opposition decided to send Egyptian army to the Palestine War. The stories of the involvement of King Farouk in the arms scandal had made the Egyptians totally exasperated with the old regime. Instability of the governments as a result of tussles between King and Parliament created a political, social and economic crisis in Egypt. Britain the real founder to the Jewish state in the heart of the Arab lands, still remained in Egypt, and the Sudan’s status was yet to be decided. The frustration of the lost war blended with economic and social problems of Egypt, hastend the revolutionary process of a group
of young army officers who had been dreaming to overthrow imperialism, monarchy, and feudalism from Egypt since very long. Their dreams soon came true when on July 23, 1952, a revolution under the leadership of Neguib (the Chief architect of coup de'etat remained in the background for some time) took place in Egypt and uprooted 150 years old Mohammed Ali dynasty.

By this time British diplomacy in the Middle East started to be ruined. France which had enjoyed the status of second dominating power of the Middle East was expelled from this region in 1941. Before the Second World War American political interests in the Arab world were extremely nebulous. The discovery of new oil resources and the growing strategic needs of the military bases in the Middle East in the changing international political system had altered the US policy of isolation outside the western hemisphere. American's indirect involvement in the Middle Eastern affairs began through her sympathetic support to the Zionist cause in Palestine. The new developments which occurred during and after the Second World War converted this indirect involvement into a direct political interest of America in the Middle Eastern region. The United States's openhearted and frechanded support for the establishment of Jewish state in Palestine in 1947 was the hallmark of her political interest in this area. It created a crisis of confidence between the Arabs and the United States. This factor had been a dominating force
behind Arab and particularly Egyptian neutralism and non-alignment which ultimately helped to facilitate the entry of Soviet influence into the area.

President Eisenhower, who succeeded Harry Truman (a stanch supporter of Zionist cause in Palestine) in January 1953, declared his policy of 'impartiality' in dealing with the Middle East problems. In this connection he sent his Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, to the Middle East in May, 1953. Eisenhower’s promise of impartiality, and Dulles’ visit, both helped in assuaging the hostile attitude of the Arab nations which did not cease to attack America’s conscience regarding the establishment of Israel. Encouraged by this temporary success, and motivated by her desire to revive the old idea of Middle East Command, the US Government began to establish a friendly relations with the revolutionary regime of Egypt.

In 1951, after the unilateral abrogation of the 1936 Treaty, and the 1899 Sudan Condominium Agreement by Nahas Pasha (who himself was the principal architect of 1936 treaty), the western powers projected a new scheme of Middle East Defence Organization to Egypt. By this joint Middle East Command they wanted to create a permanent security system against the expected Soviet threat. The proposed scheme was promptly rejected by the Egyptian Government on the plea that it, however, would perpetuate western domination into the area. The revolutionary regime which came into power in 1952, gave a
new hope to the US Government. It felt that it might be easier
to influence the soldiers than those of experienced political
leaders of Farouk's regime. The US expectations were based on
the wrong calculations of the gravity of nationalism and anti-
western feelings of the revolutionary leaders and particularly
Nasser. Her hopes were largely buried by 1955, when Nasser
openly rejected the US sponsored TEDO plan and pursueded a
policy of 'positive neutralism', a concept which he brought
back from Banding after discussions with Nehru, Tito, Sukarno
and Cho-Su Lai.

