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TWO SERIES OF ARAB SUMMIT CONFERENCES ON PALESTINE:

1936 - 1950 and 1963 - 1965.

by

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## PREFACE

The term "summit conference" is used in this study to include, in addition to the conferences of heads of state, sub-summit meetings that were held between 1936 and 1965, such as the meetings of the prime ministers, foreign ministers and defence ministers.

The meetings studied are those dealing with the Palestine problem only. Thus the thesis does not discuss the Prime Ministers' Meeting held in January 1955 (dealing with the Baghdad Pact), nor the Heads-of-State Meeting held in November 1956 (dealing with the Tripartite Invasion of Egypt).

The thesis is divided into two parts, the first dealing with the summit and sub-summit conferences held between 1936 and 1950, and the second dealing with another set of summit and sub-summit conferences held between 1963 and 1965.

As a result of this division, there is a disparity with regard to the source material used in the two parts. The sources of the first part have been mainly books, while those of the second part have been mainly newspapers and articles, as well as current documents.



Another major difference between the two parts stems from the idea of collective Arab policy. The first series of summit and sub-summit conferences was a response to developments occurring outside the Arab world which had direct bearing on the Palestine problem, such as the United Nations and the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, whereas the second series was initiated by the Arab leaders, and was not always in response to outside influences. This fact has had a direct effect on the study as a whole, since emphasis in the first part on outside developments has had to be more extensive than in the second part.

The attention of the reader should also be drawn to the fact that the outcome of the first part is already a matter of history, whereas our judgements on the outcome of the second part are still tentative, since the process under examination is still continuing.

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PART ONE

CHAPTER 1

THE BEGINNING OF OFFICIAL ARAB INTERVENTION

IN THE PALESTINE PROBLEM

Although it had elicited the sympathy of the Arab peoples ever since its inception, the Palestine Problem did not begin to stimulate official action on the part of the Arab governments, whether singly or jointly, until 1936. Two factors contributed in that year to the initiation of the new process (i.e., collective intervention by the Arab Governments): first, the change in the juridical and international status of some Arab states; and, secondly, the occurrence of serious, widespread trouble in Palestine.

A. Situation of the Arab States in 1936:

There was an independent and united Saudi Arabia, ruled by a King who had friendly relations with Britian. His country was backward, and had negligible material power or cultural influence. In spite of all this, it had political influence in the area.

Another Kingdom was that of Iraq, an independent Arab State in treaty relationship with Great Britain. It

was ruled by a dynasty which was at bitter enmity with that of Saudi Arabia.

There was the small state of TransJordan, which had been artificially created by Britain. It was autonomously administered by a Hashemite Prince under British supervision. This house was also at bitter enmity with that of Arabia.

There were the two republics of Lebanon and Syria under the French Mandate.

Another State was Egypt, an independent Kingdom in treaty relationship with Britain, similar to that of Iraq.

And there was medieval Yemen.

In the midst was Palestine, "with about a million inhabitants in insurrection against the British Mandate on account of the Jewish colonisation which was being imposed on them under the Conditions of that Mandate". (1)

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(1) John Marlowe, Arab Nationalism and British Imperialism London, The Cresset Press, 1966, P. 30

The year 1936 witnessed the negotiation of treaties with Egypt, Syria and Lebanon, which promised to raise the international stature of those three countries (and of the Arab world as a whole), and to give them greater freedom of action in international affairs.

The picture was further complicated by the dynastic rivalries that existed:

Amir Abdullah of TransJordan, who was the senior survivor of the Hashemite-Sherifian family, believed in the establishment of Greater Syria composed of Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and TransJordan under Hashemite rule. He was convinced that the 1915 British pledge to Husain was not aborted by the peace settlement after World War I, but was temporarily suspended. Such a belief made him active in the internal affairs of both Palestine and Syria, in order to gain enough support in these states to become the heir of the French Mandate in Syria and of the British Mandate in Palestine.

On the other hand, Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud was inflexibly opposed to the Hashemite Greater Syria scheme, because such a plan would reduce his status to that of a desert chieftain. In order to block Abdullah's ambitions, Ibn Saud established close relations with the leaders of the National Bloc in Syria, who formed the Majority Party there and were expected to take over the Government at the end of the French Mandate. It seemed that he had per-



sueded the British Government that its policy of supporting the Hashemite ambitions in the area was incompatible with a policy which aimed at winning the friendship of the Arabs as a whole.

The appearance of Egypt on the stage of Arab affairs, with the signature of the Anglo-Egyptian treaty in the summer of 1936, assisted Ibn Saud in his task. Egypt began to aspire for leadership in the Arab world. It felt that the ambitions of Abdullah for a Greater Syria would challenge and even defeat its prospect of Arab leadership. Thus fear of the same enemy brought Egypt and Saudi Arabia closer to each other.

This division between the Saudis, with the Egyptian power on their side, and the Hashemites, was to shape Arab affairs for the coming ten years, "But beneath their surface differences the rules of these countries were united in their determination to arrest the spread of popular movements in the Arab world". (1)

The Palestine Arab rebellion had an immediate effect on these popular movements by giving them a new lease on life. These movements were divided into two categories, the pan-Islamic movements and the intellectual

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(1) Ibid

movements, which were permanently opposed to the social status-quo in the Arab States and the pro-Western policies adopted by the Arab Governments. The pan-Islamic movement was reinforced by the personality and achievements of Hajj Amin al-Hussaini, Mufti of Jerusalem, President of the Supreme Moslem Council of Palestine and the leader of the Palestine Arab rebellion. The intellectual movement was secular and was represented by the Syrian Popular Party, founded in 1935 by Antoine Saadeh. It advocated a Greater Syria with a republican regime. Historically it was interesting because it formed a stage in the development of the intellectual Syrian Arab nationalism which had been an important factor in shaping Arab nationalist thought, and, to some extent, in the formation of Arab nationalist policy.

In spite of the fact that the Palestine rebellion encouraged the Arab radical movements, at the same time it consolidated the conservative tendencies in the Arab world. The conservative elements were represented by the Princes and the Pashas, and were identified with Britain. Thus they were able to use the Palestine rebellion to persuade the British Government to change its policy over Palestine, in order to justify that the policy of collaboration could give results which the policy of resistance could not achieve. (1)

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(1) Ibid

B. The 1936 Strike and the Intervention of the Arab Kings and Amir.

On 26th April, 1936, the Arabs of Palestine declared a nation-wide strike. This strike, and the disturbances and open rebellion which accompanied it, attracted the attention of Arab leaders outside the boundaries of Palestine, particularly in Syria, TransJordan and Iraq. This official concern was a new phenomenon, since the earlier outbreaks of 1920, 1929 and 1933 had not aroused such active interest among the Arab Governments.

The first official Arab intervention took place in August, 1936. Tawfiq al-Suwaidi, the Prime Minister of Iraq, after prior agreement with the British Government, attempted to persuade the Palestinian Arab Higher Committee to call off the strike, but his attempt was unsuccessful. (1)

The second intervention was also made by the Iraqi Government, when Nouri al-Said, Foreign Minister, visited Palestine at the end of August, 1936, in an attempt to mediate between the Arab Higher Committee and the British Mandate. At the end of his visit the Iraqi Government sent an appeal to the Arab Higher Committee, which was also formulated after prior consultation with the British Government, in which it declared that:

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(1) Ibid

- I. The Arab Higher Committee would take all the necessary measures to put an end to the strike.
2. The Iraqi Government would mediate with the British Government in order to get all the legal rights of the people of Palestine.

But the Arab leaders of Palestine, knowing the pro-British sympathies of the volunteer mediator, indicated that they would prefer a joint mediation in which all the monarchs of the then-independent Arab States would participate. (1)

Accordingly, on 8th October, 1936, an appeal came from the Monarchs of Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Iraq and the Amir of TransJordan, calling upon the Arabs of Palestine to suspend the rebellion and to halt the strike, relying on the good intentions of "their friend Great Britain", who had declared it would do justice. And the monarchs promised to continue to assist the Palestinians in their efforts.

The Arabs of Palestine listened to the counsel of their four Arab chiefs; and the Arab Higher Committee issued a manifest in which it stated that the Arab rulers would not have bidden the Palestinian Arabs to abandon

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(1) M. Darwazeh, The Palestine Problem, Beirut, al-Asriyyah Press, 1960. Vol. 1, pp. 139-141

their struggle without believing that it was in their best interest to do so. "Realising, therefore, the great benefit to accrue from their intervention and support it called upon the community to comply with this order which had no aim except the welfare of the Arabs". (1)

So it was made apparent that the British Government had committed itself to find a solution to the Palestine troubles "which would be acceptable to moderate Arab opinion as represented by the independent Arab Governments. From that time on, consultation between the British Government and the Arab Governments over the future of Palestine was continuous, and accompanied by a continuous pressure on the Arab Governments, from the Arab side, in the form of resolutions, demonstrations, 'Palestine Days', etc." (2)

In accordance with the above-mentioned agreement, which resulted in calling off the strike on 12th October, 1936, the Royal Commission, under the Chairmanship of Lord Peel, departed for Palestine on 5th November, 1936,

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- (1) Great Britain and Palestine, 1915-1945, London, Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1946, p. 96  
(2) John Marlowe, Arab Nationalism and the British Imperialism, P. 35

to enquire into the under-lying causes of the disturbances and to make recommendations for "the removal of any legitimate grievances felt by Jews or Arabs on account of the way in which the Mandate was being implemented." (1)

The Royal Commission's report about its findings was submitted in June, 1937. It stated that the under-lying causes of the disturbances were that: (i) the Arabs of Palestine desired national independence, and (ii) they opposed and feared the establishment of the Jewish National Home. It also stated that the above-mentioned causes were the same that had brought about the disturbances of 1920, 1921, 1929 and 1933. The Commission concluded that the obligations imposed upon the Mandatory by the terms of the Mandate were mutually irreconcilable. It wrote:

"To put it in one sentence, we cannot - in Palestine as it now is - both concede the Arab claim to self-government and secure the establishment of the Jewish National Home". (2)

Accordingly, the Commission recommended the termination of the Mandate and the partition of Palestine, in order to create a Jewish State in the Northern and Western regions, and to incorporate the remaining territory in

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(1) The Political History of Palestine under British Administration, Jerusalem, Government Printer, 1947, p. 21

(2) Ibid,

TransJordan. The report was endorsed by both the British Government and the Council of the League of Nations.

The Arab Higher Committee rejected the plan and opposed any surrender of Arab territory to the Zionists. In spite of this reaction among the Palestinian Arabs, however, there were some around Abdullah who were prepared to accept the plan.

The fourth Arab intervention occurred on 8th September, 1937, when a pan-Arab conference was held at Bludan in Syria. The Conference declared "categorically that Palestine was Arab and its preservation as such was the duty of every Arab. The report of the Peel Commission was rejected, in particular the proposal for partition. The Palestine question could be solved by the withdrawal of the Balfour Declaration, the abolition of the Mandate and the signing of a treaty creating an Arab State after the example of Iraq." (1)

The fifth Arab intervention by Arab Governments in the Palestine Problem occurred in the League of Nations in 1937 and 1938, when the two Arab member-States opposed partition.

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(1) E.W. Bethmann, Decisive Years in Palestine, New York, American Friends of The Middle East Inc., 1957, p.22

On 30th July, 1937, a letter was addressed by the Government of Iraq to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations, in which Iraq protested against the proposals of the Peel Commission and against the partition plan, since partition would do injustice to the people of Palestine. It also asserted that settlement of the problem could only be attained by recognising Palestine as an independent Arab State, with a Jewish minority. In order to achieve this end, Jewish immigration should be stopped, and the Jewish population in Palestine should be fixed at the present number, because in every essential, the promises of the Balfour declaration had already been fulfilled. The strong terms of the appeal were justified by the Iraqi Government on the basis of the moral responsibilities towards the Arabs of Palestine which were undertaken by the Arab rulers when they intervened to put an end to the rebellion in October, 1936. (1)

Wasef Ghali, the Foreign Minister of Egypt, also delivered a speech at the 1938 session of the League of Nations, in which he defended the rights of the Arabs in Palestine, and stressed the interest of the Egyptian Government in the Palestine question because of the existing national, linguistic and religious ties between the two countries. He protested

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(1) Great Britain and Palestine 1915-1945, P.104



against the injustice of the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine, which could have the effect of making the Arabs bear the burden of Jewish persecution in Europe. He proposed solving the Palestine problem on the basis of establishing an independent Arab Palestinian State, in treaty relationship with Britain, and ensuring the rights of the Jews existing in it. He objected to the formation of a state based on different nationalities and separate regions. (1)

In spite of the Arab opposition, the League Council recommended the setting up of a commission to study, and recommend a partition plan.

C. The 1939 London Conference.

In accordance with the resolution adopted at the Council of the League of Nations, a technical commission was appointed in February, 1938, under the Chairmanship of Sir John Woodhead, to study and submit a partition plan for Palestine. The report, which was published in October, 1938, stressed the impossibility of dividing Palestine without leaving Arabs in the Jewish sector, amounting to 49% of the Jewish State. The Commission also concluded that partition was impossible as far as the economic conditions of the country were concerned. (2)

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(1) M. Darwaza, The Palestine Problem, Vol. 1, P. 186

(2) Great Britain and Palestine, 1915-1945. Op. Cit. pp.108-109

Simultaneously with the Woodhead Commission report, the British Government issued a White Paper in which it declared that it had "reached the conclusion that this further examination has shown that the political, administrative and financial difficulties involved in the proposal to create independent Arab and Jewish States inside Palestine are so great that this solution of the problem is impracticable". (1) In order to be able to overcome those difficulties, the British Government called for Arab and Jewish representatives to attend a conference to be held in London.

The Conference was attended by Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the Jewish Agency and the Palestinian Delegation. The latter was composed of Jamal al-Husaini, Aouni Abdul-Hadi, George Antonios, Ragheb Nashashibi, Husain al-Khalidi, Yaacoub Farraj, Yaacoub al Ghosain and Mousa al-Alami. (2)

The Arab Governments showed their interest in playing an active role in the Conference. Thus this was the sixth Arab intervention. Before meeting in London, the Arab Delegation, (with the exception of Ragheb Nasha-Shibi and Yaacoub Farraj), met in Cairo in mid-January, 1938, to draw up a plan to be submitted at the Conference.

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(1) The Political History of Palestine under British Administration, P.26

(2) Emil Ghouri, 15th May 1948, Beirut, al-Kitab al-Arabi Press, 1959, p.22

Nuri al-Said then flew to Beirut to meet Amin al-Husaini and discuss the plan with him. The plan envisaged an independent State of Palestine, in a treaty relationship with Britain. It would be governed by a Constitution which would be drawn up by a constituent assembly and would embody guarantees of full civil and religious rights to all communities. Immigration of Jews would cease immediately. The transfer of administration would be gradual. (1)

The London Conference was held on 7th February, 1939. The Palestinian Arabs refused to sit at the same table with the Jewish Agency Delegation, since they maintained their refusal to recognise the Jewish Agency. As a result, two parallel conferences were held. (2)

The Arabs insisted on enquiring into the bearing of the McMahon-Husain correspondence of 1915-16 on the Palestine question. In accordance with the promises pledged in the correspondence, the Arabs maintained that Palestine should be granted its independence. "The British Delegation, through conceding that 'the Arab contentions regarding the interpretation

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- (1) Great Britain and Palestine 1915-1945, pp. 119-123
- (2) The Political History of Palestine Under British Administration pps. 26-27

of the correspondence ... have greater force than has appeared hitherto', was unable to accept this view". (1)

The British Government issued a White Paper in May, 1939. It intended in this statement of policy to put an end to the uncertainty of its objectives in Palestine, and to prepare the way for the termination of the Mandate. It defined clearly its attitude towards the maximum claims of the Arabs and the Jews, by unequivocally declaring that "it is not part of their policy that Palestine should become a Jewish State." (2) Simultaneously the British Government maintained its rejection of the Arab claim that it had undertaken, in the above mentioned pledges, to grant independence to the Palestinian Arabs, asserting that "they it.... cannot agree that the McMahon correspondence forms a just basis for the claim that Palestine should be converted into an Arab State". (3)

The British Government proposed the establishment of an independent state in Palestine within ten years. The Arabs and Jews would share in the government in a way

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- (1) Ibid P.27  
(2) Ibid P.27  
(3) Ibid P. 27

that would ensure the safeguarding of the essential interests of each community. This period would be considered a transitional and a training period, for both Arabs and Jews, and would be designed to improve relations between the two communities and to build up the apparatus of self-government, by placing Arabs and Jews in charge of the Governmental Departments in proportion to their respective populations, and by introducing them into the Executive Council. At the end of the first five years, "an appropriate body representative of the people of Palestine and of His Majesty's Government" would recommend the constitution of the future independent state. But:

"If, at the end of ten years, it appears to His Majesty's Government that, contrary to their hope, circumstances require the postponement of the establishment of the independent state, they will consult with representatives of the people of Palestine, the Council of the League of Nations and the neighbouring States, before deciding on such a postponement. If His Majesty's Government came to the conclusion that postponement is unavoidable, they will invite the cooperation of these parties in framing plans for the future with a view to achieving the desired objective at the earliest possible date." (1) The independent state should enter into treaty relationship with Britain.

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(1) Ibid

As for immigration, the paper provided for the admission of 75,000 Jews beginning in April 1939 and for the next five years, after which period no further Jewish immigration would be allowed unless the Arabs would accept it. Included in this number would be the illegal immigrants who entered the country in the Period. (1) The Paper also stated that the High Commissioner would be given general powers to prohibit and regulate land transfer from Arabs to Jews. (2)

So, by now, British policy had reached the point of accepting Arab collective action in the Palestine question. From that time on, the British Government took it for granted that the Arab Governments should be consulted over the future of Palestine. Britain began to follow a policy of appeasing Arab nationalist sentiment. The White Paper represented a major change in British policy towards Palestine. It also constituted a reversal of the policy laid down by the Mandate in Palestine. It was "an earnest of what could be achieved as the result of a united Arab front on a particular issue, supported by public opinion and uninhibited by dynastic, personal or political rivalries". (3)

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(1) Great Britain and Palestine 1915-1945, op.cit. pp.125-126

(2) The Political History of Palestine....., op.cit. P.29

(3) J. Marlowe, Arab Nationalism and British Imperialism,  
P.42

The Zionist Congress of 1939 bitterly condemned the proposals expounded by the White Paper on the basis that they were morally and legally invalid; it declared that the Jews would not accept the reduction of their status to that of a minority.

The Arabs, on the other hand, criticised the length of the transitional period, the provision for the possibility of its prolongation, and the proposal that representatives of the mandatory power should participate in framing the constitution of the would-be independent state.

As for the Permanent Mandates Commission, it declared in its observations that the White Paper was not in accordance with the Mandate. The British Government intended to seek the approval of the League Council for its new policy, but it was prevented from doing so by the outbreak of World War II in September. (1)

The action of the Zionist leaders for the abolition of the 1939 White Paper and the implementation of the Biltmore Programme (which was adopted on 11th May, 1942) acted as a stimulus for the seventh Arab intervention in the Palestine question. The Biltmore Programme called for:

- a) the opening of the gates of Palestine to unlimited immigration,

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(1) J. Marlowe, op. cit.,

- b) control of immigration by the Jewish Agency,
- c) the establishment of Palestine as a Jewish Commonwealth, and
- d) the creation of a Jewish army. (1)

Similar resolutions were introduced in 1943 and 1944 in both the U.S. Houses of Congress. As a result, Egypt, Syria and Lebanon protested against the U.S. Congress resolution, which asked for unlimited Jewish immigration into Palestine. Amir Abdullah sent personally a strong cable of protest to President Roosevelt. In his reply, the American President assured him that the U.S. Government had no intention of altering the basic situation in Palestine without consulting both Arabs and Jews. (2)

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(1) Muhammad Khalil, The Arab States and the Arab League, Beirut, Khayats, 1962, ~~1962~~, pp. 506-507

(2) Great Britain and Palestine, 1915-1945, pp. 134-136



CHAPTER II

THE ARAB LEAGUE AND ANGLO-AMERICAN INTERVENTION

During the war years, two developments occurred which affected the modality of collective intervention by the Arab Governments in the Palestine Problem: first, the establishment of a forum for inter-Arab consultation, (namely, the League of Arab States); and, secondly, the entry of the United States as an active participant in the Palestine Problem.

A. The League of Arab States:

Long before World War II came to an end, it had become apparent that the Arab States were destined to occupy a key position in the power politics of the post-war period. "It was already clear, both to the British Government and to the Arab leaders, that two cardinal factors - the re-emergence of Russia as a World Power and the increasing importance of the Middle East oil deposits to the future industrial needs of Western Europe - fortified the validity and necessitated the continuance of Great Britain's traditional policy of ensuring for her use the countries of the Middle East, both as bases and as lines of communication. What was required, from the British point of view, was an up-to-date version of the 'Arab State or Confederation of States' adumbrated in the pledge to Husain." (1)

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(1) J. Marlowe, Arab Nationalism and British Imperialism P.41

Such an attitude on the part of the British prompted the Arab leaders to take action. "There were two general points of agreement. First, the independence of Palestine by means of an acceleration of the policy laid down in the White Paper. Secondly, the immediate independence of Syria and Lebanon, in implementation of the promise made by the Free French in 1941." (1) Beyond these two points all was rivalry and dissention. Abdullah saw Arab unity only in terms of the Kingdom of Greater Syria ruled by the Hashemites. Nuri al-Said saw Arab unity in terms of a Greater Syria under an Iraqi hegemony which would exclude any Egyptian or Saudi influence. Abdul Aziz ibn Saud refused to accept any additional influence either to Iraq or to TransJordan. In Cairo, Premier Nahas Pasha refused to accept the aggrandissement of any Arab power in the East-of-Suez area except that of Egypt. Shukry Kuwathlî, the President of the Syrian Republic and leader of the Syrian National Bloc, was an adherent of Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud. The Christians in Lebanon feared any scheme of Arab unity which might expose them to the domination of a Moslem majority. "It was clear therefore that any fruitful scheme of cooperation would have to be conceived in terms of the unimpaired sovereignty of each of the Arab States within their existing boundaries. There was no reason why this limitation, in itself, should have prevented a fairly comprehensive unity vis-a-vis the outside world. The immediate reason for failure to

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(1) Ibid

achieve this external unity was the question of the future of Palestine. Assuming the emergence of Palestine as a mainly Arab State in accordance with the provisions of the White Paper, would it become an independent State in its own right under the inevitable dominance of the Husaini family, or would it unite with TransJordan and possibly become the nucleus of a Great Syria, Failure to agree over this was to paralyse united Arab action, not over Palestine only, but over almost everything else. For failure to agree over Palestine was a symptom of that double rivalry, between the Nile and the Euphrates on the one hand and between the desert and the sown on the other, which has always imposed its inexorable pattern on the inhabitants of the Middle East and which is the principal reason for the endemic dissension and disunity in the Fertile Crescent". (1)

The Pact of the Arab League, which was signed in March, 1945, was the result of almost two years of negotiations between the then-independent Arab States, namely Egypt, Iraq, TransJordan, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. The latest phase of those negotiations was the most important:

On 12th July, 1944, the Egyptian Government announced

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(1) Ibid

that it intended to invite the above-mentioned Governments to a preliminary general meeting, in the third week of September. Representation of the Palestinian Arabs was not mentioned, although Nuri al-Said had declared on 15th March that there was no reason for not representing Palestine by the surviving members of the Palestine Delegation to the London Conference of 1939. (The difficulty was that the Palestinians could not agree among themselves on the Delegation. There was no Palestinian who could command the loyalty of all parties, and the heads of the loose party organisation had their sectional and personal jealousy problems to solve). (1)

As a result of this exclusion, Abdullah addressed a letter to Nehru on 14th August 1944, in which he stated that his Prime Minister, Samir al-Rifai, would attend the Meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the Arab Unity Conference at its fixed time; but added that to exclude Palestine would be to deny her a right which should not be neglected. "With the Zionist attempt against the departing (British) High Commission", wrote Abdullah, "the danger constituted against Palestine by the Jews and their ambitions beyond Palestine have become (all the more) evident. In view of our close proximity (to Palestine), the Zionist

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(1) G. Kirk, The Middle East in the War. Survey of International Affairs, 1939-1946, London, Oxford University Press, 1954, p.339

movement threatens us here before any other country; hence the question of preserving the very existence and safety of Palestine is vital to TransJordan.