Dulles, who had visited Egypt in May 1953, believed that
in the way of the US Egyptian friendly relations the presence
of British troops in the Suez Canal Zone was an obstacle. Af­
ter this realization, Eisenhower administration started to
pressure Britain to accept the Egyptians demands for the
evacuation of British forces from the Suez Canal Zone and
unity of the Nile valley. The US Government was more anxious
to secure oil and bases in the Middle East than to support
the imperial interests of Britain and France. For Britain
the departure of her troops from Egypt was meant the total
retirement from the Middle Eastern politics. After the ter­
mination of British Mandate over Palestine the government of
United Kingdom immensely desired to remain in Egypt. Apart
from Britain's strategic needs for the Suez Canal base, the
Suez Canal itself had become so vital for her oil and commer­
cial requirements that if it was mismanaged or captured by any
other country she would suffer first and most. But in the changing international situation Britain could no longer escape from the impact of Egyptian nationalism and above all from the growing American pressure. It was against this background that agreements over the future of Sudan (1953) and evacuation of British troops from the Suez Canal Zone (1954) were signed between Britain and Egypt. In both these events the United States not only offered its good offices but also put a strong pressure on Britain to reach on final settlements. The US Government was then hopeful that these developments might bring Egypt in the proposed American defence alliance for the Middle East. In order to soften the attitude of now revolutionary leaders further, America had offered Egypt with economic and military aid. But at the same time the US Government attached certain conditions, chief among them was the Egypt's acceptance to the American Middle East defence scheme, for the delivery of arms. Britain which had now become even hysterical to establish a joint command in the Middle East, in which she was supposed to be an important ally, after her departure from Palestine in 1947, nationalization of Abadan oil refinery by Iran in 1951, and the Anglo-Egyptian agreements of 1953 and 1954 ending her traditional heritage in Sudan and Egypt, followed the American suit. Western promises to Egypt were never fulfilled, partly due to Israeli and Zionist opposition, and partly Egypt's non-acceptance of the condition to this aid.
Since Dull's diplomacy to enlist Egypt in a western defence alliance had failed, he developed a personal hatred against Nasser, who by now, had become the new head of the state and president of Council of Revolution. This factor had always played an important role in the ensuing Suez crisis which, however, created a danger of the third world war and brought America and Russia face to face in the Middle East. After Egypt's rejection of the proposed MCDO plan, Dull's invented the idea of a 'Northern Tier' alliance which was soon forwarded by Britain. By October, 1955, Turkey, Iraq, Britain Pakistan and Iran were linked by treaty, commonly known as 'Baghdad Pact'. It is an irony that America which initiated the very idea of 'Tier' never joined it. This fluctuated diplomacy of Dull's by introducing a plan and then withdrawing from it created a number of problems in the near future.

Soon after the conclusion of Baghdad Pact the western, and particularly the U.S. Egyptian relations, which had improved considerably with the revolutionary regime began to deteriorate. Nasser from the very beginning of his accession to power dreamed of Arab unity. Linking of Iraq with the 'Northern Tier alliance challenged Nasser's policies and threatened his role as a leader of the Arab World. He severally criticized this pact and persuaded the other Arab countries to denounced it as well. The empty handed return of the Templor mission from Jordan and later the fate of Muri-Sa Said had revealed that how successful Nasser was in his efforts. 
Israel and Russia were naturally benefited by this situation. Soon after the formation of Baghdad Pact and return of Ben Gurion to the Government as defence minister Israel armed forces attacked Egyptian military installations in the Gaza strip. Gaza raid was proved to be an 'alarm bell' to Nasser, who, till now had not forgotten the humiliation which the Egyptian army had to face after the defeat of the Palestine war. Under the pressure of the new situation created by the Israeli threat he once again repeated his request for the western arms. As western powers did not pay any attention to his request, he quickly turned towards Russia which since long was looking for this opportunity. The Russian wooing of Egypt threatened the western interests in the Middle Eastern region. But despite the Russian Egyptian arms deal the western power did not lose their hope to conciliate Nasser. As a result, Dulles and Eden who initially were reluctant to cooperate with the world bank in financing the Aswan Dam project had promptly offered their governments' help to Egypt. The sudden change of their hearts did not affect on Nasser's anti western policies. After the signing of the Baghdad Pact he never missed any opportunity to undercut western influence or interests in the region. The developments which had occurred in the first half of 1956, made the western governments realize that their policy of appeasement had failed with Nasser. In retaliation the USA and Britain withdrew their offers of financial support for the construction of
the Aswan High Dam. The World Bank offer leaped automatically as it was conditional on Anglo-American support. In a counter stroke Nasser announced the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company declaring that its revenues would be used to pay the new Dam. Hugh Thomas had rightly said that he nationalized the Suez Canal Company "chiefly to get money to finance the Dam but partly to snub the west in an obvious fashion".

After the Russian arms deal, the nationalization of the Canal was Nasser's boldest action against the imperialist powers. Overnight his prestige and popularity reached a high pedestal. Arab masses admired his boldness which no other Arab leaders had shown in dealing with the western countries. He was described by some as the new Saladin, who would reconquer Palestine. Apart from the Arab world, Nasser's action was justified by India and the USSR. Throughout the Suez crisis these two countries played a major role in mobilizing the world opinion in favour of Egypt.