"Under the circumstances, the question of representing Palestine at the Conference is of first (importance) to us, and that opinion is one in both TransJordan and Palestine concerning this national problem." (1.)

The Preparatory Committee, which was composed of the Prime Ministers of the seven Arab States and a representative of Palestine, (2) held its first meeting at Alexandria on 25th September; all delegates were present with the exception of Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Palestine.

"The correspondent of The Times reported that there was an impression, which it was impossible to confirm in Cairo, that Ibn Saud's main reason for hesitating was his continuing conviction that the participation of the Palestine Arabs was a sine qua non; on the other hand, it was possible that he still did not wish to be drawn into the affairs of other Arab countries. The long-standing lack of cordiality between him and the rulers of Iraq and TransJordan was, of

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(1) M. Khalil, The Arab States and the Arab League, V.2, P.19

(2) F. Sayegh, Arab Unity, Hope and Fulfillment, New York, The Devin Adair Company, 1958, p.121

course, notorious, and had certainly been sharpened by the Amir Abdullah's persistent propaganda for Greater Syria (repeated by the Prime Minister of TransJordan in an interview with Akhir Sa'a of 16th April, 1944), and by the suggestion that Nuri was more subtly working towards similar ends. Abdullah's efforts produced a counter-claim by the Syrian representative at the Alexandria Conference that TransJordan should become, as it had been under Abdullah's brother King Faisal (1918-20), the Southern province of Syria." (1)

By the second meeting, which took place on 28th September, Husain al-Kibsi of Yemen had arrived. But he declared that he would only observe, because the Imam did not empower him to sit as a delegate.

By the third session the Saudi delegation headed by Yusuf Yasin had arrived.

The third late arrival was Musa al-Alami, the representative of Palestine, who had been a member of the delegation to the London Conference. At the last moment the six Palestinian parties had agreed to send him to Alexandria as their representative. Upon his arrival, the other delegates proposed that he should not

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(1) J. Kirk, op.cit.

sit at the conference table, but that he should only represent the Palestine Arabs at informal meetings. However, in the course of the third meeting, he took his place as a full delegate.

On 7th October, 1944, the Conference issued a Protocol in which it proposed the creation of a League of Arab States that would be open to all independent Arab States. Decisions made by it would be binding only on those states which had accepted them. No member state would be allowed to pursue a foreign policy that might be prejudicial to the policy of the League or <sup>to</sup> that ~~that~~ of any member. In case of disputes that might lead to a war, in which one of the member states was involved, the Council of the League would mediate in order to reconcile the parties involved. Co-operation in economic matters, communications, cultural matters, questions of nationality and passports, social affairs and public health would be promoted by commissions set up for this purpose. A unanimous affirmation was made by the signatories respecting the independence and sovereignty of Lebanon ~~within~~ her present frontiers, which were already recognised by their Governments. (1)

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(1) M. Khalil, Op. Cit.

Vol 2, pp. 53-55

Besides the above-mentioned resolutions, there was a special one concerning Palestine in which the Committee recognised that "Palestine constitutes an important part of the Arab world and that the rights of the Arabs in Palestine cannot be touched without prejudice to peace and stability in the Arab world". (1)

The British Government had promised the Arabs that it would put an end to Jewish immigration, preserve the lands of the Arabs, and achieve independence for Palestine. These pledges had been permanent Arab rights; if immediately implemented, they would constitute a step towards peace and security.

The Committee also declared that it had supported and would continue to support the Arabs of Palestine, and it stressed its willingness to work for achieving their legitimate aim and safeguarding their rights.

The Committee declared that it regretted the woes which had been inflicted upon the Jews in Europe, but insisted that their question should not be confused with that of Zionism, because it would be unjust to solve the problem of the Jews by inflicting injustice on the Palestinian Arabs.

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(1) Ibid



As for the special proposal concerning the participation of the Governments and peoples of the Arab world in the creation of an "Arab National Fund", for safeguarding the lands of the Palestinian Arabs, it was decided to refer it to the committee of financial and economic affairs for examination; the results would be submitted to the Preliminary Committee at its next meeting. (1)

The Saudi and Yemeni delegates did not sign the protocol, because they were not empowered to do so without referring it to their respective governments. Abdul Rahman Azzam, Egyptian Minister of Arab Affairs, who was in Saudi Arabia on a pilgrimage, remained there (after the pilgrimage) and on 3rd January, 1945, informed his Government that Ibn Saud had given instructions to his representative to sign the Protocol. The Delegate of Yemen was also delayed, but on 3rd February the Egyptian Foreign Minister was notified of the agreement of the Imam.

While political leaders were continuing their parley, King Faruq paid a visit to Ibn Saud, and Kuwatli paid a visit to Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Iraq.

The Egyptian Foreign Minister, Nukerashi, invited the Foreign Ministers of the Arab States to Cairo to draft

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(1) Ibid

a constitution for the proposed League. The meeting took place on 8th February, 1945, under the chairmanship of Nukrashi assisted by Azzam. Palestine was represented by Musa al-Alami, at the invitation of the other Arab delegates, not as a participating delegate but as an observer. On 3rd March, at the end of the seventeenth meeting, a draft Constitution was signed.

On 17th March, the Preparatory Committee convened and on 20th March it transformed itself into a General Arab Congress. The signing of the Pact took place on 22nd March by all with the exception of the representative of Yemen, who had not yet arrived. (1)

Changes in governments took place in Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and TransJordan between the publication of the Alexandria Protocol and the creation of the Arab League. Partly as a result of these changes, and partly because some of the Arab rulers were hesitant, the Pact of the League, although in general it followed the main lines laid down by the Protocol, came out to be in some respects not as strong a document as the Protocol.

It safeguarded more carefully and more specifically the sovereignty of each State. Whereas the Protocol had envisaged that member States would progressively and

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(1) G. Kirk, The Middle East in the War, Survey of International Affairs, 1939-46, pp.340-341

increasingly surrender their sovereignty, the Pact emphasised its retention. For example, the preamble, after the statement "desirous of strengthening the close relations and numerous ties which link the Arab States and anxious to support and strengthen these ties", added the phrase "upon a basis of respect for the independence and sovereignty of these States". The Pact also omitted the clause of the Protocol which stated that "in no case will a state be permitted to pursue a foreign policy which could be detrimental to the policy of the League or to any of its member states". The Pact also omitted Article 3 of the Protocol, which looked for a greater degree of unity in the future; instead, it specified that member states would cooperate "with due regard to the organisation and circumstances of each state". The Pact added a clause in which it specifically forbade any member state from interfering in the governmental systems of the other states. (1)

The Pact contained an appendix relating to Palestine in which it recognised Palestine's de jure independence, and allowed it to participate in the proceedings of the Council of the League. And, because of the special circumstances of Palestine, and until its de facto indep-

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(1) C.A. Hourani, Middle East Journal, The Arab League in Perspective, April 1947, Vol. I, No. 2  
P. 132

endence was achieved, the Council of the League would be responsible for selecting the Arab Delegate of Palestine to participate in its proceedings. This stand was taken in order that the League would appear to be in conformity with public opinion in the Arab world, which would oppose the League and regard it as incomplete if Palestine was not included in it.

Another appendix to the Pact provided for the participation of non-independent Arab States in the work of the different committees of the League; though not in the work of the Council; and pledged that the League would work for their interest "by all the political means at its disposal". (1)

B. The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry and Collective Arab Consultations:

At the end of World War II, a new chapter in the history of the question of Palestine was opening. The policy of the White Paper of 1939 could not be applied, because it had to be submitted to the Council of the League of Nations for approval before application, and,

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(1) M. Khalil, The Arab States and the Arab League,  
Vol. 2, P.61

by the time Britain was prepared to do that, the League had ceased to exist in fact. (1)

During the war, the Zionists were putting pressure on the U.S. Government to help them achieve the repudiation of the White Paper. The first manifestation of official American response to these pressures was President Truman's letter to Mr. Atlee, sent in August 1945, in which he called on the British Government to allow 100,000 Jews to enter Palestine as immigrants. (2)

In July 1945, general elections were held in Britain in which the Labour Party scored victory. This caused a wave of optimism among the Zionists all over the world, for in December 1944, at ~~its~~ Conference in London, the Labour Party had declared its policy in Palestine: "Let the Jews if they wish enter this tiny land in such numbers as to become a majority.... the Arabs being encouraged to move out as the Jews move in". (3)

With the policy statement of the Labour Party in mind, the World Zionist Conference held a meeting in London

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- (1) The Political History of Palestine Under British Administration P. 34
- (2) Ibid. P. 34
- (3) Great Britain and Palestine 1915-1945, P. 139

in August 1945, endorsing the requests which were submitted to the British Government on 22nd May by the Jewish Agency in Palestine. These were:

1. The Jewish State should be immediately established in Palestine.
2. The Jewish Agency should be given all powers necessary for bringing into Palestine as many Jews as it would find necessary.
3. An international loan and other means of help should be given to the Agency for transferring the first million Jews into Palestine, and for economic development.
4. Germany should pay the Jews reparations in kind, for the establishment of the Jews in Palestine. The first step should be the turning over of German property in Palestine to the Jewish Agency in order to be used for the resettlement of Jews coming from Europe.
5. The Jews who wish to settle in Palestine should be provided with international facilities for their exit and transit.

This declaration was accompanied in October and November by outrages in Palestine which were designed to demonstrate that the Zionists were prepared to use force to attain their ends. The Zionist supporters of the above-mentioned programme stated:

"If these provisions (the White Paper of 1939) are not changed, there are those who declare that every possible effort must then be made to encourage illegal immigration. If it be answered that force will be used to stop such immigration, the reply is that force will be used to see it through. If lives are lost in the process, that will be a tragedy no greater than that of accepting supinely the arbitrary pitilessly small immigration figures of that White Paper which is now the law of the land. And if lives are lost, perhaps that is the only way left to us of calling the world's attention to this impossible situation". (1)

This was the background for the statement of policy which was made by Mr. Bevin on 13th November, 1945, in the House of Commons. In it he announced that the U.S. Government had accepted to participate in a joint Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry to examine the political,

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(1) Ibid

economic and social conditions of Palestine in connection with the problem of Jewish immigration and settlement. Bevin added that the Committee would also examine the position of the Jews in those European countries where they had been the victims of Nazi persecution. The Committee would also study the possibility of settling these Jews in Europe or other countries.

As for Palestine, said Bevin, the British Government could not ignore its duties and responsibilities under the Mandate. It therefore would propose to deal with the question in three stages.

1. The British Government would consult the Arabs in order to ensure the continuation of Jewish immigration at the present monthly rate, while the Committee was making its inquiries.
2. After considering the recommendations of the Committee, the British Government would examine with the parties concerned, the possibility of finding other arrangements that would be temporary, to deal with the Palestine problem until a permanent solution could be reached.
3. The British Government would prepare a permanent solution to be submitted to the U.N., and



if possible it would be an agreed one. (1)

The political committee of the Arab League met in December 1945 and issued a reply to the Bevin Declaration. The reply stated that the Bevin Declaration wished that Jewish immigration into Palestine, in excess of the 75,000 imposed by the 1939 White Paper, would be allowed to continue at the same rate. But the Arab States had not yet been informed of how much this rate would represent, and how that rate had been calculated. The Declaration also had avoided mentioning the number that would fall on the U.S. and the U.K. as a part of their share, while at the same time it had suggested fresh immigration to an Arab country.

The political committee could not find a justification in Bevin's statement for demanding fresh immigration into Palestine other than that it was the result of Zionist pressure in Britain and the United States of America aimed at the establishment of a Zionist State in Palestine. The Arab States would not agree to immigration based on Zionist pressure.

The persecution of Jews had reached a high pitch in 1939, when Britain on its initiative laid down the

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(1) M. Khalil, The Arab States and the Arab League,  
Vol. 2, pp. 507-508

policy of stopping Jewish immigration in 1944, and had allowed the entry of 75,000 immigrants as a decisive and remedial step for the conditions that were prevailing in Europe, on condition that from this number would be deducted the number of illegal immigrants. And now, since the Nazi regime had been done away with, Jews would find themselves in the care of the victorious, democratic powers; so there would be no justification for opening the doors of Palestine for new immigration. To resort to such measures would be against the interests of the people of Palestine, and would be a permanent cause of disturbance in the country and a threat to the security and peace of the Middle East.

A number of Jews in Palestine had been desiring to emigrate to the U.S. and to other countries, but were forbidden by the terroristic Zionists in Palestine. Would it not be more realistic to grant to those who wished to leave Palestine the permission to do so?

Furthermore, the Arab League, which had been maintaining friendly relations with Britain and the U.S., could not see any justification for sending a committee of inquiry to examine immigration into Palestine, because the problem had received sufficient investigation and did not need fresh examination. (1)

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(1) Ibid,

The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, after working for 120 days on investigation in the field, had its first meeting in Washington on 4th January, 1946, and signed a unanimous Report at Lausanne on 20th April (Cmd.6808) in which it recommended that the constitutional future of Palestine should be based on three principles:

1. That neither Jews would dominate Arabs, nor Arabs would dominate Jews.
2. That Palestine would be neither a Jewish nor an Arab State.
3. That the form of government that would be established should, under international guarantees, protect and preserve the interests of Christians, Moslems and Jews in the Holy land.

The Committee also explicitly rejected any partition plan and concluded that the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, or States, would result in a civil war that would be a threat to the peace of the World.

The Committee's recommendation was that Palestine should continue to be administered under the Mandate until the conclusion of a trusteeship agreement. The Committee did not precisely recommend the kind of administrative system,

nor the steps to be taken in order to develop self-governing institutions, during the long-envisaged period of British rule. Its proposals were concerned mainly with economic and social developments. It recommended the revocation of the 1940 Land Transfers Regulations, and recommended that 100,000 Jews should be authorised to immigrate into Palestine before the end of 1946.

On 30th April, 1946, the report was published in London and Washington. President Truman on that evening issued a statement in which he said:

"I am very happy that the request which I made for the immediate admission of 100,000 Jews into Palestine has been unanimously endorsed by the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry. The transference of these unfortunate people should now be accomplished with the greatest despatch.... I am also pleased that the Committee recommends in effect the abrogation of the White Paper of 1939 including existing restrictions on immigration and land acquisition to permit the further development of the Jewish National Home. It is also gratifying that the report envisages the carrying out of large scale economic development projects in Palestine which would facilitate

immigration and be of benefit to the entire population. In addition to those immediate objectives, the report deals with many other questions of long-range political policies and questions of international law which require careful study and which I will take under advisement". (1)

The British reaction was expressed in a statement made by the Prime Minister to the House of Commons, in which he made it clear that his Government could not agree to make a decision on the recommendations of the Committee concerning the question of immigration in advance of the Government's general decision on the Report as a whole. He said that the Report must be considered "as a whole in all its implications", and that his Government could not put into effect the Report with its own financial and military resources alone. An essential precondition for the admission of the 100,000 immigrants he announced, was the disbandment and disarmament of all illegal military groups in Palestine. (1)

C. Inshas Conference, 28th May, 1946

The immediate reaction of the Arab Governments

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(1) The Political History of Palestine Under British Administration, P. 36

(2) Ibid, P. 36

to the publication of the Report of the Anglo-American Committee was an invitation for a Conference sent by King Faruq to the Heads of the Arab States, to be held at Inshas, Egypt, on 28th May, 1946.

The Conference was attended by President Shukri Al-Kuwatli of Syria, Crown Prince <sup>d</sup>Abul Ilah of Iraq, President Bechara el-Khoury of Lebanon, Prince Saud of Saudi Arabia, and Prince Saif al-Islam of Yemen.

A statement was issued on 29th May, 1946, in which it was stated that the Palestine problem concerned not only the Arabs of Palestine, but all Arabs; that Palestine, as an Arab State, should be supported by all the Arab States and peoples for the preservation of its Arab character; and that the Arab States would not agree to any further Jewish immigration, which would be regarded by the Arabs as a violation of the 1939 White Paper.

They hoped that the friendly relations which existed between the Arab States and peoples on the one hand, and the U.S. and Britain on the other hand, would not be disturbed, as they undoubtedly would be by the insistence of the latter on the execution of measures that infringed on the rights of the Palestinian Arabs. The Arab States proclaimed this view in order that the friendly relations between them and the U.S. and Britain

might continue, and in order to avoid any reaction that might lead to the disturbance of peace in the world. Then they requested the Secretary-General of the Arab League to carry the results of their discussions to the Council of the Arab League in order to choose the best means for protecting the future of Palestine. (1)

During the months of June and July, meetings were held in London between British and American officials to examine the Report. They reached full agreement on the terms of a report to be submitted to their respective Governments. They took as their starting point the third constitutional recommendation, i.e. that the form of government that would be established should, under international guarantees, protect and preserve the interests of Christians, Moslems and Jews in the Holy Land; and they advocated a plan for provincial autonomy as a means for executing this recommendation.

This plan recommended the division of the greater part of Palestine into two provinces, an Arab and a Jewish one. The Jewish province would include the entire area on which Jews had been settled, with a considerable area between and around their settlements. Each one of the two provinces would have an elected legislature and an executive,

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(1) M. Darwaza, The Palestine Problem, Vol.2 pp.52-53

having a wide range of functions which would include control over transfer of land and the power to limit immigration. The areas that would remain under the direct control of the Central Government included Jerusalem, Bethlehem and the Negev.

The British High Commissioner would administer the Central Government, with a nominated Executive Council. Its authority would be over questions of defence, foreign relations, customs and excise. Its power would also include all those not expressly granted to the provinces.

The British Government, on 25th July, 1946, approved the policy recommended by the British and American officials, as a basis for negotiation with Arabs and Jews. On the other hand, the U.S. Government was not ready to be associated with this effort. (1)

D. Bludan Conference, 8th June, 1946

In accordance with the above-mentioned decision, the Council of the League of Arab States decided to hold an extra-ordinary session at Bludan, Syria, on 8th June,

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(1) The Political History... op. cit. pp. 36-37



1946, in order to consider the plan that the Arabs should adopt as a result of the Anglo-American Committee's Report. The Session was attended by Prime Ministers, Foreign Ministers and Members of Parliament. Secret and public meetings were held; and on 12th June, 1946, corresponding secret and public decisions were adopted.

The public decisions dealt with general principles.

These were:

- "1 To criticise the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry for its pro-Zionist attitude; to send a memorandum to that effect from the Arab League, and from each Arab Government separately to the two Governments of the U.S. and Britain.
- "2 To ask for negotiations with the British Government in order to put an end to the present situation in Palestine.
- "3 To submit the Palestine question to the United Nations if the negotiations with Britain do not result in a solution satisfactory to the Arabs.
- "4 To establish a permanent committee of the Council of the Arab League to observe the developments in the Palestine question.

- "5 To request the disarmament of the Jews.
- "6 To establish boycott offices in each Arab State: to prohibit the export of raw materials that would help Zionist products; to prohibit the import of any Zionist goods; to boycott Zionist companies and agencies; to lay down rules that would make the sale of Arab lands to Zionists in Palestine a crime.
- "7 To reject any scheme for partition.
- "8 To establish committees for the defence of Palestine in each Arab State, and to issue a Palestine stamp whose revenue would be earmarked for Palestine.
- "9 To re-organise the representation of Palestine in a new committee; to call upon the people of Palestine to cooperate and unite; and to instruct the Arab Governments to assist this new committee."(1)

The secret decisions embodied a programme of action manifesting a new trend in Arab policy making regarding Palestine, which had been so far restricted to diplomatic

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(1) M. Darwaza, Op. Cit.

representation and mediation. The full text of these decisions was as follows.

"1 The situation in Palestine is developing into violent strife because of the Zionist military organisation and the terrorist societies, and because the Zionists have become accustomed to the use of force for dictating their will. As a result, the position of the Arab Governments will become so delicate that they will be unable to prevent their peoples from volunteering to support the Arabs of Palestine by every means: money, arms and volunteers.

"2 If the Governments of Britain and the U.S. will adopt the recommendations of their Committee: of Inquiry and will embark upon the implementation of those recommendations, then relations between the Arab States, on the one hand, and the U.S. and Britain on the other hand, will deteriorate to such an extent that, in self-defence, the Arab Governments will find themselves compelled to take such necessary measures:

"a - Withholding new economic concessions from either or both of those governments or their citizens;

"b - Withholding support for the interests of those two Governments in any international agency;

- "c - Moral boycott;
- "d - Reconsidering whatever concessions they may at present have in the Arab lands;
- "e - Taking the case to the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations." (1)

The above-mentioned decisions were directed against the British and U.S. Governments and their petroleum companies that had concessions to exploit petroleum in Iraq and Saudi Arabia at that time. So the Arab Governments were beginning to realise that their petroleum could be used as a political weapon in formulating their policy.

As a result of the decisions taken at Bludan, the Arab League addressed a memorandum to each of the U.S. and British Governments, in which the recommendations of the 1946 Committee of Inquiry were rejected,(2) and in which they invited the British Government to negotiate "for the conclusion of an agreement which will put an end to the present situation in Palestine and transform it into one in conformity with the provisions of the U.N. Charter and agreeable with its aims. The Arab Governments further suggested that the Conference

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(1) Al-Siyasa Special Supplement, 745, 15th May, 1959, P.14.

(2) M. Darwaza, op.cit. (Supplement) pp. 15-21

should be convened in time to conclude a complete and satisfactory agreement before the next Session of the General Assembly to be held in September, 1946." (1)

The immediate result of the 1946 Bludan decisions was the revocation of the latest British policy. The British Government declared that "it had been the intention of His Majesty's Government, in accordance with pledges given at various times, to consult the interested parties before reaching a final decision on their policy in Palestine. In conformity with this intention, the Report of the Anglo-American Conference of officials provided that its proposals, if adopted by the two Governments, should be presented to Arab and Jewish representatives as a basis for negotiations in a Conference to be convened by the United Kingdom Government." (2)

On 25th July, 1946, the British Government issued invitations to a Conference to be held in London to the Arab Governments which were members of the Arab League, to the Jewish Agency for Palestine, and to the Palestine Arab High~~er~~ Committee. Invitations were also sent to prominent Palestinian Arabs, the Secretary-General of

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- (1) The Political History of Palestine Under British Administration, P.38
- (2) Ibid, P.38

the Arab League, and representatives of Jewish opinion in Britain and Palestine.

The Conference opened on 9th September, 1946. It was attended by representatives of all the then independent Arab States and the Secretary-General of the Arab League. The invitation was rejected by both the Palestinian Arabs and the Jews.

The first item for discussion - a plan for provincial autonomy in Palestine, - was put forward by the British Delegation. The Arab Delegates unanimously opposed this plan, arguing that it would inevitably lead to partition. As a result of this opposition, the British Delegation invited the Arab Delegates to offer alternative proposals for dealing with the problem.

The Arab Delegates then presented their solution. (Cmd 7044). Its main features were:

- "a - Palestine would be a unitary State with a permanent Arab majority, and would attain its independence as such after a short period of transition (two or three years) under British Mandate.
- "b - Within this unitary State, Jews who had acquired Palestinian citizenship (for which

the qualification would be ten years' residence in the country) would have full civil rights, equally with all other citizens of Palestine.

"c -Special safeguards would be provided to protect the religious and cultural rights of the Jewish community.

"d- The Sanctity of the Holy Places would be guaranteed and safeguards provided for freedom of religious practice throughout Palestine.

"e- The Jewish community would be entitled to a number of seats in the Legislative Assembly proportionate to the number of Jewish citizens (as defined) in Palestine, subject to the proviso that in no case would the number of Jewish representatives exceed one third of the total number of members.

"f- All legislation concerning immigration and the transfer of land would require the consent of the Arabs in Palestine as expressed by a majority of the Arab members of the Legislative Assembly.

"g- The guarantees concerning the Holy Places would be alterable only with the consent of the United Nations; and the safeguards provided for the Jewish community would be alterable only with the consent of a majority of the

Jewish members of the Legislative Assembly." (1)

The plan also stated that a constitution based on these lines would be brought into being during the period of transition. The first step would be the establishment, by nomination by the High Commissioner, of a provisional Government that would consist of seven Arabs and three Jews. This Government would be responsible for the election of a Constituent Assembly, which would draw up, within six months, a detailed constitution which would be consistent with the general principles outlined above. If the Constituent Assembly would fail to carry out its duties within the prescribed period, then the Provisional Government would be responsible for the promulgation of a Constitution. This provision would ensure that the scheme would proceed even if there were Jewish boycott. Subject to the observance of certain wide directives, the Constitution would not be subject to mandatory veto. After the adoption of the Constitution, the election of a Legislative Assembly, and the appointment of the first Head of the independent Palestine State, would take place. The Head of the State would take over the authority which would be transferred to him by the High Commissioner,

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(1) Ibid,



and a treaty defining the future relations between the British Government and the Government of Palestine would be convened.

In October 1946, the Anglo-Arab Conference adjourned in order to allow certain of the delegates to attend the U.N. General Assembly and the Council of Foreign Ministers Meetings. The Conference re-assembled on 27th January, 1947.

During the recess period, the Zionist Congress met at Basel, and denounced the British plan that provided for provincial autonomy, describing it as "a travesty of Britain's obligations under the Mandate, unacceptable even as a basis for discussion"<sup>(1)</sup> It said that such a plan would prevent the Jews from settling in the greater part of Palestine, and it would also deny them independence in the territory that would be allocated to the Jewish Province. The Congress recorded that it would oppose any trusteeship which would supersede the Mandate and postpone the establishment of the Jewish State. They also declared that the Zionist movement could not participate in the London Conference "in the existing circumstances". The Congress re-affirmed its political programme in the

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(1) Ibid,

following terms:

"i - that Palestine be established as a Jewish Commonwealth integrated in the structure of the democratic world;

"ii- that the gates of Palestine be opened to Jewish immigration;

"iii-that the Jewish Agency be vested with the control of immigration into Palestine and with the necessary authority for the up-building of the country". (1)

The Anglo-Arab Conference resumed its work in January 1947. At this part of the Conference a delegation representing the Palestine Arab Higher Committee was present. At the same time, informal conversations between the Jewish Agency and the British Government were going on. The Jewish Agency put forward three suggestions:

- I. Palestine should become a Jewish State.
2. Jewish immigration should be permitted to the full extent of the economic absorptive

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(1) Ibid.

capacity of the country, and no part of the country should be closed to land purchase and settlement by the Jews.

- 3.- The Jewish Agency would be prepared to recommend the acceptance of a "viable Jewish State in an adequate area of Palestine".

On 7th February, 1947, the British Delegation submitted new proposals at the Anglo-Arab Conference. (Cmd 7044). The proposals were also communicated to the Jewish Agency. They provided for British trusteeship over Palestine. The length of the period would be five years, and the object of the trusteeship would be the preparation of the country for independence.

The terms of trusteeship would provide for a substantial measure of local autonomy in those areas that include a substantial majority of either Arabs or Jews. It would be the responsibility of the High Commissioner to protect the minorities in the above-mentioned areas. The High Commissioner would endeavour to form at the centre a representative Advisory Council. The election of a Constituent Assembly would take place after four years. If the majority of the Arab representatives and that of the Jewish representatives would reach an agreement then an independent State would be proclaimed without delay. If they dis-

agree, then the Trusteeship Council of the U.N. would be asked to give its advice upon the future procedure.

The British Delegation was of the view that "any provisions made for future Jewish immigration must rest upon consideration for the well-being of Palestine as a whole". (1) With such an end in view, the trusteeship agreement would provide for admitting 96,000 Jews, as immigrants, during the first two years of its operation. After that the rate of Jewish immigration into Palestine would be determined by the High Commissioner in consultation with his Advisory Council after seeing to the economic absorptive capacity of the country. If there were disagreement, then the U.N. would have to appoint an arbitration tribunal to make the final decision.

The British Government considered these proposals to be consistent with the terms of the Mandate of the League, and with Article 76 of the Charter of the U.N. It also looked for an early termination of the trust by stating that:

"His Majesty's Government are not prepared to continue indefinitely to govern Palestine themselves

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(1) Ibid,

merely because Arabs and Jews cannot agree upon the means of sharing its government between them. The proposals contained in the present Memorandum are designed to give two peoples an opportunity of demonstrating their ability to work together for the good of Palestine as a whole and so providing a stable foundation for an independent State". (1)

The new British proposals were rejected by both the Arab Delegations and the Jewish Agency for Palestine. Whereupon the Mandatory Power decided to refer the problem to the U.N. This decision was announced by the Foreign Secretary to the House of Commons on 18th February, 1947. In the course of his speech he said:

"His Majesty's Government have..... been faced with an irreconcilable conflict of principles. There are in Palestine about 1,200,000 Arabs and 600,000 Jews. For the Jews, the essential point of principle is the creation of a sovereign Jewish State. For the Arabs, the essential point of principle is to resist to the last the establishment of Jewish sovereignty in any part of Palestine. The discussions of the last month have quite clearly shown that there is no prospect of

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(1) Ibid,

resolving this conflict by any settlement negotiated between the parties. But if the conflict has to be resolved by an arbitrary decision, that is not a decision which His Majesty's Government are empowered, as Mandatory, to take. His Majesty's Government have of themselves no power, under the terms of the Mandate, to award the country either to the Arabs or to the Jews, or even to partition it between them.

"It is in these circumstances that we have decided that we are unable to accept the scheme put forward either by the Arabs or by the Jews, or to impose ourselves a solution of our own. We have, therefore, reached the conclusion that the only course open to us is to submit the problem to the Judgement of the United Nations. We intend to place before them an historical account of the way in which His Majesty's Government have discharged their trust in Palestine over the last twenty-five years. We shall explain that the Mandate has proved to be unworkable in practice, and that the obligations undertaken to the two communities in Palestine have been shown to be irreconcilable. We shall describe the various proposals which have been put forward for dealing with the situation, namely the Arab plan, the Zionists' aspirations, so far as we have been able to ascertain them, the proposals of the Anglo-American Committee and the various proposals which we

ourselves have put forward. We shall then ask the United Nations to consider our report, and to recommend a settlement of the problem. We do not intend ourselves to recommend any particular solution."(1)

On 17th March, 1947, the Council of the Arab League held its seventh Session in Cairo (17th-29th March), and the Palestine question was the main item of discussion. The purpose of the Session was to oppose the policy of the U.N. Secretary-General, who was thinking of appointing a committee of inquiry into the Palestine question after Britain had declared its intention of submitting the question of Palestine to the United Nations. The Council of the League also declared:

1. That the question of Palestine at the United Nations should be discussed on the basis of declaring Palestine an independent country.
2. That a committee should be set up to formulate the necessary requirements while the discussion of the question would be going on; and the Arab Governments should finance it.
3. That the Arab Governments should send a new

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(1) Ibid,

protest to the British Government against the continuation of Jewish immigration, which was permitted by the British Government for a short period; and against the inefficiency and the weakness of the measures adopted for stopping the illegal immigration of the Jews into Palestine.

4. That the Arab Governments should supply the Arab Higher Committee with money (the sum was not specified) in order to enable it to carry on its activities. (1)

The Council of the League also discussed whether the Arab Governments should carry the Palestine question to the United Nations, or leave it to the British Government to do so (although the Council of the League had decided at its Bludan Conference of June, 1946, to submit the question to the United Nations). The Iraqi Delegate opposed the raising of the question by the Arab Governments except on the basis of the declaration of its independence. He declared that his Government had asked him to register the following reservation:

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(1) M. Darwaza, Op. cit.



"Due to the critical phase through which the Palestine problem is passing now, and due to the fact that the Arabs are not responsible for this development - on the contrary they have been cooperative and tolerant, as has been manifested by the Arabs' refraining from opposing the application of the 1939 White Paper, whose bases have been preserved in the Arab plan submitted to the 1946 London Conference - therefore, the Arab States of the League unanimously consider each of Britain and the U.S. responsible for the continuation of the present critical situation in Palestine. The Arab States do not see any reason for raising the Palestine question at the United Nations except for the immediate declaration of its independence on democratic grounds. If not, the Arab States then will be forced to review their political and economic relations with Britain and the U.S., and will consider the relationship between the Arab States and those two States unfavourable." (1)

Then the Delegate of TransJordan declared that his Government had asked him to register the following reservation:

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(1) Ibid,

"Although his Government does not oppose the idea of submitting the Palestine problem to the United Nations as long as Britain has chosen to do so, the Government of TransJordan wishes to register that it safeguards its right to act independently as far as the Palestine question is concerned in order to preserve its Arab identity and its national aspirations."(1)

It will be recalled that TransJordan was not, at that time, a member of the United Nations.

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(1) Ibid,

CHAPTER III  
COLLECTIVE ARAB INTERVENTION  
AT THE UNITED NATIONS.

In April, 1947, the Arab World witnessed the issuance of a new policy towards the Palestine problem, namely the formal internationalisation of the Palestine problem by the Mandatory Power, which officially transferred the problem to the United Nations.

A. The Problem Brought Before the United Nations:

On 2nd April, 1947, the Secretary-General of the United Nations received the following message:

"His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom requests the Secretary-General of the United Nations to place the question of Palestine on the agenda of the General Assembly at its next regular Annual Session: They will submit to the Assembly an account of their administration of the League of Nations Mandate and will ask the Assembly to make recommendations, under Article 10 of the Charter, concerning the future Government of Palestine.

"In making this request, His Majesty's Government draw the attention of the Secretary-General to the desirability of an early settlement in Palestine and to the risk that the General Assembly might not be able to decide upon its recommendations at its next regular annual session unless some preliminary study of the question had previously been made under the auspices of the United Nations. They therefore request the Secretary-General to summon, as soon as possible, a special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of constituting and instructing a special committee to prepare for the consideration, at the regular session of the Assembly, of the question referred to in the preceding paragraph." (1)

This request was in accordance with a decision made by the British Government, the result of which was the internationalisation of the Palestine question.

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(1) United Nations Yearbook, 1947-1948, Lake Success, New York, United Nations Department of Public Information, 1949, p.276

B. Arab Diplomacy at the United Nations in 1947:

The Arab Governments reacted as one block in the United Nations. They formulated their policies accordingly; and most of the time, there was one representative of one of the Arab States speaking in the name of the whole group and presenting an already formulated, collective Arab policy. The following description would demonstrate this collective function of Arab diplomacy at the United Nations in 1947.

On 28th April, 1947, the Special Session of the General Assembly opened. Egypt and Iraq, (on 21st April) and Syria, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia, (on 22nd April) requested the inclusion of an additional item on the agenda, namely "the termination of the Mandate over Palestine and the declaration of its independence."<sup>(1)</sup> The reasons for this request were stated on 29th April, 1947, the second day of the Session. These were:

1. The independence of Palestine was the real question at issue. It was recognised in the Covenant of the League of Nations, and in statements and declarations made by the Allies. The principles of the

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(1) Ibid.

Covenant were violated by the Balfour Declaration and by the Mandate for Palestine resulting in the imposition of the Jews on the Arabs of that country. The Arabs had recognised neither the Balfour Declaration nor the Mandate. Other parts of the Ottoman Empire, which were simultaneously placed under the Mandate, were subsequently granted their independence.

2. The problem was to establish principles and not to find facts. The reasons for the Palestine problem would be found in the Palestine Mandate and the Balfour Declaration, whose principles were based on expediency, power politics, local interests and local pressures. Such principles were inconsistent with the Covenant of the League and the Charter of the United Nations.

3. The situation in Palestine would be solved by the declaration of its independence according to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and not by the establishment of a committee: for the committee could only retard the settlement of the situation, which was getting more tense in the Arab world due to Zionist political activities abroad.

4. The question of Palestine could be brought appropriately before the United Nations only by

(a) notifying the General Assembly that Palestine was ready for independence; (b) submitting to the General Assembly an agreement of a draft trusteeship for Palestine; and (c) relinquishing the Mandate. This proposition was in accordance with the Charter, since the discussion of the question should be directed towards the termination of the Mandate system.

5. The discussion of the question should take place because (a) the matter was urgent; (b) the committee should be instructed adequately; and (c) the question could not be avoided any longer.

6. The appointment of a committee depended solely on an agreement on principles.

7. The only just solution of the problem was independence, on which both parties concerned, Arabs and Jews, were in full agreement.

8. The discussion of independence would not be the immediate granting of it.

9. The discussion of independence would not prejudice the Jewish interests, since the hearing

of their case could be granted, and since the problem of the Jews was a separate one than that of Palestine. (1)

The Arab proposal to add the above-mentioned item to the agenda was defeated when it was put to the vote. Fifteen members voted for it, twenty-four voted against, and ten abstained. (2)

On 28th April, 1947, the Egyptian representative stated that the Arab States did not represent the Palestinian Arab people; because the Arab Higher Committee was the representative of the Arab Palestine people, it should be heard. (3)

The General Assembly, on 1st May, 1947, referred to the First Committee the question of setting up and constituting a special committee to study the Palestine problem and to submit its findings to the General Assembly at its next regular session.

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- (1) Ibid, pp. 278-279  
(2) Ibid, P.280  
(3) Ibid, P.282



On 7th May, 1947, the First Committee submitted to the General Assembly its recommendations. (1) The Arab representatives had reservations on the recommendations. The Lebanese representative stated that he would abstain from voting because "not only has any mention of independence for Palestine been severely suppressed from the terms of reference, but also the basis on which this extraordinary session of the General Assembly was convened in the first place has insensibly shifted, during the last two weeks, from preparing for advising the United Kingdom Government on the future government of Palestine to preparing for the consideration of the so-called problem of Palestine in general, a phrase which by its very generality may mean anything and, therefore, is really unacceptable." (2)

The Syrian representative stated that he would vote against the recommendation on the ground that "a definite proposal for the independence of Palestine was deleted by a great majority of the committee and that another proposal that a solution should be based on the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the Covenant of the League of Nations had been overlooked". (3)

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- (1) Ibid, P. 301  
(2) Ibid, P. 302  
(3) Ibid, P. 303

The Iraqi, the Saudi-Arabian and the Egyptian representatives endorsed the above-mentioned statements.

On 14th and 15th May, 1947, the General Assembly considered the Report of the First Committee. The Arab States disapproved of the Report, protesting against the terms of reference suggested by the Committee: because the independence of Palestine, or the principles of the Charter, were not mentioned; because the term, the "future government" of Palestine, was replaced by the vague term, the "problem" of Palestine; because the clause relating to the consideration of the interests of all the inhabitants of Palestine was omitted; because "the mandate to the special committee to conduct investigations wherever it deemed useful had been expressly intended to enable the committee to visit the displaced persons camps and bring about a connection between the two problems"; (1) and because the terms of reference which had been proposed would not establish peace in the Middle East.

After the discussion, the resolution was adopted by 45 votes for and 7 against.

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(1) Ibid,

The Special Committee (UNSCOP) was composed of Australia, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, India, Iran, Netherlands, Peru, Sweden, Uruguay and Yugoslavia. It held its first meeting on 26th May, 1947, at Lake Success. (1)

On 31st August, 1947, the Report of UNSCOP was submitted to the General Assembly.

The UNSCOP Report (A/364) included two proposals: a majority proposal and a minority proposal.

The majority proposal was a plan of partition with economic union. The members composing the majority were: Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, Netherlands, Peru, Sweden and Uruguay. This plan recommended that Palestine would be constituted into an Arab State, a Jewish State and the City of Jerusalem. After a transitional period of two years, which would begin on 1st September, 1947, the Arab and Jewish States would become independent, while the City of Jerusalem would be placed under a system of International Trusteeship. (2)

The Minority proposal included a plan for

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(1) Ibid, P. 303

(2) U.N. Yearbook, 1947-1948, P. 230

a Federal State. It was proposed by India, Iran and Yugoslavia. It provided for the creation of an independent federal state of Palestine after a transitional period of three years. The independent federal state would be constituted of an Arab and a Jewish State with Jerusalem as its capital. Beginning with the transitional period and for three years, Jewish immigration into Palestine would be permitted depending on the absorptive capacity of the country. Such a capacity would be determined by an international commission, set up for a period of three years and composed of three Arabs, three Jews and three United Nations representatives. (1)

From 4th - 16th October, 1947, a general debate of the UNSCOP proposals took place in the ad hoc Committee on the Palestine Question, to which the Report of UNSCOP was referred. Representatives of the six Arab States which were members of the United Nations, (namely, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen), stated that the partition plan violated the Charter of the United Nations and the democratic right of a people to self-determination. They declared that they were in favour of "an independent, unitary

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(1) Ibid,

state embracing all of Palestine, in which the rights of the minority would be scrupulously safeguarded." (1)

During the debate, seventeen proposals were submitted to the ad hoc Committee. Among them were proposals submitted by the Arab States.

Iraq (A/AC.14/21) proposed that the following "legal point" should be submitted by the General Assembly to the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion under Article 96 of the Charter:

"Did not the pledges given by Great Britain to the Shereef Hussein of Mecca and her subsequent declarations, promises and assurances to the Arabs that in the event of Allied victory the Arab countries would obtain their independence including Palestine and its inhabitants?"(2)

Syria submitted two proposals. The first (A/AC.14/22) stated that the General Assembly should recommend:

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- (1) Ibid, P.235  
(2) Ibid, P.237

"that the United Kingdom prepare as soon as possible an agreement under Article 79 of the Charter and submit it for approval to the General Assembly authorising Great Britain, as administering authority, to complete her task in Palestine during the transitional period in accordance with the said agreement, which shall contain the following provisions:

- "1. That a sovereign State for the whole of Palestine be established on a democratic basis.
- "2. That a Constituent Assembly shall be elected at the earliest date, all genuine and law-abiding nationals of Palestine being entitled to vote.
- "3. This Constituent Assembly shall within a fixed period formulate and enact a Constitution for the State of Palestine which shall be of a democratic character and contain provision
  - "a. guaranteeing human rights, fundamental freedoms and the equality of all persons before the law,
  - "b. guaranteeing the legitimate rights and interests of all minorities,

"c - safeguarding the Holy Places and guaranteeing freedom of worship and access to the Holy Places to all.

- "4. That a government shall be formed within a fixed period in accordance with the terms of the Constitution to take over the administration of Palestine from the administering authority." (1)

The Second Syrian proposal (A/AC.14/25) asked the Assembly to address a request to the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion concerning the following questions:

- "I. Are the terms of the Act of Mandate (i.e., United Kingdom Mandate for Palestine)... consistent or not consistent with the Covenant of the League of Nations.... and with the fundamental rights of peoples and their right of self-determination and International law?
- "2. Is a forcible plan of partition.... consistent with the objectives of the Mandate and with the principles of the Charter and with the ultimate fate of mandated territories

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(1) Ibid,

referred to in Chapter XII of the Charter?

- "3. Does the plan of partition in its adoption and forcible execution fall within the jurisdiction of the General Assembly?" (1)

Egypt (A/AC.14/24) proposed the submission of the following two questions to the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion:

- "1. Does it lie within the competence of the General Assembly to recommend any of the two solutions proposed by the majority or by the minority of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine?
- "2. Does it lie within the rights of any Member State or group of Member States to implement any of the proposed solutions without the consent of the people of Palestine?" (2)

Lebanon (A/AC 14/26) suggested that the General Assembly:

"Recognise the danger that assistance in transport, arms and money to immigrants destined for Palestine is calculated to

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(1) Ibid, P.237

(2) Ibid, P.237



accentuate the existing tension in that country and to endanger peace in the Middle East,

"Recommend that the Governments of Members of the United Nations refrain, and prohibit their nationals, from giving assistance in any form whatsoever to the said immigrants".(1)

On 21st October, 1947, the Syrian representative suggested, verbally, that a sub-committee should be established to study the items of the agenda proposed jointly by Iraq and Saudi Arabia to create an independent, unitary state of all of Palestine. Syria also proposed that a sub-committee composed of jurists should be established to see whether the Assembly had the competence to enforce a decision and to deal with the aspects of the Mandate of Palestine. Then the representative of Syria declared that the discussion of referring the issue of Palestine to the International Court of Justice would await the receipt of the report of the Committee of Jurists by the ad hoc Committee. (2)

On 21st October, after the General debate, the ad hoc Committee proposed the establishment of

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(1) Ibid,

P. 237

(2) Ibid,

P. 237

Sub-Committee 1, which would draw up a detailed plan based on the majority proposal of UNSCOP, and Sub-Committee 2, which would draw up a detailed plan based on the proposal submitted by Saudi Arabia and Iraq stating that Palestine should be recognised as an independent unitary state, and the proposal to the same effect that was submitted by Syria. (1)

On 19th November, 1947, the ad hoc Committee met to discuss the recommendations of the two sub-Committees.

Sub-Committee 1 recommended that a draft resolution should be adopted that would embody a Plan of Partition with Economic Union, as suggested by the Majority Plan of UNSCOP. (A/Ac.14/34)

Sub-Committee 2 recommended that the General Assembly should instruct the Secretary-General to transmit the draft resolution pertaining to the legal question submitted by the representatives of Iraq, Egypt and Syria to the International Court of Justice. It also recommended that the displaced Jewish refugees should be taken back by their original

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(1) Ibid,

countries; and that the Jewish refugees who could not be repatriated should be absorbed in the territories of the United Nations Members. And finally it recommended the setting up of a provisional government in Palestine. After the installment of the proposed provisional government, the Mandatory Power should withdraw its forces and services from Palestine. A constitution would be drawn up, which should adhere strictly to the provision that Palestine should be a unitary and sovereign state. (1) (A/AC.14/32)

The draft resolution of Sub-Committee 2 was put to a vote in the ad hoc Committee. The item dealing with the establishment of an independent unitary state of Palestine was defeated by 29 to 12, with 14 abstentions.

Before voting on the recommendations of Sub-Committee 1, representatives of Iraq, Syria and Egypt "protested against the partition resolution as being unjust, impractical, against the Charter and a threat to peace. The representative of Egypt reserved the right of his Government to consider the resolution null and void." (2)

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(1) Ibid, pp. 238-243

(2) Ibid, P. 245

On 25th November, 1947, the draft resolution was adopted by 25 to 13, with 17 abstentions; and was forwarded to the General Assembly for its consideration.

The General Assembly considered the recommendations of the ad hoc Committee (A/516) from 26th to 29th November, 1947. During the discussion, the recommendation (namely that of partition with economic union) was supported by representatives of eleven States, viz: Sweden, Canada, Brazil, the U.S., Poland, Uruguay, Netherlands, New Zealand, the U.S.S.R., Belgium and Guatemala. It was opposed, on the grounds that it was a violation of the United Nations Charter and the rights of the Palestine people to self-determination by the representatives of twelve States, viz: the Philippines, Yemen, Greece, Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Lebanon, Haiti, Pakistan, Cuba and Iraq. The representatives of China and Ethiopia announced that they would abstain from voting.

On 28th November, 1947, the French representative put forward a proposal for a 24-hour adjournment for a last-minute effort to conciliate Arabs and Jews and to arrive at an agreed solution

to the problem of Palestine. This proposal was approved by the Assembly by 25 to 15, with 10 abstentions.

On 29th November, following the adjournment, the Lebanese representatives announced that "the Arab States were in position to submit the general principles which ought to serve as a basis for a compromise formula, namely:

"Principle number one: A federal independent state shall be set up in Palestine not later than 1st August, 1948.

"Principle number two: The Government of the independent state of Palestine shall be constituted on a federal basis and shall comprise a federal government and cantonal governments of Jewish and Arab cantons.

"Principle number three: The delimitation of the cantons shall be effected with a view to leaving as few Arab or Jewish minorities as possible in each canton.

"Principle number four: The population of Palestine shall elect by direct universal

suffrage a constituent Assembly which shall draft the future constitution of the Federal State of Palestine. The Constituent Assembly shall comprise all the elements of the population in proportion to the number of their respective citizens.

"Principle number five: The Constituent Assembly, in defining the powers of the federal State of Palestine, as well as the powers of the judicial and legislative organs, in defining the functions of the cantonal governments, and in defining the relationships between the cantonal governments and the federal State, will be guided by the provisions of the Constitutions of the United States of America, as well as the constitutions of the individual states of the United States of America.

"Principle number six: Among other necessary and essential provisions, the constitution shall provide for the protection of the Holy Places, freedom of access, visit and worship, in accordance with the status

quo, as well as the safeguarding of the rights of religious establishments of all nationalities which are now found in Palestine." (1)

The Lebanese representative also stressed that in formulating the above-mentioned suggestions, the Arab States did not wish the exclusion of suggestions or proposals which might be submitted by other delegations which might help in conciliating the points of view of Arabs and Jews.

The U.S. representative declared that the proposals submitted by the representative of Lebanon coincided with the minority plan of UNSCOP which had been rejected by the ad hoc Committee. The U.S.S.R representative also opposed the Lebanese proposals and asked for a vote to be promptly taken on the recommendations of the ad hoc Committee. Then the President ruled that the Assembly should vote on the recommendations of the ad hoc Committee. This was on 29th November, 1947.