Western reaction to the nationalization of the Suez Canal was not unexpected. Since long they were trying to get rid of Nasser who day by day was becoming a danger to their national interests in the Middle East. Britain and France, which were directly hit by the take over of the Canal, soon decided to use it as a pretext to justify their aggressive actions against Nasser. The main cause behind the French hostility against Nasser was his support to the Algerian
rebellion. Even before the nationalization of the Suez Canal, the French Government began to collaborate with the Israeli defense officials to overthrow the arrogant Egyptian leader whose activities were equally harmful to the Zionist aspirations in Palestine. The attitude of the US Government was quite different than those of its allies. While the United States shared the British and French feelings that Nasser was the main source of all their trouble in the Middle East and he must be discredited, it strongly opposed the Anglo-French military preparations against Egypt. Perhaps, Dulles believed that despite of his government opposition Britain and France would attack Egypt then why America should be branded as an aggressor. Dulles immensely desired to punish Nasser for his open defiance with the US policies but he did not like to tarnish America's image in the Arab world. It was also presumed that America's cooperation with her allies in the ensuing attack would facilitate Soviet's physical presence in the Middle East. From the very beginning of the Suez Crisis America had played a very safe game in which Britain and France were used as the scapegoats. There is no definite proof that America had a prior knowledge of Israel's involvement in the Anglo-French planning. But it is hard to believe that without the US encouragement Israel could dare to take such a bold step. Since America knew the weaknesses of the aggressive countries, she could stop them at any time if her political strategy in the area required it.
Initially Britain was hesitant to involve Israel in their military action against Egypt. Eden knew that even Nasser's strongest enemies would not give Britain for her collusion with Israel. Labour opposition and the US non-co-operation were other factors which had discouraging effect on Britain. But later Eden's desire of revenge had overcome all his fears and reasonings. Eden was aware that legally Nasser's action was justified so he wanted to take this issue on the broader international grounds. When he failed to achieve his objective even from the Security Council, he soon agreed on his government collusion with Israel.

All the western panic and apprehension about the right of free passage and normal functioning of the Suez Canal were artificial. They exaggerated the issue in order to justify their hostile actions against Nasser who had become a symbol of Arab aspirations. After weeks of nationalization of the Suez Canal on western ship was denied free passage through the Canal. In fact the tripartite aggression was the result of a deep-rooted conspiracy of imperialist and Zionist forces against the growing Arab nationalism.

The outcome of the tripartite war were discouraging to both Britain and France. Instead of destroying Nasser, their action transformed him into a world figure, a leader of international stature. They wanted to break up Arab unity, Suez brought Egypt and other Arab countries closer to each other (if temporarily). The war did not weaken nationalism
and Pan-Arabism in the Middle East but intensified it. It united Asia and Africa in sharp opposition to Europe and brought a 'third world' into existence. Britain immensly desired to establish international control over Suez Canal. The end of 1956 war lost every possibility of it. France wanted to suppress Algerian rebellion by destroying its main source of inspiration. She not only failed to do so but hastened the process of Algerian independence. Their moral and political positions were further weakened in the world and particularly in the Arab countries. Arabs were not only better of Anglo-French assault on Egypt, but they were hostile because there two countries brought Israel as a partner in their collusion. Their lame excuses that by intervening between Israel and Egypt they wanted to protect the Suez Canal had lost its validity when they jointly vetoed the Security Council resolution (S/3710) calling for an immediate cease fire between Israel and Egypt. Apart from this fact, the developments which had occurred in the month of October, 1956, reveal that the tripartite action against Egypt was pre-planned, although Britain and France denied this allegation.

The Anglo-French decision to attack Egypt seems to have dominated largely by their emotions. They invaded Egypt mainly to satisfy their wounded ego-asser's policies of Arab unity and independence under Egyptian leadership was a challenge to Great Britain (and a lesser degree to France) which had dominated Egypt from 1882 and the Arab world since the end of the
First World War. Evacuation of the British forces from the Suez Canal Zone, followed by Egypt's rejoicings with Soviet Foreign Minister, Shepilov, had a humiliating effect on Eden. It seems that in his frustration he underestimated the gravity of the British collusion with Israel an enemy of the Arabs. The effects of the Anglo-French invasion were so damaging that even their friends and public opinion had become adverse to them. In Britain, enormous crowds, incited by the labour opposition, took a hostile turn chanting that "Eden must go" and "Law not War". However, the Suez affairs had caused the political death of British Prime Minister, Eden, who never uttered Nasser's name without emotion.

It is irony that their closest ally America joined hands with her greatest enemy Russia in suppressing their action in Egypt. Throughout the Suez Crisis the U.S. attitude and actions, expressed through the U.N. and outside, were mainly guided by her desire to strengthen her position in the oil rich Middle East. It was obvious that the shattering image of Britain and France in the Arab world would be benificial for America's strategic goals. Soon after the nationalisation of the Suez Canal, Dulles assured Eden, that what Nasser had attempted to swallow was to be disgorged. But it was Dulles, who, instead of Nasser, forced Britain, France, and Israel to disgorge what they had swallowed in Egypt. In the Suez Crisis Dulles fluctuating diplomacy is an important factor to confuse the Anglo-French Governments. By pressurizing the aggressors to cease fire and withdrawal from the occupied areas,
America intended to establish her leadership in the region. The US policies were motivated by her selfish interests but fortunately they saved the world from the danger of a third great war.