The result of the vote was as follows:

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(1) Ibid,

In favour: Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Byclorussian S.S.R., Canada, Costa Rica, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, France, Guatemala, Haiti, Iceland, Liberia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Sweden, Ukranian S.S.R., Union of South Africa, U.S.S.R., United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela.

Against: Afghanistan, Cuba, Egypt, Greece, India, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, Yemen.

Abstained: Argentina, Chile, China, Colombia, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Honduras, Mexico, United Kingdom, Yugoslavia.

The report, including the plan of Partition with Economic Union, was therefore adopted by a vote of 33 to 13, with 10 abstentions. (1)

After the resolution was adopted, the

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(1) Ibid,



representatives of Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria and Yemen denounced the Partition Plan because it was "anti-Charter, illegal and immoral, and declared that their respective Governments, regarding the resolution embodying the plan as a recommendation (rather than a binding decision), would not feel bound by it." (1)

Arab collective policy at the United Nations was defeated as a result of its being handicapped by the fact that it was limited to political manouvers and pressure. However, if they had used their economic power, for example, their petroleum, as a political weapon, then they could have been able to put more pressure on the big powers which were using their economic aid to other member-states of the United Nations as a means of making these states change their attitude on the Palestine problem and vote against their convictions, i.e. vote for partition.

C. Sawfar Conference, September, 1947

The period between 1st September and 29th November, 1947, witnessed a new phase in the Arab collective policy towards Palestine. This phase may be referred to as the Sawfar-Aley phase, named after the meeting

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(1) Ibid,

places of the Political Committee and the Council of the Arab League.

The Political Committee of the Arab League held its meeting in mid-September, 1947, at Sawfar. It was attended by three representatives of the Arab Higher Committee, namely, Moeen el-Madi, Emile el-Ghuri and Mohammad Darwaza.

The resolution adopted at this meeting stated that a technical committee would be set up to determine the available means for self-defence among the Palestinian Arabs; and the need for such means. It was instructed to submit its report containing its findings and recommendations to the Council of the Arab League.(1)

In spite of the adoption of the above-mentioned resolution unanimously, there was friction and disagreement concerning the execution of the Bludan resolution pertaining to petroleum. Yousif Yaseen, the Saudi Delegate, proposed the establishment of a committee to study the matter. Others asked whether it was not high time the resolution was executed. It was obvious that the intention of the Iraqi Delegate was the embarrassment of Saudi Arabia, by stating that Iraq would execute the resolution if Saudi Arabia would go along

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(1) M. Darwaza, The Palestine Problem, Vol 2. pp.97-101

with it. At that point the division of the Committee into two camps began to manifest itself, when the Jordanian Delegate supported that of Iraq, and the Egyptian, Syrian and Lebanese Delegates supported that of Saudi Arabia. The discussion was ended by the declaration of Yaseen that his Government would be ready to execute any final resolutions which the Council of the League would adopt. (1)

Before 7th October, 1947, the technical committee held its meeting and was attended by Mohammad Darwaza (Palestine), Colonel Mahmoud al-Hindi (Syria), Major Shawkat Shokair (Lebanon), and Major General Ismail Sufwat (Iraq). It was also attended by Fouad Ammoun (Director-General of the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Shara (Chargé d'Affairs of the Egyptian Legation in Lebanon), Yousif Yaseen, and Riad al-Solh, Lebanese Prime Minister, who attended some of its meetings.

In its final report, which was submitted to the Council of the Arab League, the technical committee stated that the Jews of Palestine had no less than 60,000 militarily trained people with the best and most up-to-date equipment; and that it was easy for them to get more weapons. As for the Palestinian

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(1) Ibid,

Arabs, their equipment was little - and most of it was unusable. The Arab military trainees were few. The Arabs, who were living in areas where the Jews formed a majority and on the boundaries of such areas, would be in danger as soon as the British authorities would begin withdrawing. The British withdrawal would give assurance to the Jews that they could clear "their" areas of the Arab inhabitants.

Consequently, the technical committee recommended that the Arab Governments should station parts of their armed forces on the Northern, Eastern and Southern borders of Palestine to be ready to fill the vacuum that would result from the withdrawal of the British troops stationed in Palestine. The Arab Governments should also provide the Arabs of Palestine with the required armaments for self-defence, by furnishing them with no less than 10,000 guns with their ammunition. The Arab Governments should start a programme of obligatory military training for their youth in order to assist in the coming battle. And a pan-Arab Unified Military Command should be set up. (1)

From 7th - 15th October, 1947, the Council of the Arab League held its meeting at Aley. It declared its full agreement with the basic assumptions of the

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(1) Ibid,

political and technical committees. The resolutions adopted at Aley provided, inter alia, that every Arab Government should allocate special funds which would be used to reinforce the capacity of the Arabs of Palestine to defend themselves against the "Zionist - perpetrated massacres" which the technical committee expected to occur at the time of the withdrawal of British troops. The sum of money to be allocated for such a purpose would be one million Egyptian pounds. A special military committee would be set up to "obtain and organise these means of self defence, (i.e., the money, guns and ammunition), and to supervise the military training of Palestinians." (1) Each Arab Government should station detachments (of unspecified size) on its side of the Palestine borders as a precautionary measure.

Significantly, the Council ignored the recommendation of the technical committee for the establishment of the pan-Arab Unified Military Command. It also stressed the necessary execution of the secret decisions which had been adopted at the Bludan Conference of 1946. In spite of the latter decision, however, nothing was done, and Iraqi petroleum continued to flow into Haifa for five months after the

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(1) Fayez Sayegh, The Entry of Detachments From the Armed Forces of Five Arab States into Palestine on 15th May, 1948, P.13

adoption of the partition resolution by the United Nations General Assembly, and did not stop until the Jews occupied that city. (1)

Thus, the three successive stages of the involvement of the Arab Governments in the Palestine question, until the adoption by the General Assembly on 29th November, 1947, of its partition resolution, were the following: "diplomatic support; the threat of sanctions against governments which might adopt an attitude detrimental to Arab rights and interests in Palestine; and material aid to Palestinian Arabs. (2)

D. Cairo Conference, 8th December, 1947

After the partition resolution was adopted, pressure mounted in the Arab world for more forceful action on the part of the Arab Governments. So a new phase was witnessed in the evolution of Arab collective policy towards the defence of Palestine. This phase could be called the Cairo phase, after the meeting place of the Prime Ministers of the Arab States.

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(1) M. Darwaza, Op. cit., pp. 103-105

(2) F. Sayegh, Op. cit., P. 13

The Conference opened on 8th December, and it ended on 17th December, 1947. The statement that was issued at the end of the Conference manifested the moving of one step further in the direction of Arab intervention in the Palestine problem. The statement condemned the Palestine Partition Resolution by stating that, when the situation in Palestine had deteriorated to a great extent, the Mandatory Power submitted the question of the Mandate to the United Nations; and the Arab representatives tried at the two sessions of the General Assembly to indicate the rights of the Arabs in Palestine, and to demonstrate the injustice which had been inflicted upon them by the Zionists. By recommending the partition resolution and the establishment of a Jewish State, the General Assembly had disregarded the principles of the United Nations Charter. The boundaries drawn by the partition plan would indicate the impossibility of its application, because it included in the Jewish State the best and largest areas of the lands of the Arabs, and because it placed half a million Arabs under Zionist rule.

The Governments of the Arab States declared that they and their peoples gave full support to the Arab people of Palestine in defending their country and

achieving its independence. To ensure that, they had decided - in their meeting at Cairo - that the partition plan was void, and that they were ready to take such measures as were necessary to defeat the plan. (1)

The best illustration of the public expectation of forceful action on the part of the Arab Governments at this new stage was the dual proposal of Saleh Jabr, the Iraqi Delegate, who asked that (1) the secret decision of the Bludan Conference of 1946 regarding petroleum be put into effect, and (2) that Arab armed forces be ordered immediately into Palestine.

The Council of the Arab League was not ready to adopt either suggestion; but it could not any longer keep the burden of the fight on the shoulders of the Arabs of Palestine alone while limiting its aid to material support (which had not yet been delivered). To avoid a critical decision, the Council adopted a middle course between direct military action and nominal action - by doubling the one million Egyptian pounds allocated earlier and by urging the Arab Governments to speed up the delivery of these funds, the 10,000 guns and the ammunition decided upon earlier.

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(1) M. Darwaza, Op. Cit., (Supplement), pp.29-30



The new element that was introduced into the picture was the authorisation of training 3,000 volunteers in the Arab States, and the naming of Ismail Safwat, an Iraqi General, as Commander of these volunteers and the Palestinian freedom-fighters to whom the donated funds and rifles were given. (1) This step initiated the birth of the "Arab Liberation Army". These volunteers were trained in Syria, and they entered Palestine in small groups between January and March of 1948.

The Cairo phase, thus, witnessed the arrival of the Arab Governments at the point of no return, in their involvement in the Palestine problem. This assessment is based on the fact that the Arab Governments did not realise that the Arab people of Palestine were not in a position to continue to hold on to their position as long as the war in Palestine was going, even if they were given supplementary aid in men, money and war equipment.

With the break-down of the Arab local resistance, with the Jews bursting out of their strongholds and overflowing the bounds of the "Jewish State", and with the bloodshed and raids of the Jews on the Arabs resulting in Arabs fleeing their country by the tens

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(1) Ibid,

of thousands, the Arab Governments were faced with pressures for more direct military intervention from their own peoples and from those of Palestine.

The Political Committee of the Arab League was not in full control of the Arab political situation in Palestine. On 10th April, 1948, it held a session which lasted for many weeks, moving from one Arab capital to the other. The result of this session - anticipated by the Arab people - was direct military intervention. This anticipation was confirmed by the speeches that were made between 10th and 12th April by the Arab Heads of State. An example would be the speech of King Faruq of Egypt, delivered on 12th April, in which he declared that "if the Arab armies would march into Palestine, it would be for liberating it. And it should be understood that this solution would be a temporary one devoid of any occupation or partition objective. After its liberation, Palestine would be given to its people to rule over it as they wished". (1)

King Abdullah commented on this declaration by saying that "this is not the time for conquest or covetousness on the part of any member of the Arab League,

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(1) Ibid,

but it is the time for battle, patience and organisation. And if the Arab Governments march into Palestine, there is no doubt that they would do so unanimously, carrying full responsibility. Palestine after its liberation would remain Palestine, and its people would have the choice to do whatever they wished without any outside force". (1)

On 16th April, 1948, the Political Committee of the Arab League decided to send Arab armed forces into Palestine at the termination of the Mandate. The Political Committee also declared that it would remain in constant session in Cairo to deal with developments that would occur in Palestine. (2)

The direct military intervention in Palestine on the part of the Arab Governments was met with grave obstacles. The Mandatory power announced that it was ready to prevent by force the entry of the armed forces of the Arabs as long as the Mandate was still in effect.(3)

The Arab Governments felt that they could not ignore this warning because Iraq, Egypt and TransJordan,

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(1) Ibid, P. 141

(2) The Middle East Journal, July 1948, Vol.2 pp.320-321

(3) E. Ghouri, The Tortured in the Lands of the Arabs, P.97. and M. Darwaza, The Tragedy of Palestine, P.95

who would be in a position to carry on the burden of fighting, depended on Britain for the supply of arms and ammunition. Besides this their intervention would be interpreted internationally as an act of aggression, thus putting them in a position of facing the armed forces of the Zionists and of the Mandatory Power.

Although the Arab Governments had unanimously agreed on liberating Palestine, yet some governments were entertaining different objectives. King Abdullah had been in favour of partition since 1937 (at that time he was Amir), when the Royal Commission had recommended the partition of Palestine. The plan was rejected by the other Arab States, and Abdullah was criticised bitterly for his attitude at the 1937 Bludan Conference. (1) In 1948, other incidents took place which clearly exposed Abdullah's policy of favouring partition. On 12th April, 1948, Abdullah held a meeting with Shartouk, Chairman of the Political Bureau of the Jewish Agency, and Daskar, Director of the Rottenbirg Project, and decided that both parties would accept the partition plan of 29th November, 1947, and would do their best to implement it. (2)

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(1) J.B. Glubb, Britain and the Arabs, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1959, p.153

(2) A.al-Tell, The Catastrophe of Palestine, Cairo, Egypt Press, 1959, Vol. 1, pp.64-65

Another meeting was held between King Abdullah and Golda Mayerson on 11th May, 1948, in which she presented the requests of the Jewish Agency. These were:

"1 - King Abdullah would declare peace with the Jews and he would not send his armed forces into Palestine.

"2 - King Abdullah would send a governor to rule the Arab sector of Palestine determined by the partition resolution.

"3 - The Jewish Agency, in return, would accept the annexation of the Arab sector of Palestine to the Hashemite Kingdom.

"King Abdullah refused the first provision because it would manifest his violation of the Arab unanimous decision of sending armed forces to liberate Palestine. Instead he promised that the armed forces of Jordan and Iraq would not fight the Zionists and would stop at the border determined by the partition resolution. After further discussion Mayerson accepted his promise." (1)

As for their military preparations, the Arab leaders and army officers were aware of the fact that their armies were ill-equipped and in no condition to fight in a war.

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(1) Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

COLLECTIVE ARAB MILITARY INTERVENTION

AND ITS AFTERMATH

(1948-1950)

A. Direct Military Intervention in Palestine

The British Mandate over Palestine was formally ended on 15th May, 1948, when the British High Commissioner, Sir Alan Cunningham, left Palestine. The State of Israel was proclaimed, with a provisional cabinet composed of the following members:

David Ben Gurion - Prime Minister and Minister of Defence.

Moshe Shertok - Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Eliezer Kaplan - Minister of Finance.

Isaac Gruenbaum - Minister of the Interior.

Moshe Shapiro - Minister of Immigration.

Aron Zisbug - Minister of Religious Affairs and War Damage.

Fritz Bernstein - Minister of Trade and Industry.

Behor Shitrit - Minister of National Minorities.

Felix Rosenblueth - Minister of Justice.

Mordecai Bentoz - Minister of Labour and Public Works.

I.M. Levin - Minister of Social Affairs.

David Remey - Minister of Communications.

Haganah became the Jewish National Army.

Menahem Beigin, Commander-in-Chief of Irgun Zvai Leumi, announced that that organisation would respect Israel as its own government and cease underground activities.

President Truman announced recognition of the provisional government as the de facto authority of the new State of Israel. (1)

The Arab Legion occupied Jericho and took control of a large area in the Judean hills; Egyptian planes bombed Tel Aviv, and Egyptian troops entered Palestine from the South. Lebanese troops invaded from the North and battled Haganah at Malikiyah, while advance Syrian patrols penetrated South of the Sea of Galilee. (2)

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(1) The Middle East Journal, July, 1948, Vol. 2, No. 3,  
pp.332-333

(2) Ibid.

P.333

So the Arab States issued a statement on 15th May, 1948, declaring war on Israel. This war brought about what on the surface could appear to be a fully co-ordinated action by the Governments of the Arab League. The legal basis for their armed intervention was stated in the above mentioned statement. These were:

"1 - That the rule of Palestine should revert to its inhabitants, in accordance with the provisions of the Covenant of the League of Nations and (the Charter) of the United Nations, and that (the Palestinians) should alone have the right to determine their future.

"2 - Security and order in Palestine have become disrupted. The Zionist aggression resulted in the exodus of more than a quarter of a million of its Arab inhabitants from their homes and in their taking refuge in the neighbouring Arab countries.... After the termination of the British Mandate over Palestine the British authorities are no longer responsible for security in the country, except to the degree affecting their withdrawing forces, and (only) in the areas in which these forces happen to be at the time of withdrawal as announced by (these authorities). This state of affairs would



render Palestine without any governmental machinery capable of restoring order and the rule of law to the country, and of protecting the lives and properties of the inhabitants.

"3 - The Governments of the Arab States, as members of the Arab League, a regional organisation within the meaning of the provisions of Ch. VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, are responsible for maintaining peace and security in their area. These Governments view the events taking place in Palestine as a threat to peace and security in the area as a whole and (also) in each of them taken separately.

"4 - ..... in order to stop the spreading of disturbances and disorder in Palestine to the neighbouring Arab countries; in order to fill the gap brought about in the governmental machinery in Palestine as a result of the termination of the Mandate and the non-establishment of a lawful successor authority, the Governments of the Arab States have found themselves compelled to intervene in Palestine solely in order to help its inhabitants restore peace and security and the rule of justice and law to their country, and in order to prevent bloodshed.

"5 - The Governments of the Arab States recognise that the independence of Palestine, which has so far been suppressed by the British Mandate, has become an accomplished fact for the lawful inhabitants of Palestine.... They alone should exercise the attributes of their independence, through their own means and without any kind of interference, immediately after peace, security and the rule of the law have been restored to the country.

"At that time the intervention of the Arab States will cease, and the independent State of Palestine will co-operate with the (other member) States of the Arab League in order to bring peace, security and prosperity to this part of the world. (1)

The act of intervention on the part of the Arab Governments made the Arab League gain prestige in the Arab world. The fact that the Arab League genuinely feared the establishment of a Zionist State gave it the needed psychological support for pressing the fight. Arab leaders were motivated to act in such a manner in order to secure their positions as heads of states and as members of the League.

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(1) M. Khalil, The Arab States and the Arab League, Vol 2, PP. 557-561

The Arab forces that were fighting in Palestine were those of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and TransJordan. Yemen had indicated that it was going to dispatch a detachment of its regular forces to Palestine. (1)

B. The Aftermath of Military Arab Intervention

As a reaction to this armed intervention, the Security Council, on 21st May, 1948, unanimously voted for the appointment of Folke Bernadotte of Sweden to be the Mediator in Palestine in accordance with the United Nations resolution of 14th May, 1948. (2)

On 22nd May, 1948, the Security Council issued an order in which it called upon all governments and authorities concerned to abstain from any military action in Palestine by issuing a cease-fire order to their military and para-military forces. This order should become effective within 36 hours. (3)

In spite of Arab objection to the cease-fire order, the Security Council, on 29th May, 1948, adopted a resolution in which it called upon "all Governments and authorities concerned to order a cessation of all acts of armed force for a period of four weeks. (4)

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- (1) United Nations Yearbook, 1947-1948, P.418  
(2) Ibid, P.420  
(3) Ibid, P.422  
(4) Ibid, P.427

The truce was due to end on 9th July, 1948. On 5th July the Mediator informed the Security Council that he had submitted proposals for both parties to prolong the truce. He asked the United Nations to appeal to both parties concerned to accept the prolongation for a period to be decided upon by way of consultation with him.

On 18th July, 1948, the Secretary-General of the Arab League informed the Security Council that the Arab Governments would like to point out that the Zionists had violated the previous truce, and had benefited from it at the expense of the Arabs. Any renewed truce must be subject to certain conditions that would remedy the situation which had developed during the first truce. These conditions must include the following points: that Jewish immigration into Palestine be stopped during the truce period, and that all Arab refugees be given the permission to return to Palestine provided that their lives and property were guaranteed. The length of the truce must be limited within the bounds of making a last effort to reach the desired peaceful solution.

"In view of the fact that the Security Council persisted in considering the continuation of hostilities in Palestine to be a breach of the peace and because it expressly threatened to apply sanctions to the Arab States if they refused to cease fire, the Arab States had no other

alternative than to accept the Security Council's resolution of July 15th, (which urged both parties to continue conversations with the Mediator 'in a spirit of conciliation and mutual concession in order that all points under dispute may be settled peacefully'.) (1) The cessation of hostilities, however, would not bring true peace to that part of the world.....

".... The Arab States .... protested against the fact that the Security Council's resolution had recognised the Zionist bands as a provisional government and asserted that such recognition went beyond the limits of neutrality which the Security Council should observe in regard to the conflict of Palestine." (2)

On 18th July, 1948, cease-fire orders were issued by both parties to their forces according to the resolution adopted by the Security Council on 15th July, 1948.

James C. McDonald wrote in his dairy "My Mission in Israel" that on 9th September, 1948, "the United States and Britain had decided to try to keep the Palestine issue

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(1) Ibid,

P.441

(2) Ibid,

pp.441-442

off the agenda of the coming United Nations General Assembly in Paris, scheduled to open on 21st September. Because it would be better to 'coast along' with the existing truce than to risk the failure of a peace effort at Paris". (1)

The failure of this attempt was followed by the assassination of Bernadotte on 17th September, 1948, in the Jewish-controlled sector of Jerusalem. If the purpose of his assassination was to prevent the Mediator from submitting his progress report to the United Nations, the Israeli act revealed a miscalculation of time. For Bernadotte had finished his report and had sent it to Paris, to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, on 16th September, 1948 (A/648), one day before his assassination. And there, on 20th September, it was made public.

In the Bernadotte report it was stated that a formal peace or an armistice should supercede the existing indefinite truce. An attempt was made to consolidate the Jewish and Arab parts of Palestine by giving Negev to the Arabs and Galilee to the Jews, and by keeping central Palestine divided according to what was established in resolution 181 (II). (2) The Israeli Government was willing to accept the inclusion of the whole of Galilee

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- (1) J.G. McDonald, My Mission in Israel, London, Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1951, p.61  
(2) United Nations Yearbook, 1948-1949, Lake Success, N.Y., United Nations Department of Public Information, 1950, p.167

in their state, but were unwilling to give up the Negev, an uncultivated area of potential land resources which Israel would wish to exploit. This area would also provide access to the mineral resources of the Dead Sea and would give promise to the exploration of oil there. (1)

The Mediator's report also stated that for compelling reasons, the Arab territory of Palestine should be merged with TransJordan. The part of Haifa and the airport of Lydda should be declared free, with assurances that the Arabs could have free access to them. Jerusalem and the Holy Places should be put under the control of the United Nations. The Mediator further advocated affirmation of "the right of the Arab refugees to return to their homes in Jewish-controlled territory at the earliest possible date .... repatriation, resettlement and economic and social rehabilitation .... payment of adequate compensation for the property of those choosing not to return" (2) to their homes in Palestine. The Mediator recommended that a conciliation commission for Palestine should be established by the United Nations to supervise the execution of these proposals.

The Mediator proposed, in a covering letter (A/647)

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(1) The Middle East Journal, January 1949, Vol. 3, No. 1. P. 63

(2) United Nations Yearbook, op.cit.

that was attached to the progress report to include the Palestine question on the agenda of the third session of the General Assembly. Accordingly, the Secretary-General on 21st September, 1948, proposed the placing of the report on the agenda of the third session. (1)

On 20th September, 1948, the Arabs of Palestine attempted to develop momentum by creating a government for all Palestine with temporary headquarters at Gaza. This attempt manifested clearly the division within the ranks of the Arab League. Leaders of the Arab League agreed to form the government on one condition, that the al-Hussaini would have no part in it. According to these terms a cabinet was created, chiefly with the backing of Egypt; but on 1st October, 1948, al-Hussaini was able to succeed in the elections for the presidency of an Arab Palestine National Assembly. This move cooled the enthusiasm of the Arab League.

The backing of the individual Arab States did not appear to be wholehearted. King Abdullah refused to recognise the Palestinian Government, or to permit it to extend to those areas which were occupied by his Arab Legion, because he saw in it a threat to his own ambitions.

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(1) Ibid,



Iraq was torn between its loyalty to the Hashemite goal of creating a united Greater Syria, whose champion was Abdullah, and creating Arab unity currently embodied in the Arab League. After consulting with Egypt, Iraq recognised the Gaza Government on 12th October, 1948. This resulted in much bitterness between the Regent of Iraq and King Abdullah. On 14th October, Syria and Lebanon followed suit because they opposed and feared King Abdullah. Ibn Saud's attitude was negative. (1)

On 11th December, 1948, the General Assembly adopted resolution 194 (III), re-examining the situation in Palestine in the light of the report which the Mediator had submitted before his assassination. The resolution adopted established a Conciliation Commission to assume the functions which had been formerly given to the Mediator, and called for negotiations that would result in the final settlement of all outstanding questions. The following paragraphs express the most important points in the resolution:

- "4. Requests the Commission to begin its functions at once, with a view to the establishment of contact between the parties themselves and the Commission at the earliest possible date;

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(1) The Middle East Journal, July 1948, vol 2 P.64

- "5           Calls upon the Government and authorities concerned to extend the scope of the negotiations provided for in the Security Council's resolution of 16th November, 1948, and to seek agreement by negotiations conducted either with the Conciliation Commission or directly with a view to the final settlement of all questions outstanding between them,....
- "8           Resolves that, in view of its association with three world religions, the Jerusalem area .... should be accorded special and separate treatment from the rest of Palestine and should be placed under effective United Nations control;
- "11          Resolves that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible;
- .. " (1)

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(1) United Nations Yearbook, op.cit.

The Commission proceeded with the task of conciliating the points of view of the parties concerned and the Mediator proceeded independently with the task of stimulating the negotiation of an armistice. To attain such an end, bilateral negotiations were held at Rhodes between Israel and each of the Arab States involved in the Palestine war.

Here one should remark the new trend of Arab policy. The decision to protect Palestine had been taken unanimously, and the Arab Governments had decided to carry on the fight as one unit. When the negotiations for an armistice began, however, they were carried on a bilateral basis between Israel and each Arab Government separately, facilitated and supervised by the new Mediator, Bunche. The negotiations resulted in the signing of four separate Armistice Agreements in 1949:

- 1 - On 24th February between Egypt and Israel;
- 2 - On 23rd March between Lebanon and Israel;
- 3 - On 3rd April between Jordan and Israel; and
- 4 - On 20th July between Syria and Israel. (1)

Besides the official military talks at Rhodes, secret negotiations were carried on directly between King

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(1) F. Sayegh, The Arab-Israeli Conflict, New York, The Arab Information Centre, 1956, p.38

Abdullah and representatives of Israel. James G. McDonald, in his diary "My Mission in Israel", gave a full account of these negotiations.

He wrote on 31st January, 1949, "there had been a reportedly 'frank and friendly' conference in Amman ... between an Israel representative and King Abdullah. This had followed earlier discussions in the Old City of Jerusalem between Israel and Jordan military spokesmen .... The Israel-Abdullah talks covered the following points:

- "1 Abdullah was eager for speedy peace negotiations to follow immediately after agreement on an armistice, which he thought should not be too difficult. He favoured public peace negotiations in Jerusalem between Jordan and Israel. He had notified all Arab Governments of his plan and had received assent from Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Egypt and Syria were not pleased but 'must follow since I (Abdullah) have decided'.
- "2 ..... Jordan, he said, was not interested in the Negev. 'We have enough desert land'. Gaza, however, he wanted as an outlet to the sea.
- "3 The King was opposed to the internationalisation of all or part of Jerusalem. He favoured partition with the Old and a portion of the New City assigned

to him, and the rest to Israel, with portions remaining under some form of United Nations supervision.

"4 The Arab refugee problem, Abdullah said, was now not important and after peace would solve itself. (1)

Ben Gurion showed his willingness to recognise the claim of Abdullah to Arab Palestine. (2)

J.G. McDonald also wrote in his book that:

"A month before the United Nations voted to insist upon internationalisation, Abdullah had reiterated a desire to achieve permanent peace with Israel. He was said to be contemptuous of the stalling and obstructive attitude of the other Arab States, who were jealous of his occupation of Arab Palestine and determined to prevent any agreement between him and Israel; he was prepared to act independently of them if peace could be restored. Negotiations, however, had to take place directly between Israel and Jordan; the Palestine Conciliation Commission had failed completely, and other

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(1) J.G. McDonald, My Mission in Israel, pp.124-125  
(2) Ibid, P. 134

indirect proposals were hopeless. But he would welcome U.S. and British mediation and hoped the two Great Powers would help bring the Jews to their senses so that Jordan could obtain a reasonable settlement based on the partition resolution or compensation where Israel had exceeded the partition.

"Abdullah demands ... were fourfold. a corridor giving access to the Mediterranean through Beersheba and Gaza; return of the Arab quarters of Jerusalem; restoration of the Jerusalem - Bethlehem road to Jordan; and free port privileges in Haifa. In exchange, he promised the Israelis a free port at Aqaba, at the southern tip of the Negev, (the implication was that most of the Negev would go to him), and access to the valuable potash works on the Jordan-controlled shore of the Dead Sea.

"Israel refused these terms. Abdullah would not modify them. So it stood for weeks. Then, with the United Nations insistence upon internationalisation the common front began to materialise. Israel and Jordan dropped the general issues in favour of a more limited objective - a permanent Jerusalem settlement. But here, too, an impasse was reached; Abdullah insisted on a restoration of the Arab quarters in the New City without comparable concessions to Israel.

"Two weeks later the negotiations took a dramatic turn for the better. The King proposed a five-year non-aggression pact between Israel and Jordan. The frontiers would remain unchanged pending final peace settlement, and committees would work on other problems. With such a pact, the frontiers would be opened to normal trade and travel; a free port zone would be set up in Haifa, which Jordan could use; and both countries would guarantee to the United Nations that they would maintain freedom of access to and protection of the Holy Places.

"On the Israel side, .... the Cabinet approved the proposal as a basis for negotiations. But in Jordan the first storm signals came when opposition to the King began to be manifested. Clearly a test of wills in Jordan was at hand. Everything depended upon Abdullah's self-confidence. Secrecy was now vitally important to avoid any undue pressure before an agreement was signed...., there was a leak. The press was replete with largely accurate details, and loud protests began to sound from the other Arab capitals. The Syrian Government led off a press statement that warned it contemplated closing the Jordan-Syrian border if any agreement was made with Israel. The other Arab Governments were quick to follow with open and implied threats. The tumult gave Abdullah pause, particularly since the Arab

League .... was to meet in Cairo, March 25th to April 13th, (1949).

"Meet they did and Abdullah sat back to sweat it out.

"He had not long to wait. At the meeting Egypt and Saudi Arabia immediately led a bitter attack on him. They wanted to prevent him not only from making a separate pact with Israel but also from annexing most of Arab Palestine, which his Jordan Legion occupied. The Egyptians urged a resolution which would have expelled him from the League if he attempted either course ....

"The Egyptians expected opposition from Iraq .... But the Iraqis sought compromise .... What came out of the Cairo meeting, finally, was a reaffirmation of an earlier resolution declaring that the Arab States were in Palestine only as trustees - not for the purpose of occupation or annexation - and that any annexation or separate peace with Israel meant expulsion from the League.

"The Cairo meeting ended on April 13th. On April 14th the Jordan elections were held. The Parliament at the start was the King's. Ten days later Abdullah, in a speech from the throne, announced his annexation of the Eastern Palestine (Western bank of the Jordan River) territory,



bowing, he said, 'to the general will' and blandly observing, for the benefit of the Arab League, that in taking this step he was 'safeguarding full Arab rights and sovereignty in Palestine .... without prejudicing the final settlement within the framework of national aspirations, Arab co-operation and international justice'.

"Great Britain promptly recognised the Jordan annexation and, to show itself impartial, simultaneously accorded de jure recognition to Israel, but the Arab League again erupted in protest, and its political committee held a special meeting to determine what disciplinary action should be invoked against Abdullah. However, the cross-currents and divisive currents within the Arab world were such that in the end no real disciplinary steps were taken.

"And in the best royal tradition, .... Abdullah had sent a magnificent message of promise to the Israelis: "Abdullah, the son of Hussein, does not break his word!" (1)

On 10th October, 1965, Lemerhav (Israeli) newspaper

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(1) Ibid,

stated that Moshé Dayan in one of his electoral campaigns at the Arab Tyra village had declared that "negotiations took place with King Abdullah of Jordan, and the King was ready to accept the Ghaza strip and the Palestine refugees, in order to get a seaport on the Mediterranean Sea. We were on the verge of reaching an agreement with him, but the British Government objected to the proposal."<sup>(1)</sup>

C. Attempts at Settlement

We have mentioned that the General Assembly had established a Conciliation Commission on 11th December, 1948. In the early months of 1949 the Commission had brief exchanges of views with the Arab Governments and with that of Israel. The Commission summarised the views exchanged in its First and Second Progress Reports (United Nations Document A/819 of 15th March and A/838 of 19th April). Then the Commission proceeded to discharge more earnestly its primary task. These efforts were described in the Commission's Third Progress Report A/927 of 21st June, 1949, as follows:

"The exchange of views held in Lausanne, unlike those held in Beirut, must be considered not only as bearing upon one of the specific tasks entrusted to the Commission by the General Assembly resolution of 11th December, 1948, such as the refugee question or the

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(1) Lemerhav, 10th October 1965

status of Jerusalem, but also as bearing upon its general tasks of conciliation of the points of view of the parties with a view to achieving a final settlement of all questions outstanding between them." (1)

From the beginning the Arab Delegations had insisted that the Palestine question "is of equal concern to all the Arab States, and that the Commission therefore should look upon them as a single 'party', carrying on all discussion and negotiations with them in bloc." (2)

A Protocol "which would constitute the basis of work" was submitted by the Commission to the two parties in order to sign it. It was signed by the Arab States, Israel and the Commission on 12th May, 1949. "To this document was annexed a map on which was indicated the boundaries defined in the General Assembly resolution of 29th November, 1947, which has thus been taken as the basis of discussion with the Commission". (3)

The text of the Protocol read as follows:

"The United Nations Conciliation Commission for

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(1) F. Sayegh, The Record of Israel at the United Nations, P.118

(2) Third Progress Report (A/927), 21st June, 1949, Para.6

(3) F. Sayegh The Record of Israel, op.cit., P.118

Palestine, anxious to achieve as quickly as possible the objectives of the General Assembly resolution of 11th December 1948, regarding refugees, the respect for their rights and the preservation of their property as well as territorial and other questions, has proposed to the Delegations of the Arab States and the Delegation of Israel that the working document attached hereto be taken as a basis for discussions with the Commission.

"The interested delegations have accepted this proposal with the understanding that the exchanges of views which will be carried on by the Commission with the two parties will bear upon the territorial adjustments necessary to the above-indicated objectives." (1)

The Commission proceeded to say that "the signing of the Protocol of 12th May, 1949, provided both a starting point and framework for the discussion of territorial questions". (2)

Immediately after that the Commission asked both parties to make known what their views were regarding the questions of refugees and territory. The Arab Delegations submitted a proposal in which they stressed that the

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(1) Ibid,

pp. 118-119

(2) Ibid,

P. 119

refugees must return immediately to the territories under the control of Israel but which formed a part of the Arab zone according to the maps of the Protocol of 12th May. These parts were: Western Galilee, the area of Lydda, Ramle and Beersheba, Jaffa, Jerusalem and the coast line North of Gaza. (1) The Delegation of Israel submitted a proposal in which it demanded that the frontier of Israel should be that of the international frontiers of Mandatory Palestine with the exception of the central area of Palestine, which was under the control of the Jordanian Arab Legion. This was the case because Israel had consented to "recognise the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom as the de facto military occupying Power", without entering into "the future status<sup>x</sup> of that area" for the time being. (Paragraphs 24 to 29). The Arab Delegations protested against these proposals because they constituted a repudiation of the terms of the Protocol which was signed on 12th May, 1949. The Delegation of Israel answered by saying that "it could not accept a certain proportionate distribution of territory agreed upon in 1947 as a criterion for a territorial settlement in present circumstances."(2)

The Arab Delegations also protested against the

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(1) Third Progress Report, op.cit. Para- 17

(2) Ibid, Para. 33

establishment of Israeli ministerial and other public services in the city of Jerusalem, by addressing a memorandum to the Commission in which they demanded the immediate withdrawal of the "administration and services which have been installed in this city in contempt of the resolution of 11th December 1948." (1)

One should examine the reversal of Israel's position when it signed the Protocol of Lausanne, and should relate it to its admission to the United Nations. After Israel had secured its membership at the United Nations, it found that it could openly oppose the acceptance of the resolutions of the General Assembly as a basis of discussion for the final settlement of the Palestine problem. Whereas, at the time when Israel was fighting at Lake Success for membership at the United Nations, it could not openly display its patent disregard for the will of the United Nations. The preamble of the admission resolution which was adopted on 11th May, 1949, stated:

"Recalling its resolution of 29th November 1947 and 11th December 1948 and taking note of the declarations and explanations made by the representative of the Government of Israel before the ad hoc Political Committee in respect of the implementation of the said resolutions,

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(1) Ibid,

"The General Assembly....

"Decides to admit Israel to membership in the United Nations". (1)

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 37 to 12 with 9 abstentions.

The Conciliation Commission continued its efforts to find solutions to the different problems arising out of the Palestine situation. It established a Refugee Office to arrange for the solution of the refugee problem. It expressed its readiness to make a new effort to assist the parties concerned in solving the outstanding problems between them by exercising its mediatory functions and by suggesting specific solutions. This attitude was manifested when the Conciliation Commission invited the Governments of Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria on 10th April, 1950 to send representatives to a conference to be held in Paris on 10th September 1950.

On 29th August, 1950, the Arab States replied jointly to the Commission by stating that they would accept the invitation on one condition that the Arab and Israeli delegations would not be required to sit at the same table. On 9th September, 1950, an Israeli note was received by the Commission in which Israel expressed its acceptance of the invitation with one reservation that the

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(1) "United Nations Yearbook, 1948-49,

Israeli Delegation would put forward "broad concrete proposals", but would not accept to discuss any specific cause of friction unless the Arab States would declare that they had accepted as the aim of the conference "a final settlement of all outstanding problems". (1)

On 13th September, 1950, the Conference opened, and the chairman of the Commission, Mr. Palmer, (the U.S. representative), submitted first to the Arab Delegations and then to the Israeli Delegation a statement in which the aims of the Commission were defined, as:

- "(a) a settlement of the rights and status of person, particularly with reference to the repatriation of refugees and the payment of compensation for losses arising out of the fighting;
- "(b) the solution of problems concerning the rights and obligations of the States represented, and their relations with one another, particularly the questions of delimitation of frontiers, establishment of demilitarised zones, restoration of communications, and customs control;
- "(c) an agreement between the parties to respect one another's rights to security, to abstain from all hostile acts, and to

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(1) Keesing's Contemporary Archives, 1950-1952, P.11876



promote permanent peace in Palestine". (1)

After consulting their governments, the Arab Delegations on 17th September, 1950, returned a favourable reply in which they expressed willingness to cooperate with the Commission if Israel would agree to repatriate the Arab refugees of Palestine. On 21st September, 1950, the Government of Israel replied by appealing for the opening of direct negotiations by suggesting that there should be an agreement on an agenda before beginning on detailed discussions; and by proposing that non-aggression pacts should be signed between Israel and the Arab States "as a first step towards a formal peace treaty".

The Commission formulated its proposals and submitted them to the Arab Delegations, on 17th September, and to the Israeli Delegation, on 21st September.

These proposals opened with a preamble in which was stated that the parties concerned, in accordance with the obligations they had as members of the United Nations, and as signatories to the armistice agreements, undertook "to settle all differences, present or future, solely by resort to pacific procedures, refraining from any use of force or acts of hostility,

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(1) Ibid,

with full respect for the right of each party to security and freedom from fear of attack, and by these means to promote the return of peace in Palestine." (1)

As for the settlement of outstanding differences, the Commission proposed:

1. That all claims concerning war damage which had resulted from the 1948 hostilities should be cancelled.
2. That the Government of Israel should agree to repatriate specified number of the Arab refugees in categories which could be integrated into the economy of Israel.
3. That the Government of Israel should accept to pay to the refugees who were not repatriated compensation for the abandoned property, the value of which would be determined by the Commission's Refugee Office.
4. That the Governments of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Israel should agree to release all blocked bank accounts, and should agree to pay in sterling pounds.
5. That the Governments of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Israel under the auspices of the United Nations should consider "the revision or amendment of the armistice agreements between them, specially with regard to the following questions:

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(1) Ibid,

(a) territorial adjustments, including demilitarised zones; (b) the creation of an international water authority to deal with the problems of the use of the Jordan and Yarmouk Rivers and their tributaries, as well as the water of Lake Tiberias; (c) the disposition of the 'Gaza strip', at present administered by Egypt; (d) the creation of a free port at Haifa; (e) border regulations between Israel and her neighbours, with special attention to the need for free access to the Holy Places in the Jerusalem area, including Bethlehem;.."(1)

Discussion of these proposals was delayed a month because of the disagreement over the preamble. The Delegation of Israel submitted a draft of a non-aggression pact by which the parties concerned would bind themselves to respect "the right of each party to its security and freedom from fear of attack or hostile act by the other"; "to settle their differences "solely by resort to pacific procedures", to "refrain from any acts of hostility whatsoever and from any threat or use of force in their reciprocal relations," and "not to enter into any alliance or participate in any action directed against the other".(2)

The Delegations of the Arab States, on the other hand, submitted a proposal in which they demanded the

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(1) Ibid,

P.11876

(2) Ibid,

P. 11876

issuance of a declaration which reaffirmed their intention to respect the undertaking given in the armistice agreements "not to resort to military force in settlement of the Palestine question, and to respect the right of each party to security and freedom from fear of attack by the armed forces of the other." (1)

In spite of all this the Commission, on 6th October, 1950, sent a letter to the Delegations in which it stated that the proposals declared by both parties had contributed to the creation of a favourable atmosphere for the present discussions for the promotion of reestablishing peace in Palestine, and that it was ready to proceed with the discussions of the proposals. The Arab Delegations in their reply stated that they were willing to take part in the discussions. The Israeli Delegation, on 14th October, stated that they could not accept the view of the Commission concerning the Arab declaration, because Israel considered it to be unsatisfactory for three reasons:

- "1 - The Arab States proposed to bind themselves only as signatories of the armistice convention;
- "2 - The text did not bind the signatories to settle their differences only through peaceful procedures;

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(1) Ibid,

and "3 - it limited the term 'hostile acts' to cover only the use of armed forces." (1)

Israel contended that such an interpretation had already been rejected by the Security Council in the decision it took regarding the Egyptian blockade of the Suez Canal.

On 19th October, the Commission replied that it could not "accept any interpretation of its position which would imply an evaluation of the scope of either the armistice agreements, the resolution of the Security Council, or the provisions of the United Nations Charter". (2) Added to this was the fact that neither the form nor the substance of the declarations of each party concerned could alter the obligations which they had assumed under the armistice agreements and the Charter. The Commission then proceeded by inviting the Delegation of Israel to open discussions on the proposals submitted by it (the Commission). On 26th October, the Delegation of Israel declined to continue negotiations "until the Arab Delegations recognise their obligations as members of the United Nations and as signatories of the armistice agreements as interpreted by the Security Council". (3) So a deadlock was reached and the negotiations broke off at this stage.

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(1) Ibid,

(2) Ibid,

(3) Ibid,

D. Tripartite (Britain, France and the United States) Declaration on Security in the Arab-Israel Zone, 25th May, 1950.

The Arab-Israel armistice agreements which were concluded in 1949 did not lead to formal peace. Britain resumed the shipping of arms to Egypt, Iraq and Jordan, according to treaty obligations, and this was accompanied, on the part of the Arabs, by widespread talk of a "second round" against Israel. On the other hand, Israel continued to purchase military equipment wherever available, and to step up its production of small arms. So an arms race between the Arabs and the Israelis developed. In order to ensure the safety of Israel, the Western powers, (Britain, France and the U.S.) issued the Tripartite Declaration which was intended to stress to the governments concerned that the above-mentioned Western powers would not tolerate the renewal of war between the Arabs and Israel, or the taking of any punitive action against Jordan, (which was threatened by expulsion from the Arab League for the fact that it had annexed the Western bank of the Jordan River by encouraging, on 11th April 1950 the participation of the Arabs of Palestine in the Jordan elections, and then the annexation was formalised by the new legislature on 24th April, 1950, by adopting a resolution in which it gave its blessing to the merger.) (1)

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(1) J.C. Hurwitz, Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East, Princeton, Van Nostrand, 1956, Vol. II, P. 308

The Declarations stated:

- "1 - The three Governments recognise that the Arab States and Israel all need to maintain a certain level of armed forces for the purposes of assuring their internal security and their legitimate self-defence and to permit them to play their part in the defence of the area as a whole. All applications for arms or war material for these countries will be considered in the light of these principles. In this connection the three Governments wish to recall and reaffirm the terms of the statements made by their representatives on the Security Council on August 4th, 1949, in which they declared their opposition to the development of an arms race between the Arab States and Israel.
- "2 - The three Governments declare that assurances have been received from all the States in question, to which they permit arms to be supplied from their countries, that the purchasing state does not intend to undertake any act of aggression against any other state. Similar assurances will be requested from any other state in the area to which they permit arms to be supplied in the future.

"3 - The three Governments take this opportunity of declaring their deep interest in and their desire to promote the establishment and maintenance of peace and stability in the area and their unalterable opposition to the use of force or threat of force between any of the states in that area. The three Governments, should they find that any of these states was preparing to violate frontiers or armistice lines, would, consistently with their obligations as members of the United Nations, immediately take action, both within and outside the United Nations, to prevent such violation." (1)

On 21st June, 1950, the Arab League Council met in order to discuss the Tripartite Declaration. On 21st June, 1950, the Arab States issued a statement, the most important points of which are the following:

"3 - Even before the three powers ever thought of issuing their declaration, the Arab Governments on their own initiative had decided to express the peaceful intentions of the Arabs and to refute the allegations that Israel has persisted in circulating (to the effect) that the Arab States are requesting arms for aggressive purposes.

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(1) Ibid,



[The Arab States] hereby reiterate their peaceful intentions and declare that the arms that have been, or may be, ordered from the three powers or from others will be used solely for defensive purposes.

- "5 - The Arab States take note of the assurances that they have received to the effect that the three powers did not intend by their declaration to favour Israel, or to exert pressure on the Arab States to enter into negotiations with Israel, or to affect the final settlement of the Palestine problem or to preserve the status quo; but that they did intend to express their opposition to the use of force or to the violation of the armistice lines.
- "6 - The Arab States declare that the most preferable and reliable measures for maintaining peace and stability in the Middle East would consist in solving its problems on the basis of right and justice, re-establishing the conditions of understanding and harmony that once prevailed and hastening the execution of the United Nations resolution on the return of the Palestine refugees to their homes and on compensation for their

material losses.

"8 - .... if the three powers should find that any state of this region was preparing to violate the frontiers or the armistice lines of another state, they would immediately take action, with or outside the United Nations, to prevent such violation. There is no doubt that action alone will dispel these doubts, if it demonstrates that the three powers are in fact concerned with maintaining peace in the Middle East impartially and on the basis of right and justice and respect for the sovereignty of the States and without subjecting them to domination or influence.

"9 - In conclusion the Arab States can only affirm once again that, despite their anxiety for peace, they cannot approve any action that would harm their sovereignty and their independence". (1)

Thus, the collective Arab reply to the Tripartite Declaration proved to be a mild one since it accepted as fait accompli the fact that the three powers would act as guardians for the state of Israel, and would do their best to ensure the maintenance of the status quo in the area.

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(1) Ibid,

F. Arab Failure to Implement Resolutions on Economic Sanctions:

Arab collective action also failed in the implementation of the secret resolutions pertaining to petroleum, adopted at the 1947 Bludan Conference. Instead of withdrawing the already made concessions to the petroleum companies, the Arab Governments of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria gave a new concession to the Trans-Arabian Pipe Line Company (Tapline), established by Aramco. The main task of Tapline was the conclusion of transit agreements with the above mentioned four Arab States that its pipeline was to traverse.