In comparison to France and Britain, Israel's action was well calculated, and its aims were clearly defined. She had extracted every possible benefit of the Anglo-French co-operation in her war efforts. The result of the war proved that Israel succeeded to achieve all her immediate objectives, if not her long term goals. Although under the strong pressure of the USA, the US and the USSR, Israel had to surrender her territorial gains, but once again her military superiority over Egypt was recognised. Unlike Britain and France neither Israel's ego nor her prestige were involved with Nasser. By attacking Egyptian territory, Israeli Prime Minister Ben-Gurion wanted to destroy her military strength because a strong Egypt was a constant danger to his Zionist aspirations. Since Israel is a product of immorality and bad faith, she never cared about the legality and morality of her actions.

The growing interest of America in the Middle Eastern region created a grave situation for Soviet Russia. Egypt opposition to the western sponsored MEDU plan and later to Baghdad Pact, brought Russia closer to the Egyptian leaders. The Russian arms deal with Egypt was the first indication that in the changing international situation the Middle East
could no longer remain as a purely western sphere of influence. This fact was further recognized by the active participation of the Soviet Russia in the Suez affair. In the Suez crisis Russia's role was primarily propagandistic, although it helped enormously in driving Britain, France and Israel out of Egypt. By her tactful diplomacy Russia won over the hearts of the Arabs. In the months following the war, world had witnessed the growing Soviet and Communist influence in the Middle East. It is more appropriate to say that the Suez affair paved the way for the entry of the Soviet Union in the Arab world, which, since long the western powers were trying to avoid. After Suez, Arabs began to realize that imperialism and Zionism were even more dangerous to their national interests than that of communism. During the Suez Crisis Russia and America seemed to be cooperating in resolving the dispute. But the later developments proved that their cooperation was short lived.

Arab bitterly denounced the Anglo-French action against Egypt because these two governments had sought the support of Zionists to re-establish their control in the Middle East. Some of the Arab countries expressed their sympathy to Egypt by breaking off diplomatic relations with Britain and France. Syria reacted by blowing up the Iraq petroleum Company's pipeline crossing their territory and Saudi Arabia stopped the flow of oil to Bahrain refinery. But no Arab country made any move to attack or even threaten Israel.
Among the Asian countries the role of India had been appreciable. It did unite the third world to raise the voice against the imperialists and zionists atrocities committed in Egypt. India's moral support with other Asian and African countries provided the Egyptians their psychological need which was much required in this grave situation.

Egypt had suffered a considerable loss from the tripartite attack. Apart from the military personals a number of Egyptian civilian lost their life. Israel's army captured a large amount of military equipment transported from Russia and other communist countries. It was once again proved that despite Russian arms, Egyptian army could not defeat Israelis. Egyptian economy was badly effected by this war and caused a hardship to Cairo Government. But in spite of all these damages Egypt's political gains were enormous. Whatever the cost Nasser had to pay in the 1956 war, he succeeded in tarnishing the western and particularly British influence in the region. By establishing international control over Suez Canal, which was regarded as a symbol of dignity and pride by the Egyptians, these powers expected the political death of Nasser in Egypt as well as in the Arab world. Nasser not only saved the Suez Canal (to which he had sacrificed the deserted Sinai Peninsula and Sharm el Sheik areas) but used it as a diplomatic weapon against the Anglo-French Governments. After the Suez episode Arab had become even more responsive to his Pan Arab policies
than before. In Syria and Jordan strong pro-Nasser groups came into power, establishing closer relations with Egypt. In February 1956, Egypt and Syria proclaimed their union (though short lived) in a United Arab Republic. In fact, Nasser lost the battle but won the war.

In general, the Suez war generated a number of the new problems in the Middle East. It paved the way for the entry of Soviet Russia in the region which intensified the cold war between the two super powers. With the East west confrontation there was further worsening of the Arab Israeli relations. The Arab hopes for the American rapprochement with them, raised by her strong opposition to Anglo-French Israeli invasion against Egypt, proved to be illusory. Finally, we may say that the crisis which erupted in 1956 was patched up by the efforts of the UN, the USA, the USSR and the third world countries, but attempts to have a durable solution continue to remain elusive.
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