Jordan and Lebanon had signed the Tapline's convention on 8th and 10th August, 1946, respectively, but Syria signed it on 1st September, 1947, i.e. after the Bludan Conference, "The basis formula of all three conventions treated the pipeline as a transportation company. The company was expected to pay a transit fee without regard either to the value of the good transported or to the profits realised by the operation." (1)

The United Nations adopted its 1947 Palestine partition resolution, and the Palestine war broke out in

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(1) George Lenczowski, Oil and State in the Middle East,  
New York, Cornell University Press,  
1960, p.155

1948, thus inducing Syria to delay the ratification of the Tapline Convention. The Arab people were demanding the use of "the oil weapon" as a means of pressure on the West, (and this was manifested in the secret resolutions adopted at the 1947 Bludan Conference). "Of the three transit countries, it was natural that Syria - a veritable heartland of Arabism - should feel and act more strongly than the other two. Jordan, as a Hashemite Kingdom in alliance with Britain, was certain to behave with \*moderation\*. Lebanon's old Phoenician traditions precluded an \*extremist\* policy likely to result in serious economic losses. In fact, 1948 witnessed a unique psychological duel between Lebanon and Syria over the Tapline Convention. Sensitive to a highly emotional public opinion, the Syrian Government and parliament delayed ratification despite their desire to benefit from such pipelines as might be constructed through their territory. After the conclusion of active hostilities in Palestine in the latter half of 1948, Lebanon grew more and more insistent on early Syrian ratification". (1) This pressure was exerted, on the part of the Lebanese Government, through the publication of certain information that the pipeline might be diverted to Egypt if ratification was further delayed. As a result the Syrian newspapers began to modify

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(1) Ibid,

their "previous intransigent attitude". On 30th November, 1948, al-Nidal daily newspaper (Damascus) published a statement of a "High Syrian official" which said: "Consideration by the company of the possibility of constructing its pipeline across Egypt or Palestine has caused us to undertake a serious study of this question .... Syria welcomes the passage of Tapline through its territory and would be glad to view the pipeline as a step towards happiness and comfort so long as this does not affect the sovereignty of the country". (1)

It was reported by the end of March, 1949, that the Syrian Parliament was ready to consider the ratification of the Tapline Convention and it was expected that a majority would vote in favour. Then, suddenly, Colonel Husni al-Zaim overthrew the Government on 30th March, in a bloodless coup, thus shedding new doubts as to the fate of the convention. However, on 11th April, al-Zaim received the representative of Tapline, and on 16th May, 1949, "in the absence of the dissolved Parliament he and his Council of Ministers, by a 'legislative decree', ratified the convention, together with two subsidiary Syro-Lebanese agreements pertaining to the operation of and profits from the pipeline. Thus the last legal obstacle in the path of the projected pipeline was removed." (2) The pipeline's construction was completed on 2nd December, 1950.

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(1) (Quoted in) Ibid,

P. 157

(2) Ibid,

P. 159

PART II.

CHAPTER V

BETWEEN THE TWO SERIES OF CONFERENCES, 1950 - 1963

The loss of Palestine ushered in a new phase in contemporary Arab history. The fact that Arab rulers had gone to war in 1948 against the advice of their military officers (who had objected to participation in a war for which the Arab armies were not fully prepared), and the fact that Arab rulers had betrayed their armies (by not providing them with the necessary arms and ammunition) were among the factors that prompted the Arab peoples and the Arab military officers alike to blame Arab rulers for the loss of Palestine.

Other factors also militated against continued acquiescence - by the peoples and the intelligentsia of the Arab world - in the political status quo. The socio-economic system of Arab society was recognised as the source of Arab underdevelopment as well as Arab military weakness.

In other words, the loss of Palestine, which revealed the immediate causes of Arab weakness - e.g. the irresoluteness, incompetence, corruption, and disunity of Arab rulers - also served to confirm pre-existing beliefs about the perennial backwardness of Arab society. Long-term convictions were sharpened by immediate stimuli: the hitherto slowly smouldering fire of discontent was fanned into a blazing flame:

the long-felt hope for change turned into a passionate clamouring for radical action: the long-envisaged social revolution - it came to be realised - could only be accompanied by the overthrow of existing regimes.

The masses, the intelligentsia, and the military officers were joined by a common cause. When the military officers (representing the only force which possessed sufficient power to deal the decisive blow) took the initiative they did so with the blessing of the intelligentsia and the applause of the masses!

Thus the Arab world promptly began to witness a succession of military coups d'etats. These fall into two groups:

- (1) from 1949 to 1958, and
- (2) from 1961 to 1963.

The first coup d'etat in the Arab world took place in Syria. Colonel Husni al-Zaim took over the Government in 1949 by military force. And since then Syria has been witnessing a succession of coups d'etats.

In 1950 Jordan witnessed the assassination of King Abdullah. Abdullah's assassination was a warning to other Arab rulers against carrying on talks with Israel aiming at the establishment of peace between the Arab States and Israel.

In 1952 the Arab world witnessed its most important coup d'etat, which was destined to herald a full-fledged revolution. The army officers in Egypt deposed King Faruq, and in the following year proclaimed Egypt a republic.

With the coming of the above-mentioned coups and revolutions, and the setting-up of what was then stamped as revolutionary regimes led by army officers, the hopes of the Arab people were raised high. A period of bipolarity was ushered in. On the one hand, there were the revolutionary regimes, believing in social revolution and Arab unity, with the whole of the Arab people behind them; and on the other hand there were the unpopular monarchical, traditional regimes believing at best in social evolution, and in loose association among the Arab States, predicated on the full retention, by each, of its full sovereignty.

The revolutionary regimes were in full agreement as far as the controversy over Arab <sup>foreign</sup> policy was concerned: non-alignment was considered by the Arab people to be an extension of the Arab struggle for independence.

This agreement on the lines to be followed in Arab foreign policy eradicated any sense of divergence among the two revolutionary regimes, culminating on 4th February 1958 in the establishment of the United Arab Republic. It was



composed of two regions: the Southern Region (Egypt), and the Northern Region (Syria). Thus the yearning for Arab unity was partially fulfilled. The UAR was looked upon as a first step towards a more comprehensive Arab unity.

On 14th July, as a counteraction to the establishment of the UAR, the Hashemite rulers of Iraq and Jordan announced the establishment of a federal union of their two countries.

In spite of this announcement, the year 1958 was a year of fulfillment. The Arab world witnessed major revolutionary change, in seven out of thirteen Arab states. The revolutionary trend was on the move. In March, Saud was relegated to the background and his brother Feisal assumed real power. In April, the Tangier Conference for Maghreb unity was held. In May, the civil war in Lebanon broke out; it succeeded in stopping Chamoun from renewing his term, and in ensuring the neutrality of Lebanon. In July, the Iraqi revolution broke out; it put an end to the monarchical regime, to the Hashemite federal union and to Iraq's membership in the Baghdad Pact. In September, the Provisional Government of Algeria was set up. In November, General Ibrahim Abboud came to power in the Sudan. Also in November, Abdullah Ibrahim, leader of the leftist splinter wing of the al-Istqalal party, became the Prime Minister in Morocco. Also in 1958, (in March), Yemen aligned itself with the UAR to form the United Arab States.

This period of hope did not last long, however. The Jordanian regime was able to maintain power with the help of the British troops. Yet the gravest disappointment was in Iraq, when Qassim began to act in an anti-union manner.

The defection of Qassim ushered in the second period in the Arab world, which was characterised by the beginning of disintegration in the Arab revolutionary block. Certain revolutionary regimes began to co-operate with traditional regimes in order to counteract other revolutionary regimes. In this spirit, Nasser, in April 1959, asked the Council of the Arab League to meet in Beirut for the purpose of condemning Qassim as a communist. And in August 1959, Nasser and Saud met also to condemn Qassim after the failure of the Mousol revolution led by al-Shawwaf.

This trend of policy on the part of the Arab revolutionary regimes led to the strengthening of the traditional regimes internally, by giving them an opportunity to satisfy their own peoples through the introduction of mild social reform, and by silencing the revolutionary elements in their countries. This split in the revolutionary block reached its climax in the secession of Syria on 28th September, 1961.

With this secession the hopes for Arab unity and social

revolution were dampened again. Nasser was isolated, and it looked - for a time - as if there was no way out of this isolation. Yet in 1962 another glimmer of hope appeared when:

1. Algeria won its independence in July 1962, and Ben Bella became the Leader of the Algerian Republic.
2. The Yemeni revolution broke out in September, 1962.
3. Quassim's regime in Iraq was overthrown on 8th February 1963 by the Iraqi Branch of the Ba'th Party.
4. Syria witnessed another coup d'etat in March 1963 led by Major-General Ziyad al-Hariri; and Salah el-Din Bitar became the Prime Minister. The National Revolutionary Command Council in Syria announced that the aim of this coup was to lead Syria back to union with the U.A.R. (Egypt) and Iraq. Following this announcement, Nasser extended diplomatic recognition to an independent Syria for the first time since the secession.

The developments, culminating in the 1963 unity talks, revived the revolutionary spirit in the Arab world.

In April and March 1963 unity talks between the U.A.R., Syria and Iraq were held in three stages:

1. From 14th to 16th March, five Syrian-U.A.R.-Iraq meetings were held.

2. - From 19th to 20th March, five bilateral Syrian-  
UAR meetings were held.
  
3. - From 6th to 14th April, ten meetings were held;  
the first two between the UAR and Syria, and the  
rest between the UAR, Syria and Iraq.

The talks were held in order to negotiate the establishment of a federal union between the UAR, Syria and Iraq. In spite of this, the larger part of the talks was devoted to personal discussions between Nasser, Bitar, Aflaq, and Abdul Karim Zouhour about their dealings with each other during 1958-1961.

On 17th April the Tripartite Union Agreement was signed. The text of the agreement reflected the fact that the talks were "dominated" by an "atmosphere" of mistrust and disagreement.

The dialogue between the Ba'ath and Nasser came to an end on 18th July, 1963, when a large-scale attempt by Syrian Nasserites to overthrow the Ba'ath regime in Damascus was put down.

Thus it was evident that Arab revolutionaries were not only capable of quarrelling with reactionaries, but were also capable of quarrelling with each other.

The immediate result of this split in the revolutionary block was the solidification of the reactionary block. They were given the opportunity to strengthen their position externally by acting as one solid block in the face of the quarrelling revolutionary regimes. For example, Jordan and Saudi Arabia announced in August 1962 the establishment of a "union" between them. (The Hashemite and Saudi dynastis had been quarrelling for the preceding forty years; yet they came to terms with one another, in 1962, in order to fight the revolutionary movements). Meanwhile the split in unitary revolutionary movements was increasing.

At the end of 1963 the Arab States were at each other's throats. Syria was quarrelling with the UAR and Iraq. The UAR and Saudi Arabia were fighting in Yemen. Algeria had a border dispute with Morocco, and another with Tunisia. Morocco and Tunisia were cool to each other, because the latter had recognised the independence of Mauritania. The UAR and Jordan were hostile to each other. Syria was hostile to Jordan, Morocco and Lebanon. Of the thirteen members of the Arab League only four states, namely Lebanon, Kuwait, Sudan, and Libya were free of immediate conflicts with everyone else.

Thus hopes in the Arab world were dampened again. There was nothing left except the feeling of loss and desperation. At that time the Palestine question began to become prominent again, because Israel was going along with the diversion of the Jordan River, and was approaching the termination of its diversion projects. The Arab people began to look for a way out of this deadlock. Nasser pointed out the way by reviving the spirit of the Arab summit conferences.

CHAPTER VI

THE CAIRO SUMMIT CONFERENCE, JANUARY, 1964.

A. The Call for the Conference

Israeli progress towards the diversion of the Jordan River waters was the direct reason for the return to the policy of holding summit conferences in the Arab world.

On 7th December, 1963, a conference of the Arab Chiefs-of-Staff opened at Cairo. It was held under the chairmanship of General Ali Ali Amer of Egypt, and was attended by delegations from Jordan, Algeria, Sudan, Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, the U.A.R., Yemen, Kuwait, Lebanon and Libya (i.e. all the Arab States except Tunisia and Morocco).

The purpose of that meeting was to prepare an agenda for the forthcoming meeting of the Supreme Defence Council, due to be held at a later date in December (or in early January, 1964), where attention would focus on the Israeli project aiming at the diversion of the Jordan River waters for the purpose of creating 120 "military resettlement posts" for settling Jewish immigrants on the would-be irrigated lands of the Negev.

Israel had been working on this project since 1953. The Arabs had first reacted by protesting to the Security Council of the United Nations. This protest forced Israel to suspend the operations which it was carrying on in the demilitarised zone of Lake Houleh. Later, however, Israel amended the plan; and, since then, it had been working on the diversion scheme entirely within the armistice demarcation lines.

It had been known that the whole Israeli project would be completed by 1968, but that the stage which would bring 180,000,000 cubic metres of water by pipeline to the Negev would be completed by March 1964. The entire project, when completed, would divert 320 million cubic meters of water, thus depriving parts of the Arab land of adequate resources and resulting in economic ruin for some Arab territories.

The Arabs had a plan in which they considered the digging of canals and the construction of dams which would prevent the headwaters of the Jordan River (namely Yarmouk, Hasbani and Baniyas which arise in Arab territory) from reaching the mainstream and Lake Tiberias, in order to block the project of Israel. (1)

On 10th December, 1963, the Chiefs-of-Staff held

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(1) Christian Science Monitor, 18th November, 1963



the final meeting of their conference and declined to issue any statement.

On 16th December, 1963, Ihsan Abdul Kuddous published an article in the Cairo weekly Rose el Youssef, in which he stated that Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia were trying to involve Egypt in war with Israel "in order to stab her Egypt in the back". The U.A.R. will not let itself be pushed into a battle with Israel before the attainment of unity between all the Arab countries", he said. (1) Then he stated that Syria was "unstable", Jordan "unfriendly", and Saudi Arabia "isolationist". The aim of these three countries was the destruction of Egypt and not Israel. He said that "the U.A.R. knows how and when it will eliminate Israel, and it knows itself to be capable of shouldering this burden by itself". (2)

The publication of this article aroused the suspicion that Nasser had no intention of getting into war with Israel when the latter would start pumping water from the Sea of Galilee down to the Negev; and if the other Arab States were denied military assistance from the U.A.R., they would not be able to venture any military action against Israel, because such action would have virtually no likelihood of success.

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(1) Quoted in Al-Ahad, 22nd December, 1963

(2) Ibid.

Commenting on this article, the Damascus daily newspaper, Al-Baath, wrote in its issue of 20th December, 1963:

"Could there be a more open encouragement to Israel to continue its aggression? Could there be a more complete renunciation of the national Palestine question? Could there be a clearer case of treachery to the cause of Arab unity and its revolutionary content?" (1)

In its issue of 22nd December, 1963, Al-Baath commented again on the Rose el-Youssef article by stating that its logic, as far as the Palestine question and the diversion of the waters of the Jordan River were concerned, resembled that of the French Marshal Petain which could be summarised as "the call to lay down arms on the grounds that continued fighting would give the enemy the opportunity to occupy more territory and take up and consolidate new positions". (2)

It was in this atmosphere that Nasser, on 23rd December, delivered a speech at Port Said, on the occasion of the seventh anniversary of "Victory Day", in which he called for a summit meeting of all Arab Kings and Presidents

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Beirut, A.U.B., Oct.-Dec. 1963,  
(1) Chronology of Arab Politics, Vol. 1, No. 4, P. 369

(2) Ibid, P. 369

to discuss the plan of Israel for the diversion of the waters of the Jordan River. He said:

"In order to confront Israel (which put a challenge to us last week, and whose Chiefs-of-Staff stood up and said 'we shall divert the water against the will of the Arabs, and let the Arabs do what they can'), a meeting between the Arab Kings and Presidents must take place as soon as possible, regardless of the strife and conflicts among them. Those with whom we are in strife, we are prepared to meet; those with whom we have a quarrel, we are ready, for the sake of Palestine, to sit with.... We will sit and talk seriously at the meeting, and it will be no shame if we come out and say that we cannot today use force. We will tell you the truth, we will tell you every word that was said, that we cannot use force today because our circumstances do not allow us; be patient with us, the battle of Palestine can continue, and the battle of the River Jordan is part of the battle of Palestine. Or we may say that we will be able, if they divert the waters of the River Jordan, to stop this diversion by force. But we will not say one thing behind closed doors and another thing

outside .... For I would lead you to disaster if I were to proclaim that I would fight at a time when I was unable to do so. I would not lead my country to disaster and would not gamble with its destiny.

"Let us try to forget all the stupidities and irritations which we have seen in the past few years; also the disputes that took place, the words that were spoken, and the treachery and so on ...."

"The catastrophe of 1948 will not be repeated, we will not allow it to be repeated". (1)

The proposed invitation, Nasser added, would be sent to individual Arab States through the Arab League.

On 25th December, the Arab League Secretariat sent cables to the Arab States, members of the League, inviting them to attend an Arab Summit Conference to be held in Cairo on 6th January, 1964. On 27th December, the Assistant Secretary-General of the Arab League, Dr. Sayyed Nawfal, announced that 13th January, 1964, would be the date for the meeting. This decision was taken because Jordan had requested the postponement of the date of the conference

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(1) UAR Information Department, Address by Gamal Abdel Nasser, 23rd December 1963, pp. 34-36

until after the visit of Pope Paul VI to Jordan; and because Tunisia had requested the date to be on 13th January, at the end of the visit of Chou En-Lai, Premier of Communist China, to Tunisia.

All Arab Kings and Presidents, with the exception of Saudi Arabia, promptly showed a favourable attitude towards the Summit Conference, and expressed their readiness to attend.

The Iraq Republic informed its embassy in Cairo of its agreement to attend the Summit Meeting on 24th December; (1) (i.e. before the official invitation was sent by the Arab League).

The Arab League received the official agreement of the Arab States (other than Iraq) to attend the meeting on the following dates:

On 25th December: Algeria, Yemen, Kuwait and Syria.

On 26th December: Sudan, Tunisia and Jordan.

On 27th December. Libya, Lebanon and Morocco. (2)

On 5th January, 1964: Saudi Arabia. (3)

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(1) Chronology of Arab Politics, Op. Cit. P. 370

(2) Ibid, Pages 304, 370, 381, (and Al-Kifah,) 27th December 1963).

(3) Ibid, Vol. 2, No. 1, P. 5

Nasser announced that he would meet the Arab Kings and Presidents in person upon their arrival at Cairo Airport; because, according to Al-Ahram, when Nasser "called for the holding of this Conference, he decided at the same time that nothing, however important, should take precedence over the Palestine problem". (1)

On 12th January, 1964, Nasser received Lieutenant General Ibrahim Abboud, President of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces in Sudan; King Hussein of Jordan; Major-General Amin al-Hafez, President of the Syrian National Revolutionary Council; Amir Abdullah Salem al-Sabah, Ruler of Kuwait; Amir ~~Hassan~~ Rida, Crown Prince of Libya; (2) Marshall Abdul Salam Aref, President of Iraq; and President Ben Bella of Algeria.

On 13th January, Nasser received President Habib Bourguiba of Tunisia; King Saud of Saudi Arabia; and King ~~Hassa~~n of Morocco.

Mr. Ali Sabri, President of the Executive Council and members of the Presidential Council on 13th January

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(1) Ibid, Vol. 1, No. 4 P.417

(2) "King Idris of Libya informed the Arab League on 8th January that he could not attend the Arab Summit Conference because floods in Tripoli prevented him from travelling by road, and he could not travel by air for health reasons."

Ibid, Vol. II, No. 1, P.5

received Mr. Rashid Karami, the Prime Minister of Lebanon and the Head of the Lebanese Delegation. (1)

Mr. Ahmad al-Shukairi, the representative of Palestine at the Arab League, was to represent Palestine at the Summit Conference.

The Arab League was to be represented by the Secretary-General, Mr. Abdul-Khaliq Hassouna, his three assistants (Dr. Sayyed Nawfal, Mr. Dardiri Ismail, and Mr. Aref Zaher) and nine advisers on Palestinian affairs. Nawfal was to be in charge of the Secretariat at the Summit Conference.

The advisers and aides of the Arab Kings and Presidents at the Summit Conference, excluding the delegation of the U.A.R., numbered 246. Delegations ranged between 54 members (Libya) and nine members (Sudan). (2)

The Summit Conference was due to open its meeting on 13th January, 1964, at 5.00 p.m. So it was decided to hold a preliminary Foreign Ministers' meeting in the morning of that day in order to discuss the agenda for the Summit meetings.

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(1) President Chehab could not attend the Conference because of ill-health.

Ibid,

P.6, 46.

(2) Arab Observer, 27th February, 1964.

The Summit Conference could be considered as a turning point in modern Arab history, because it was going beyond the limited scope of its agenda of discussing ways and means of stopping the diversion of the Jordan River by Israel, to take up far-reaching Arab differences that were getting out of control, such as: Algeria vs. Morocco, U.A.R. vs. Saudi Arabia and Jordan, U.A.R. vs. Syria, and Syria vs. Iraq.

B. The Meetings of the Conference

The Arab Summit Conference was opened at 5.40 p.m. in the Hall of the Arab League Headquarters in Cairo. The meeting was presided over by President Aref, since it was the turn of Iraq to chair the current session of the Arab League Council. Speeches welcoming the Heads of State attending the Conference were made by Aref and Hassouna. Nasser then read some past resolutions adopted by the Arab League, the Foreign Ministers and the Chiefs-of-Staff, concerning the diversion of the Jordan River by Israel. After that, Hassouna announced that the meeting would be held in camera; and the hall was cleared of the public.

The first meeting lasted for three hours, at the end of which an official communique was issued stating that the discussion had centred on the plans of Israel



for diverting the Jordan River in particular, and on the Palestine case and the Zionist danger in general. (1)

It was agreed that the meeting would be resumed on 14th January, at 10:00 a.m., to hear the reports of the Head of the League's Permanent Military Command, and the Representatives of the Arab League Technical Committee for the Jordan River waters, and to discuss the expressed views.

The Arab League Technical Committee had prepared a plan that would suggest the diversion of the Jordan River tributaries (vis. Hasbani, Yarmouk and Banias) within Lebanon, Jordan and Syria respectively. It had also studied methods for meeting the expenses of these projects by allocating a certain percentage of oil revenues and incomes from the Suez Canal for that purpose.

¶ The report of the Arab League Permanent Military Command would cover the protection of Syria and Lebanon against any Israeli aggression if the diversion of the tributaries took place; and the plan for an all-out war if the Kings and Presidents of the Arab States were willing to consider such an alternative. (2)

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(1) League of Arab States, For the Record, No. 188, 14th January, 1964, P.6

(2) Christian Science Monitor, 14th January 1964

On 14th January, after hearing the above-mentioned reports, the Arab Heads of State held a closed meeting for more than four hours to get down to a fundamental and, if possible, a unanimous decision.

Aside from the official meetings that were held, the Arab leaders conducted private talks at the Hilton Hotel, where the visiting leaders were staying. Here, attempts were made to settle various inter-Arab disputes as well as to come to an agreement on the Jordan waters. Nasser called on Hassan II, and the two leaders were joined later by Ben Bella. Nasser had supported Algeria in its border war with Morocco which had broken out in October 1963. After this meeting, Hassan II announced that he had released five Egyptian fliers captured during the above-mentioned war. They were part of an Egyptian contingent sent by Nasser to support Algeria. (1) It was also predicted that this meeting would speed up the return of normal relations between the monarchical regime of Morocco and the socialist regime of Algeria. These States had been facing each other across an armistice line since 4th November, 1963, when the Organisation of African Unity stopped the fighting. (2)

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(1) New York Herald Tribune, (European Edition)  
14th January, 1964.

(2) Christian Science Monitor, 16th January, 1964.

These conciliatory moves of King Hassan II coincided with reports that Nasser and Hussein had held a private meeting to patch up their differences, and to agree on resuming diplomatic relations, broken by the U.A.R in 1961 after prompt Jordanian recognition of the secessionist regime in Syria.

Hussein met with Sallal, and subsequently Nasser and Saud held a meeting in which the Yemen question was discussed. (1)

The only ruler who was not exchanging visits was Amin al-Hafez of Syria. This was the case because the antagonism between the Al-Ba'th Party of Syria and Nasser was too deep to be removed. (2)

On 15th January, the third day of the Summit, Hassan II, accompanied by his brother Moulay Abdullah, left Cairo for Rabat, leaving the Foreign Minister, Ahmad Gadira, to represent Morocco.

It was announced, through Cairo Radio, that an agreement had been reached among the Arab leaders to form

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(1) The Guardian, 15th January 1964.

(2) The Times (London), 16th January, 1964.

a unified Arab military command with "administrative and financial responsibilities and with a headquarters". (1) No further details were given of the new command and it was not known whether all Arab States would participate in it. The agreement did not specify the area in which Arab forces might operate; nor did it assign any specific functions to the Command. It was not known whether troops of one State would be stationed on the territories of other States, but it was known that no site had yet been selected for the command headquarters.

Bourguiba and Ben Bella put forward a proposal to the Summit Conference for the formation of a "FLN-Style" organisation (i.e. National Liberation Front) to push forward the campaign for the restoration of the rights of the Arabs of Palestine. It was reported that Hussein did not object to the creation of the above-mentioned organisation but he opposed suggestions for the creation of a Palestine army or a Palestine State on the Western bank of the Jordan River territory, (2) which had been formally incorporated into the Trans-Jordanian Kingdom by Abdullah after the war of Palestine on 24th April, 1950. As a result of this incorporation, Jordanian Kings had

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(1) Christian Science Monitor, 17th January 1964.

(2) New York Herald Tribune, (European Edition),  
16th January 1964.

consistently opposed the creation of a Palestinian entity whenever the subject was discussed, until the Cairo Summit Conference.

The official meetings were carried on; and on 16th January a Conference spokesman announced that the Unified Military Command would be headed by an army officer from the U.A.R. He said that the U.A.R. had proposed an Iraqi officer for the job, but that the other Arab States insisted on having an Egyptian because the U.A.R. army was the strongest in the Arab world. The spokesman said that the command, which was expected to start functioning within a few weeks, would be a standing apparatus of coordination among the Arab armies under normal conditions. However, in the event of an aggression by Israel, the Command would assume active command of the Arab armies. (1)

During the meeting of 16th January, Nasser stated that the civil war in Yemen should be settled so that the Arabs could give undivided attention to Aden. He said that the people of Aden should be given their independence, but "he did not go on to stipulate that Britain must vacate the Aden base". (2)

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(1) New York Herald Tribune, 17th January 1964.

(2) Daily Telegraph, 17th January 1964.

The two final working meetings of the Conference - one of which lasted until 4:00 a.m. on 17th January - raised tension caused by the tough anti-Egyptian attitude taken by Al-Hafez. It was understood that the Syrians wanted to take bolder or quicker military action against Israel, but other Arab States claimed that they were not yet ready for taking such action. (1) In order to smooth out these difficulties, other delegates intervened; but such tensions delayed agreement on the final communiqué. (2)

C. The Basic Decisions of the Conference

On 17th ~~January~~ 1964, Hassouna read the communiqué which closed the five-day meeting, and announced that the actual resolutions passed would remain secret.

The communiqué was adopted unanimously by the thirteen participants. In the following pages the decisions adopted and their application would be discussed.

(1) The Communiqué said that the Conference had considered Israeli aggressions since its emergence as an imperialist force occupying Palestine and practicing racial discrimination against the Arab minority. Israel followed a policy based on aggression and fait accompli. It persisted

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(1) The Times (London), 18th January 1964.

(2) The New York Times, (International Edition),  
18th January 1964.

in disregarding the resolutions of the United Nations in support of the natural right of the Palestine people to return to its homeland, and paid no attention to the repeated condemnations passed by the world organisation.

After discussing what Israel was about to do, by committing a new and grave aggression on the Arab waters through diverting the Jordan River flow, the Conference had taken the necessary practical resolutions to avert the imminent Israeli danger - whether in the defensive and technical fields, or in the field of organising the people of Palestine to enable them to liberate its homeland and determine its future. (1)

It will be observed that a new slogan was launched, namely the "liberation of Palestine". Prior to the Summit Conference, and since 1949, the Arab States had called for the "application of the United Nations' resolutions".

The new slogan of liberation was formulated within the framework of the principles and resolutions adopted at the Bandung Conference and the Addis Ababa Covenant. The Arab States hoped that the African and Asian States - which had made great sacrifices in the struggle against

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(1) Arab League, Statement by the Council of the Kings and Presidents of State, 17th January 1964.  
P.1

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(1) Arab League, Statement by the Council of the Kings and Presidents of State, 17th January 1964.  
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colonialism, which had opposed racial discrimination, and which had been and still were exposed to colonialist and Zionist ambitions, especially in Africa - would offer sincere help and support to the Arabs in their just struggle. (1)

2. The communiqué did not mention the unified Arab military command, although agreement on the matter had been reached - as is evident from the fact that it was announced at a press conference on 18th January 1964, that Lt. General Ali Ali Amer, U.A.R. Chief-of-Staff, would be appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Unified Arab Command, which would be centered in Cairo, and whose budget would be \$34.5 million annually. (2)

Already the end of February had been set by the Arab League as the deadline for the Arab countries to meet their financial commitments for the unified command. Contributions would be made as follows: Kuwait, \$11.5 millions; the U.A.R., \$6.9 million; Saudi Arabia, \$6.9 million; Iraq, \$3.45 million, and the other Arab countries, the remaining \$5.75 million. Most of the Arab States would be able to extract their contributions from their regular budgets. Others, like Jordan, were thinking of special fund-raising campaigns to meet their obligations. (3)

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(1) Ibid,

P.1

(2) The Times (London), 20th January 1964.

(3) Christian Science Monitor, 11th February 1964.

3. The communiqué said that one way of repelling the threatening Zionist danger was through the organisation of the Palestinian people, thus enabling it to play its part in liberating Palestine and in determining its future. (1)

The immediate background of this decision could be found in the 40th session of the Arab League Council held on 15th September, 1963. At that session, the Council studied the problem of Palestine in a more constructive manner, by affirming the "Palestine entity" on the international level, by establishing the bases for action through the organisation of the people of Palestine, and by making them assume the responsibility of their national cause and the liberation of Palestine.

The first decision taken by the Council of the League was the appointment of Ahmad al-Shukairi as the representative of Palestine at the Arab League. He was also entrusted with carrying out consultations with the representatives of the people of Palestine for the formation of a new general government for Palestine. He was also asked to visit the various Arab capitals to discuss the means which the Arab Governments would place at his disposal for the fulfillment of this task.

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(1) Arab League, Statement by the Council of the Kings and Presidents of State,  
17th January 1964. P. 1

So, the decision taken at the First Summit Conference was in fact an endorsement of the decision taken by the Council of the Arab League at its preceding session. Besides this, the significance of the apparent agreement to set up an organisation representing the Palestine entity was the fact that Hussein had consented to the idea of establishing a "Palestine entity". This concession, on the part of Hussein, was made easier by the fact that he and Nasser had agreed in advance which Palestinians should be appointed as leaders; previously this had been a source of acute disagreement. The person agreed upon was Mr. Ahman al-Shukairi. He was to give a concrete expression of the Palestine entity after contacting the Palestine refugees and the Arab Governments.

According to the above-mentioned resolutions, al-Shukairi began his tour of the Arab States on 19th February 1964, to discuss with the people of Palestine and the Arab Governments the draft of the Palestine National Charter and the draft constitution of a Liberation Organisation, on which the "Palestine entity" would be based. (1) The organisation for the liberation of Palestine would nominate a provisional national leadership (an executive council and committee) which would study the draft of the national charter, submitted by al-Shukairi. This draft

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(1) Al-Kifah, 20th February 1964.

charter outlined the basic principles for the liberation of Palestine, and comprised the statutes of the liberation organisation, its executive council and committee, and its administrative organs.

The principal elements of the national charter and the statutes are: the organisation, in which all Palestinians are members, will become responsible for carrying out actions that would lead to liberation in every field; a committee of twelve members will prepare the meeting of the National Council of the Organisation, which will meet every two years; several committees will be attached to this council in order to facilitate the study of the questions related to the Palestine cause.

The Council will also have an executive committee composed of fifteen members for exercising its competences.

Palestinian forces will be set up, and will be trained under the auspices of the Unified Arab Command.

A national Palestine Fund will be established, it will be fed by a direct and fixed tax collected from all Palestinians, by financial assistance given by states and peoples, by issuing a liberation stamp, and by donations

and unconditional loans. (1)

Al-Shukairi visited Jordan, Syria, Bahrain, Qatar, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, and Sudan. He met the President of the Yemeni Republic, Sallal, in Cairo. His tour was ended on 5th April, 1964. Upon his arrival in Cairo, al-Shukairi made a statement in which he announced that he had held about 30 conferences with the Palestinian people, during which he has met thousands of them in Jordan, Syria, Iraq and the Arab Gulf area. At these conferences he had explained the Palestine National Charter, and the basic system of the Liberation Organisation.

Al-Shukairi pointed out that Palestinians "were willing to sacrifice themselves to gain the freedom of their country". (2) He went on to say that the Palestine Conference would be held at Jerusalem on 14th May, 1964, and would be attended by representatives of the people of Palestine living in the Arab countries. The Conference would study the basis of the Palestine entity. This entity would not be limited to the political sphere, but would set up plans to make use of the military potentials of the Palestinians. Al-Shukairi ended his statement by inviting all the Arab Kings and Presidents

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(1) "International Cooperation Assumes Shape and Form", The Scribe, VIII, 3rd April 1964. pp 23-24

(2) Arab Observer, 13th April 1964.

to attend the Conference. (1)

On 15th April 1964, al-Shukairi submitted a detailed report about his discussions with the Arab Governments and the people of Palestine to the Follow-Up Committee at its second meeting held at the Arab League Headquarters in Cairo. The report stated that the basis of the National Charter and the Liberation Organisation would be the people of Palestine: the role of the Arab Governments would be limited to helping the people of Palestine in the creation of this entity. After that, the Palestinian entity would have an independence of its own, and would co-operate with the other Arab States inside and outside the Arab League. (2)

On 28th May, 1964, the Palestine Congress opened in Jerusalem, and unanimously elected al-Shukairi as Chairman of the Conference. It was held under the supervision of the Arab League, and under the auspices of King Hussein. It was attended by 242 representatives from Jordan, 146 from Syria, Lebanon, Ghaza, Qatar, Kuwait and Iraq. (3) Also present were Hassouna, and personal representatives of all Arab Kings and Presidents with the exception of

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(1) Ibid,

(2) Al Mouharrer, 16th April 1964.

(3) The Times (London), 30th May 1964.

Saudi Arabia. (Feisal had turned down the invitation of al-Shukairi to send a personal representative to the Congress. Moreover, the twelve Palestinians who were selected by al-Shukairi to represent their colleagues in Saudi Arabia at the Congress did not show up). (1)

The Congress was opened by a speech by Hussein in which he called on all the Palestinians to unite for the restoration of Palestine. Then Hassouna delivered a speech in which he stressed the cooperation of the Arab Kings and Presidents in the field of organising the Palestinians in order to achieve the aim of liberating Palestine in collaboration with the other Arab States. After that, al-Shukairi delivered a speech in which he made it very clear that the "Palestine entity" did not aim at the separation of the Western bank from the Kingdom of Jordan: what it aimed at was the liberation of that part of Palestine which falls West of the Western bank. (2) Then he presented the two provisional drafts for study and appraisal. The first was called "The Palestine National Charter"; the second comprised a constitution for the creation of a "Palestine Liberation Organisation". (3)

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(1) The New York Times, (International Edition),  
29th May 1964.

(2) P.L.O., The First Palestine Congress, pp 5,16-32

(3) Ibid,  
pp.32-39

Division on the manner of creating a "Palestine entity", though not over the principle itself, existed among Palestinians as well as among Arab leaders:

A - The oldest Palestinian organisation, "the Arab Higher Committee", led by Hajj Amin al-Husseini, the ex-mufti of Jerusalem, decided to boycott the Congress, arguing that al-Shukairi was seeking a "faked entity". Al-Husseini said that elections were the only way to be followed by Palestinians in choosing their real representatives. (This was announced in an official communiqué issued on 10th June, 1964). (1)

Al-Shukairi had discarded the principle of elections because its application would be impossible and unfeasible. (2)

B - On 24th May, 1964, six underground Palestine Organisations announced that they were going to merge into their own liberation organisation, and declared that the "military way" was the only way for the "liberation of Palestine". These organisations were: "The Palestine Liberation Front", "The Palestinian National Liberation Front", "the Revolutionary Front for the Lib-

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(1) Arab Documents, 1964, Beirut, A.U.B., pp.292-295

(2) An interview with Al-Shukairi, 9th February 1966.



-eration of Palestine", "The Palestinian Commandos Bloc", "The Arab Liberation Front for Palestine", "The National Liberation Organisation". (1)

C. The Ba'th Party of Syria issued its own alternative plan for the Palestine organisation, proposing elections among Palestinians and demanding that Palestinians should be given full sovereignty now over all of Palestine, including the part that is now under the rule of Israel.(2)

D. Another Arab official opposing the so-called "al-Shukairi scheme", was Feisal, then Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia. He declared that it was wrong to impose selected members on the Palestinians. He said that they should be given the right to choose their spokesman, and the way to do so was by elections.

This opposition on the part of Saudi Arabia was based on personal grounds. From the beginning, Saudi Arabia had objected to the appointment of Al-Shukairi as the representative of Palestine at the Arab League, and then as the person to carry on negotiations for the organisation of the Palestinians. This was the result of the fact that al-Shukairi, as the Saudi representative at the

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(1) Arab Documents op.cit. pp.253-254

(2) The New York Times (International Edition),  
29th May, 1964

United Nations had refused to plead the Saudi case there, against the U.A.R. over the question of Yemen. (1) Although the rift between al-Shukairi and the Saudi Government was reconciled, the former submitted his resignation in August 1963.

Besides the above-mentioned reason, Saudi Arabia was in favour of Hajj Amin al-Husseini, who was being financed and supported by Saudi Arabia for his Islamic status and views. Nasser objected to Hajj Amin al-Husseini because he was a conservative, discredited by young Palestinians and a protégé of Feisal's. The result of this antagonism led Nasser and Aref to support al-Shukairi. This support was expressed in a Joint Communiqué issued on 26th May, 1964, in which Nasser and Aref made it a point to endorse the Jerusalem Congress. (2)

On 29th May, 1964, the Congress sent a message to U Thant, Secretary-General of the United Nations, informing him of the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, which would be "the only legitimate spokesman for all matters concerning the Palestine people". (3)

On 30th May, the Palestine National Congress

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- (1) The New York Times, (International Edition) 29th May 1964.
  - (2) U.A.R. Information Department, Arab Political Encyclopedia, Documents and Notes, May-June, 1964, Cairo, National Publication House, pp. 86-87
  - (3) The Times (London), 30th May, 1964.

elected nine special committees. These were the Political, Financial, Enlightenment, Education, Information, Legal, Refugee Affairs, Nomations, Organisation and National Charter Committees. (1)

On 31st May the nine Committees held separate meetings in which they studied the recommendations to be submitted to the Congress. It was reported that the Congress would submit its own recommendations to the second Arab Summit Conference to be held in Alexandria in August, 1964.

On 2nd June, the Palestine National Congress held its final plenary session, during which it approved the recommendations put forward by its nine committees which were in the form of "Resolutions of the Palestine National Congress". The most important resolutions were:

- (a) Establishment of a Palestine Liberation Organisation to be set up by the people of Palestine in accordance with its statutes.
- (b) Appeal to all professional Palestinians to form a union and to become members in the Arab Professional Union.

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(1) P.L.O., The First Palestine Congress, pp.54-59

- (c) Immediate opening of camps for military training of all Palestinians, in order to prepare them for the liberation battle which could only be won by force. These army commando contingents would be put under the Unified Arab Command. The Arab Governments were urged to admit Palestinians to their military academies.
  
- (d) Establishment of a Palestine National Fund to finance P.L.O. The sources of revenue would include annual subscriptions, to be paid by every Palestinian over 18 years of age; loans and grants to be offered by Arab and friendly states; contributions to be collected on national occasions; and the revenue from issuing Palestine Liberation Bonds by the Arab League.
  
- (e) Election of Ahmad al-Shukairi as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the P.L.O. (1)

Also on 2nd June, the Palestine National Charter was proclaimed by the Palestine National Congress. It consists of 29 articles, the most important of which are the following:

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(1) Ibid,

"Article 2: Palestine, within the boundaries it had during the period of the British Mandate, is an indivisible territorial unit.

"Article 6: Palestinians are those Arab citizens who, until 1947, had normally resided in Palestine, regardless of whether they have been evicted from it or have stayed in it. Anyone born, after that date, of a Palestinian father, whether inside Palestine or outside it, is also a Palestinian.

"Article 17: The partition of Palestine in 1947 and the establishment of Israel are entirely illegal, regardless of the passage of time, because they were contrary to the will of the Palestinian people and its natural right in its homeland, and inconsistent with the general principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations particularly the right of self-determination.

"Article 23: For the realisation of the goals of this Charter and its principles the Palestine Liberation Organisation shall perform its complete role in the liberation of Palestine, in accordance with the Constitution of this Organisation.

"Article 24: This Organisation shall not exercise any

territorial sovereignty over the West-bank [region] of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Ghaza Strip, or the Henna area. Its activities in the liberational organisational, political and financial fields shall be on the national-popular level.

"Article 25: This Organisation shall be responsible for the movement of the Palestinian people in its struggle for the liberation of its homeland, in all liberational, organisational, political and financial fields, and also for whatever may be required by the Palestine case on the inter-Arab and international levels.

"Article 26: The Liberation Organisation shall cooperate with all Arab States, each according to its potentialities; and it shall not interfere in the internal affairs of any Arab States.

"Article 29: This Charter shall not be amended save by [vote of] a majority of two-thirds of the total membership of the National Council of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, [taken] at a special session convened for that purpose. (1)

On the Arab Governmental level there was no repud-

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(1) P.L.O., The National Charter, Jerusalem, al-Bilad al-Moukkadassa Press, pp.2-8

-iation of the National Charter, which meant that there was an implicit agreement on the principles of the Charter. But soon this implicit agreement proved to be deceptive. One can suspect that ~~SOME~~ Arab Governments approved of the Charter and the Organisation only as long as they were convinced that the Palestinians would not take any effective action to enforce the principles of the Charter.

4. The thirteen Arab Heads of State had agreed not to go to war with Israel to stop it from diverting the waters of the Jordan River to the Negev. Instead, they had decided on reprisals in kind, and approved a plan to divert for exclusive Arab use, those parts of the Jordan head-waters rising in Arab territory, namely Hashani, Baniyas and Yarmouk.

At the Summit Conference Dr. Mohammad Ahmad Slim, Chairman of the Arab Technical Committee for the diversion of the Jordan River Waters, presented a project which was approved by the Conference. The project was divided into two stages: a long and a short-range stage. The long-range stage aimed at the building of basins, dams and electric power stations, and the completion of navigation projects. The short-range stage aimed only at diversions without storage.

The time-limit for the execution of the long-range

part of the project was estimated to be between 8 and 12 years.

The expenses of the project were estimated to be between 65 and 70 million pounds sterling.

The short-range project presented to the Summit Conference may be summarised as follows:

a) In Lebanon:

(i) The diversion of the waters of the Hasbani River to the Littani River by building a diversion dam on the Hasbani, and the opening of a diversion tunnel between the two rivers. Its expenses were estimated to be 6 million Lebanese Pounds and the time needed for its execution, between 18 and 24 months.

(ii) The establishment of a pumping station on the Wazzani stream, which lies at the lower part of the Hasbani, to pump water to the surrounding high plains. This scheme would irrigate 1,500 hectares in Lebanon, and 800 hectares in Syria. The remaining pumped water would flow to the Wazzani-Baqias canal at a length of 11 kilometres. Its expenses were estimated to be 3 million Lebanese Pounds, and the time needed for its completion was estimated to be two years.



b) In Syria:

The diversion of the Banias River Waters to the surrounding lands through two canals, one directed Westwards and the other Southwards. This project would provide for the irrigation of 1,200 hectares annually in Syria. The rest of the water would flow to the Yarmouk River through the Valley of Wakkad (one of the Yarmouk tributaries), to be used for irrigation in Jordan. This project would cost around 17 million Syrian pounds.

c) In Jordan:

(i) The establishment of the Mokhaiba dam on the Yarmouk River to constitute a reservoir and to divert the waters to the East Ghor Canal at the naval stores over a length of 11 kilometres. This dam and reservoir would hold the Yarmouk waters flowing into it from the Banias-al-Rukad Canal to the agricultural land in Jordan.

(ii) The establishment of canals for diverting the waters of the upper Jordan River which would help to convert the course of the lower Jordan River to a saline stream. (1)

After adopting the recommendations presented by

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(1) U.A.R. Information Department, The River Jordan and the Zionist Conspiracy, pp.49-51, and Al-Ra'ed Al-Arabi, May 1964, pp. 20-21

the Arab Technical Committee, the Conference decided to establish a body with an official status, within the sphere of the Arab League, to be called the Board for the Exploitation of the Jordan River Waters and its tributaries. The Arab Technical Committee, which was established before the Summit Conference, was transformed into the above-mentioned Board.

The Chairman of the Board would be the Secretary-General of the Arab League, and its members would be one representative from each of the following states: Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and the U.A.R.

The Board would be concerned with:

- (a) To plan, to distribute and to observe the execution by the states concerned, of the short-range projects.
  
- b) To study the long-range projects for the exploitation of the Jordan River and its tributaries, in order to estimate its expenses for the purpose of presenting its estimates to the Second Arab Summit Conference. The Conference would take the necessary measures for financing the projects from loans on the basis that they would fall under the

category of development projects. (1)

The Board is composed of the following members: Abdul-Khaliq Hassouna as Chairman, Dr. Mohammad Ahmad Slim representing the U.A.R., Mr. Nasseuh Taher representing Jordan, Mr. Fouad al Bizri representing Lebanon, and Mr. Fawzi al-Khabbaz representing Syria. (2)

This Board meets once every month. It held its first meeting in Cairo on 1st February, 1964, at the end of which it announced that starting on the diversion plan was not connected with Israel's finishing the final part of its project.

At that meeting the Board decided also to establish three Technical Executive Committees for the diversion of the tributaries in each of Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. This step was taken because each of the States involved was to execute that part of the project which lay within its borders independently and under the supervision of its own technical executive committee. The three executive committees meet to carry on further discussions, and to make on-site visits and checking. The Board is responsible

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(1) Ibid, (Al-Raed al-Arabi),

pp.20-21

(2) Al-Mouharer, 7th April 1964.

for co-ordination between these three executive committees in order to ensure that the plan is being implemented according to schedule in the three States. (1) The Heads of the three executive committees represent their respective countries on the Board.

Until the second Summit Conference, the work of the Jordan agencies remained limited to bureaucratic arrangements: selection of personnel, holding meetings, and studying plans that might never be put into effect; because diversion would mean war with Israel, and none of the Arab States appears to be willing to go to war with Israel, whether collectively or individually. All of the Arab States had paid their share of the expenses of the Jordan River diversion plan, but not one of them had carried on the work within its borders according to the plan approved by the Summit Conference.

5. Liquidating inter-Arab differences and normalising relations between the various Arab States was one of the major consequences of the Arab Summit Conference. The meeting itself allowed for a clearing of the ground and the establishment of an atmosphere which might help in the creation of a feeling of confidence favourable to a smooth examination of outstanding differences.

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(1) Al-Raed al-Arabi, May 1964, P.21

(a) One of these differences was between the U.A.R. and Saudi Arabia over the question of Yemen.

The revolution in Yemen broke out in September 1962, and on <sup>6<sup>th</sup></sup> October 1962, an open telegram was sent to the U.A.R asking for military aid, in accordance with the "Military Pact" signed between Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Yemen on 21st April, 1956. As a result of the military aid provided by the U.A.R. to the Yemeni republican regime, Saudi Arabia broke off its diplomatic relations with the U.A.R on 7th November, 1962. The fighting continued between the royalist Yemenites, supported by Saudi Arabia; and the republican Yemenites, supported by the U.A.R.

After Iraqi and Algerian mediation between the U.A.R. and Saudi Arabia, the former announced, on 5th February, 1964, its willingness to send a delegation to Saudi Arabia.

The meeting was held in Riyadh between 1st and 3rd March, 1964. It was attended by Field Marshal Abdul Hakim Amer and Anwar al-Sadat, two vice-Presidents of the U.A.R.; Crown Prince Feisal and Prince Sultan ibn-Abdul Aziz, Saudi Arabian Minister of Defence and Aviation; Shamel al-Sameraii, Minister of Health in Iraq; Ahmad Tawfiq al-Madani, Minister of Waqf in Algeria;

and Abdul Hamid Noman, the Ambassador of Iraq at Kuwait. (1)

At the conclusion of the talks, a joint communiqué was issued on 3rd March, 1964. It stated that both sides decided to pursue their talks to a final settlement at a forthcoming meeting, to be held towards the end of April, 1964, between Nasser and Feisal in Cairo.

Saudi Arabia and the U.A.R. jointly declared also that they had no ambition in Yemen, that they gave unconditional support to its independence and the freedom of its people, and that both States opposed any imperialist attempt against Yemen.

Both States also announced the prompt return of their ambassadors to their respective posts. (2)

In spite of the apparent agreement between the two Governments, Saudi Arabia regarded with the deepest misgivings the continued presence of U.A.R. troops in Yemen. And, on the other hand, the U.A.R. was wholly committed in Yemen and was unable to withdraw its forces unless there was a guarantee that the Yemeni Republican regime would be maintained. The core of the issue was:

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(1) Al Kifah, 2nd March, 1964.

(2) Arab Documents, 1964,

if the U.A.R. troops were to withdraw immediately, it would be questionable whether the republican regime would last.

The matter was further complicated by Feisal's decision to cancel his proposed visit to Cairo, to discuss the Yemeni stalemate with Nasser, and by Nasser's declaration on 1st May 1964, that he was intending to keep the U.A.R. troops in Yemen until the British left Aden. (1)

(The discussion of subsequent developments relating to the Yemen question will be continued, following <sup>our analysis of</sup> the second Summit Conference, in Chapter VIII.

(b) Jordan and the U.A.R. had begun patching up their differences in 1963, when Hussein and Mohammad Hassanein Haikal met in Paris, after the failure of the attempt at unity between the U.A.R. and the Baathist regimes in Syria and Iraq. Hussein could now hope to keep the problem of Palestine under control.

Whether Hussein could ever completely live down his reputation as a Western protégé, a political anachronism, and one of the main obstacles to Arab unity would be

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(1) Al-Ahram, 2nd May 1964

doubtful, but there could be no doubt that the Arab resolution to close ranks in the face of Israel had given Hussein his best opportunity to win acceptance in the Arab world at large, and among his Palestinian subjects in particular.

Hussein clearly regarded close cooperation with Nasser as the indispensable basis of success. So relations between Jordan and the U.A.R. were re-established on 15th January, 1964. And on 10th March, 1964, Hussein paid a private visit to the U.A.R. He was met with a great deal of evident cordiality. (1) He discussed with Nasser the possibility of Jordan receiving financial aid from the other Arab States so as to reduce its dependence on the U.S. Government. (2) This reduced dependence would give Jordan a neutralist image which would enhance Hussein's stature in the Arab world.

This reconciliation with Nasser gave Hussein his post-Summit freedom of movement, and silenced much of his domestic opposition. But Hussein's most important contribution to Arab concord, and the one which could eventually make or break him was, his consent to the

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(1) The Times, (London), 12th March 1964.

(2) The Guardian, 13th March 1964.



establishment of the P.L.O., whose purpose was (and is) the enabling of the Palestinians as a body to play a leading role in the recovery of Palestine. If the P.L.O. would seek to assert itself at the expense of the present expanded Jordanian sovereignty (which, in turn, had been expanded at the expense of the Palestinians), then Hussein would withdraw his blessing from the whole scheme. But this, as indeed would be the whole course of events in the Arab world, would depend on whether or not the Summitry spirit would be preserved.

(c) Another conflict whose solution was facilitated by the Summit Conference, by paving the way for further negotiations, was that of Algeria and the U.A.R. vs. Morocco. The frontier dispute between Algeria and Morocco broke out in October, 1963. The U.A.R. was involved in it because it sent a contingent to Algeria which was stationed at Colomb Bechar and other points near the Moroccan frontier. The estimated number of the U.A.R. troops was around 3,000 men. But the role of the contingent as an irritant in Rabat's relations with Algeria and Cairo exceeded its numerical size. (1)

A military agreement was signed between Algeria

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(1) Christian Science Monitor, 14th February 1964.

and Morocco in Rabat on 19th February, 1964. It provided for the return of the Moroccons to their position of 1st October, 1963, and the evacuation by the Algerians of the posts of Icht and Figuig. The regions of Hassi-Beida, Tinjoub and Oum-el-Achar became a sort of no-man's land; and an exchange of prisoners taken during the fighting was agreed on.

This agreement was also a tangible result of the Addis Ababa Conference held on 16th November, 1963. (1)

As a result of this agreement, Nasser ordered the withdrawal of the Egyptian troops from Algeria by 23rd February. (2)

On 28th February, an official communiqué was issued announcing the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the U.A.R. and Morocco and the exchange of ambassadors.

On 14th April, 1964, the exchange of prisoners took place: Hassan II returned 350 Algerian prisoners, and Ben Bella sent home 50 Moroccan prisoners.

On 21st May, 1964, diplomatic relations between

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(1) The Scribe, VIII/3 April 1964, pp 24-25

(2) Christian Science Monitor, 24th February 1964.

Algeria and Morocco were re-established at ambassadors' level. (1)

Hassan II's rapproch<sup>a</sup>ment with the "socialist" Arab regimes helped in easing some of the pressure on the monarchy at home. The two opposition parties, which controlled 68 out of 144 seats in the House of Representatives, had vigorously attacked the political and economic programme of the Government as presented by Premier Bahnini to the House of Representatives on 11th January, 1964. The opposition had not disguised their sympathies for Nasser and Ben Bella, and their socialist movement.

(d) The Cairo Conference also brought about an understanding between Hassan II and Bourguiba and the resumption of full diplomatic relations (which had been broken off in 1960 when Tunisia recognised the independence of Mauretania, the Saharan Republic which Morocco claims as its own territory) (2)

The above-mentioned liquidation of inter-Arab differences and disputes reflected a basic change in the U.A.R.'s policy towards the other Arab States. The new U.A.R. policy can best be understood when viewed in the light of its immediate predecessor, which was explained by M.H. Haikal (in an article he published in

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(1) The New York Times (International Edition),  
23rd-24th May, 1964.

(2) Christian Science Monitor, 6th February 1964.

Al-Ahram of 29th December 1962) as a policy predicated on the distinction between "Egypt as a State" and "Egypt as a revolution". Wrote Haikal:

"As a State, Egypt deals with all Arab Governments, whatever their forms or systems. She takes her place beside them in the Arab League and at the United Nations and concludes defence, trade, cultural and other agreements with them ... As a revolution, Egypt should deal only with the people. This does not imply interference on our part in the affairs of others, since the fundamental premise of our struggle is that the Arab people are a single nation. If Egypt as a State recognises frontiers in her dealings with governments, Egypt as a revolution should never hesitate or halt at frontiers, but should carry her message across them .... We have no right to separate ourselves from the struggle of other citizens of our nation. Egypt as a revolution will thus be not the Cairo Government but a progressive party within the framework of the Arab nation. It should extend its hand to all progressive elements of the nation and openly stand beside them and support them.... We should do our utmost to co-operate to the point where popular movements are affected.

If the Arab League were to be used to paralyse our movement, we should even be prepared to freeze the operations of that body. We should also be prepared for a break in official relations with any Arab country ruled by reactionaries, if it should seek to pressure us into suspending our legitimate appeal for freedom, socialism, and the unity of all people of the Arab Nation".(1)

This pre-1964 policy, in turn, represented a shift from an earlier policy. The shift in question was summed up by Nasser in a speech delivered on 22nd February, 1962. The policy followed by the U.A.R. from 1958-1961 was that of "unity of ranks" among the Arab regimes which had diverse internal orientation, in order to be able to face external dangers and pressure. From 1961 until 1963, the slogan of "unity of ranks" was changed to that of "unity of purpose".

This slogan was adopted as a result of charges from Damascus, Amman and Rhyadh accusing Nasser of wrecking Arab solidarity. Nasser in his speech declared:

"There are certain persons who today talk about the closing of the Arab ranks. From the time of

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(1) Al-Ahram, 29th December 1962. (translated by M.Kerr)  
The Arab Cold War, 1958-1964, London, Oxford University Press, 1965, pp.38-39

Nuri al-Said they have been talking about it. But what was the goal of such unity? Was it to serve the interests of imperialism, or was it to serve the interests of the Arab Nation? Unanimity over purposes is more important than unity of ranks. We call for unity of purpose but we look with suspicion on slogans calling for unity of ranks. Unity of ranks based on different purposes would drive the entire Arab nation into danger .... It would mean we set little store on our aspirations .... We seek to achieve unity of purpose in the first place. Such unity can lead to unity of ranks, because unity of purpose constitutes unity of all the Arab peoples. All the Arab peoples have one and the same goal, but certain rulers are working towards different goals. Therefore they falsify the slogans and appeal for unity of ranks". (1)

The Charter of National Action of May, 1962, authoritatively described the repudiation of a policy based on the slogan "unity of ranks", and the adoption of a policy based on

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(1) U.A.R. Information Department, President Gamal Abdel Nasser's Speeches and Press Interviews, 1962, pp.29 - 30 (translated by M.Kerr The Arab Cold War, 1958-1964. P.39).

the slogan "unity of purpose", as follows:

"That phase of social revolution has developed through that superficial concept of Arab unity and led that concept to a stage where unity of objective purpose was a symbol of unity. The unity of objective purpose is a substantial fact for the popular base in the entire Arab Nation.

"Yet, the unity of objectives purpose of the popular bases will be capable of bridging the gap between various stages of development.

"The unity of the Arab Nations has attained a stage of solidarity enabling it to cope with the stage of social revolution.

"The methods of military coup d'etats; the methods of individual opportunism and the methods adopted by the ruling reaction can only indicate that the old regime in the Arab world is madly in despair and is gradually losing its nerves, while hearing at a distance from its isolated palaces the steps of the masses advancing towards their objectives purposes.

"The unity of objective purpose must be a slogan of Arab unity in its progress ~~from~~ the phase of political revolution to that of a social revolution". (1)

Thus, the policy initiated in the Cairo Summit Conference in early 1964 represented in reality the third line of action adopted by Nasser towards other Arab countries. A new, conciliatory slogan, "unity of work" replaced the earlier revolutionary slogan, "unity of purpose", as this in turn had once supplanted its predecessor, "unity of ranks".

From the disputes discussed we could trace a peculiar phenomenon: The liquidation of differences was mainly limited to those existing between monarchical traditional regimes, (Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Morocco) and republican revolutionary regimes (U.A.R. and Algeria). The disputes which existed among the republican revolutionary regimes remained unsolved: for example, U.A.R. vs. Syria, and Iraq vs. Syria.

The net result of this selective liquidation of inter-Arab disputes was the strengthening of the monarchical regimes, at home and in the Arab world at

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(1) U.A.R. Information Department, The Charter, Cairo, National Publication House Press, 1962, p.92



large, by silencing the revolutionary elements in those States. Also such a step gave the monarchical regimes the opportunity to prove that co-existence between them and the republican regimes was possible, and that it was easier to ameliorate differences stemming out of ideological incompatibility than it was to ameliorate less basic differences existing among the republican revolutionary regimes which have very similar ideological beliefs.

6. The communiqué that was issued by the Summit Conference also stated that the Arabs in their defensive position, would regulate their political and economic relations with other countries according to the attitude of these countries towards the Arab struggle against Zionist ambitions in the Arab world. (1)

7. For the implementation of the foregoing resolution the Arab Foreign Ministers held a meeting at the Arab League Headquarters in Cairo from 4th to 6th March, 1964, to agree on a plan for a unified Arab action in investigating the attitudes of other countries towards the Palestine question. It was agreed that the Ministers would visit other countries, and that the visits would

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(1) The Arab League, Statement by the Council of the Kings and Presidents of State, 17th January 1964. P.2

be paid either individually or collectively depending on the attitudes of the foreign countries towards the Palestine issue, and on specific ties binding some Arab States with certain foreign countries. Each Foreign Minister would represent the 13 Arab States and would speak in their name in accordance with the resolutions adopted at the Summit Conference. The trips would be carried out in two stages: The first would take place before the Second Summit Conference, scheduled to be held in Alexandria in August 1964; and the second stage would take place prior to the next session of the United Nations General Assembly. The Foreign Ministers who would undertake the first part of the tour would have to report the results of their missions to the Heads of State during the August meeting. (1)

All Foreign Ministers would visit the six great world capitals, namely, Washington, Moscow, London, Paris, Peking and Bonn. Visits to the other capitals would be divided among the Foreign Ministers in a manner that would ensure that each one of them would visit capitals with which his country has the best relations. Thus, e.g. the Foreign Ministers of Lebanon, Syria and Jordan would visit the countries

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(1) The Scribe, VIII, 3rd April 1964.

of Latin America, where communities of Arab origin would be found in great numbers. (1)

The Foreign Ministers decided not to limit their visits to those countries with which they had diplomatic relations, or to those countries which were members of the United Nations; the tours would cover all countries. The aim of both tours was to give the governing authorities and world public opinion a definite and objective idea of the Palestine reality, which had been deformed by biased Zionist propoganda. (2) In order to do so, it was agreed that the Foreign Ministers should express a unified opinion on all aspects of the Palestine problem and its impact on relations between the Arab States and other countries. Each Minister's visit would last for two months. The points that would be discussed by the Foreign Ministers and their hosts were the following:

a) Arab viewpoint on the Israeli plan for diversion:

(i) Israel is an imperialist, aggressive force which has occupied an Arab country, expelled its people, and usurped their property. In order to become a member of the United Nations, Israel

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(1) Ibid,

P.19

(2) Ibid,

P.20

pledged by the terms of the Lausanne Protocol to let the Arabs of Palestine return to their homes and to compensate them for their property. Yet, once admitted to the United Nations, Israel refused to let the Palestinians return or to compensate them for their losses. This makes the membership of Israel at the United Nations illegal, since its admission depended on the implementation of those resolutions that it subsequently refused to comply with.

(ii) Israel's plan to divert the waters of the Jordan River is a violation of the Armistice Agreement, and contradicts the Partition Resolution on which the existence of Israel is mainly based. It is a unilateral scheme harming the natural resources of the neighbouring countries and thus a violation of international law.

(iii) The Arab plan counteracts that of Israel and it gives the Arab countries much less than they deserve from the Jordan waters, since 67% of it runs through the Arab land. The Arabs had never accepted the Johnston plan.

(iv) The Unified Arab Command is a defensive measure, and is not a threat to any country.

(v) The Arab Heads of State expressed in their communiqué their belief in peace based on justice, and in the principle of peaceful co-existence between countries, and their faith in the necessity of solving all international problems by peaceful means according to the Charter of the United Nations. The Arabs never exercised aggression against Israel, despite its aggressive nature. Israel has been condemned many times by the Security Council for acts of aggression on the Arabs, and always declares its expansionist ambitions in the Arab world.

(vi) Israel's call for peace is in sharp contrast with its actions; it offers to have direct negotiations with the Arabs while it refuses to carry out the resolutions of the United Nations concerning repatriation and compensation for the Palestinians.

(b) The Arab Plan for the Palestine Problem:

(i) The Palestine problem is that of a people driven by force from their homeland and struggling, ever since, to return back. The dispute is mainly between the Arabs of Palestine and

Israel; and the Palestinian people has the final word concerning its self-determination.

(ii) Racial discrimination is exercised by the Government of Israel against the Arab minority; and the Knesset refuses to lift the martial laws on the closed Arab areas in Israel.

(iii) The Palestinian people and the African peoples share much in common. The African peoples suffer from the problem of refugees: Israel usurped the property of the Arabs of Palestine as the colonialist powers usurped the property of the Africans, and the Arab refusal to accept the policy of *fait accompli* parallels the African peoples' refusal of that policy. Arabs and Africans also share the problem of being developing countries, and the Arabs are ready to co-operate with the African States to find solutions to this common problem.

(iv) Israel violates the sovereignty of other countries: e.g. the crimes committed by the Israelis against the German scientists co-operating with the Arabs.

(v) The people of Palestine is determined to return to its country; and the Zionist allegation that the Palestine problem could be solved by emigration or assimilation is false.

(c) Arab property in occupied Palestine:

(i) The individually owned property of the Palestinians is sufficient to provide for the needs of the people of Palestine.

(ii) Israel refuses to appoint a custodian for the property of the Arabs in occupied Palestine.

(d) Jewish immigration to Israel

(i) The immigration of Jews to Israel is a threat to the security of the Middle East, and it hinders the implementation of the United Nations resolution concerning the return of the Arab people of Palestine to its country. So it is the duty of the peace-loving countries not to allow the Jews to emigrate from, or to pass through, their territories, and to forbid the collection of money for further Jewish settlement in Palestine.

(ii) The immigration of Jews is not an individual action motivated by economic factors, but a collective movement motivated by aggressive intentions. This call by the Zionists for immigration destroys the allegiance of a Jew to the country in which he lives, and this creates restlessness among the Jews living in these countries and divides their allegiance. (1)

8. At the First Arab Summit Conference, the Arab Heads of State decided to establish a committee composed of their personal representatives, to follow up the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Conference, to have direct contact with the Heads of the Arab States in case of a deadlock, and to work for solving the difficulties that may arise.

It was composed of the following members:

Abdul Khāliq Hassouna, Secretary-General of the Arab League, Chairman.

Mr. Bahjat Talhouni, representative of King Hussein.

Ambassador Mohammad Badra, representative of President Bourguiba.

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(1) Arab Observer, 16th March 1964.



Ambassador al-Akhdar al Ibrahim, representative of President Ben Bella.

Ambassador Ahmad Mukhtar, representative of President Ibrahim Abboud.

Ambassador Shukri Saleh Zaki, representative of Marshal Abdul Salam Aref.

Ambassador Taher Radwan, representative of King Saud.

Dr. Sami al-Jundi, representative of Lieutenant General Amin al Hafez.

Mr. Hasan Sabri al-Khawli, representative of President Jamal Abdul Nasser.

Ambassador Ahmad Mohammed Noman, representative of President Abdullah al-Sallal.

Ambassador Khaled al-Adassani, representative of Prince Abdullah al-Salem al-Sabah.

Ambassador Joseph Aby Khater, representative of President Fouad Chehab.

Ambassador Taher Bakir, representative of King Idriss al-Sounousi.

Mr. Abdul-latif al-Iraqi, representative of King Hassan II. (1)

On 9th March, 1964, the Follow-up Committee held its first meeting in Cairo. It examined the results of the meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, held

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(1) Al-Kifah, 10th March 1964.

on 4th - 6th March, 1964, progress with regard to the Unified Arab Command, and the discussions that were then being conducted by the Arab Ministers of Information. (1)

On 15th April, the Follow-up Committee held its second meeting in Cairo, and it was attended by al-Shukairi.

At the end of the meeting, Hassouna stated that the Committee listened to a report about what had been implemented of the diversion plan of the Jordan waters, presented by Hassouna; and the steps implemented in the course of the formation of the Arab Unified Command.

The Committee also listened to a detailed report presented by al-Shukairi about his contacts with the Arab Governments and the people of Palestine concerning the Palestine entity.

The Committee also studied the two notes presented by al-Khawli: the first concerning the economic relations of the U.A.R. with the other countries of the world, and the second concerning the European Common Market and Israel, and the danger, to the Palestine cause in particular and the Arab cause in general, implicit in that association.

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(1) Ibid.

The Committee also decided that the Palestine Congress would convene on 28th May instead of 14th May, 1964. (1)

The Committee was thenceforth to be known as the "Committee of Personal Representatives of the Arab Kings and Heads of State".

The Committee of Personal Representatives continued thenceforth to hold monthly meetings in which it discussed the developments pertaining to Summit Conference Resolutions.

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(1) Al-Kifah, 17th April. 1964.

CHAPTER VII

THE ALEXANDRIA SUMMIT CONFERENCE,

September, 1964.

A. Preparatory Foreign Ministers' Meeting:

On 1st September, 1964, the Arab Foreign Ministers met at the Arab League Headquarters in Cairo, to prepare the agenda of the second Summit Conference. The Meeting was attended by all the Foreign Ministers except that of Saudi Arabia (which was represented by Omar al-Sakka, permanent under-secretary of the Saudi Foreign Ministry). It was also attended by the Secretary-General of the Arab League and his three assistants; by Ali Ali Amer, Commander-in-Chief of the Unified Arab Command; and by Ahmad al-Shukairi, the representative of Palestine at the Arab League.

On 3rd September, the Foreign Ministers drafted the agenda, which consisted of the following items:

1. The projects pertaining to the Jordan River and its tributaries, including a plan for al-Moukhaiba dam.
2. The Unified Arab Command, and related military problems.

3. The Palestine entity, and the steps taken towards its establishment.
4. The financial and moral support that should be given to the Republic of Yemen.
5. The problem of South Arabia, including "colonial plans against the occupied South and Oman".
6. The reports of the Foreign Ministers regarding their world tour, and the attitude of each country visited towards the Palestine question.

The Foreign Ministers decided to leave discussion of the following questions to the Heads of State:

- I. The report of Ali Ali Amer.
2. The detailed plan for the diversion of the Jordan River and the money to be allocated for the short-range period.
3. The budget of the Palestine entity and the political and military issues connected with it. (1)

B. Meetings and Discussions of the Conference:

On 5th September, 1964, the Second Arab Summit Conference opened in Alexandria, at al-Muntazah Palace.

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(1) Al Ahram, 4th September 1964.

It was attended by Hussein, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan; Bahi al-Adgham, the representative of the President of the Republic of Tunisia; Ahmad Ben Bella, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria; Lt. General Ibrahim Abboud, Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces of the Sudanese Republic; Field Marshal Abdul Salam Aref, President of the Republic of Iraq; Amir Feisal al-Saud, Deputy of the King of Saudi Arabia; Lt. General Mohammad Amin al-Hafez, Chairman of the National Revolutionary Command of the Syrian Republic; Jamal Abdul Nasser, President of the U.A.R.; Field Marshal Abdullah al-Sallal, President of the Yemeni Arab Republic; Sheikh Abdullah al-Salem al-Sabah, Ruler of the State of Kuwait; Charles Helou, President-elect of the Republic of Lebanon; Idris I, King of the Kingdom of Libya; Amir Abdullah, Deputy of the King of the Kingdom of Morocco; and Ahmad al-Shukairi, Chairman of the P.L.O.

The Chairman of the Conference was Feisal.

In the opening meeting, Nasser, as host, addressed the Conference by saying that the U.A.R. did not have any national or international problems to discuss at this Conference; and that the self-created force of the U.A.R. was growing steadily for its defense and that of the Arab world. (1)

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(1) Al Ahram, 6th September 1964.

After that Abdullah read a letter, on behalf of his brother addressed to the Conference, in which he said that Morocco was prepared to defend the rights of the Arab nation and to protect its interests, and to make every sacrifice for the liberation of Palestine. (1)

The meeting, which was held in camera, lasted for one and a half hours, during which Hassouna presented a 65-minute report.

In his political review, Hassouna discussed the problem of Yemen, in spite of the fact that neither Saudi Arabia nor the Republic of Yemen had shown any interest in discussing the problem at the Foreign Ministers' meeting. Hassouna stated that this problem should be solved in order to enable the Arab States to repel the persisting threat of imperialism and zionism in the Arab world.

He also pointed to the British occupation of al-Buraimi Oasis, although, at the Foreign Ministers' Meeting, Saudi Arabia had requested the exclusion of this item, stating that it was then in the process of negotiating the problem with the British Government. Hassouna asked for collective Arab action to put an end to British aggression in that area.

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(1) Ibid.

Hassouna exhibited secret official letters exchanged between him and General Ali Ali Amer concerning the refusal of the Lebanese Government to implement that part of the diversion plan that would fall within its boundaries until it completed its defense preparations - which - according to Hassouna, would take a long time. Lebanon had also announced its refusal to allow any Arab armed forces to be stationed on its territory for defense purposes.

The exhibition of these letters prompted Helou to interrupt and ask for the floor so as to clarify Lebanon's point of view. This request led to an argument between Helou and the Chairman (Feisal), which was resolved in accordance with the Kuwaiti proposal that Helou would speak at the next meeting. (See page 211 below).

Hassouna then resumed delivery of his report, reviewing the attitude of the American, British and French Governments towards the Palestine question. In the course of this review, he analyzed:

1. The relations between each of the above-mentioned countries with Israel.
2. The interests of each of those countries in the Arab world.

Hassouna concluded his report by submitting a



list of sixteen specific recommendations to be adopted by the Conference. One of them was:

"A specific and final permission from the Arab Kings and Presidents to start with the implementation of the present Arab diversion plan of the Jordan River and its tributaries in September, 1964." (1)

On 6th September, 1964, the Conference held two secret meetings. The first one opened at 10:50 a.m., in which Helou declared that Lebanon had fulfilled all the financial, technical and military obligations assigned to it by the First Summit Conference, and that Lebanon was ready to fulfill its "obligations of Arab solidarity" with the other Arab States. (2)

Helou was followed by General Ali Ali Amer, who presented his report, which was divided into three sections:

I. The first section comprised a detailed study of what had been accomplished concerning the resolution, adopted by the first Summit Conference, to establish a

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(1) Ibid.

(2) Chronology of Arab Politics, Vol II, No. 3, P.232

Unified Arab Command, composed of contingents of those Arab armies that could face any war possibilities.

In this section of the report, Amer discussed the following points:

- a. The formation of the Unified Arab Command, its circumstances, and the situation of the contingents that were placed at its disposal by the Arab Governments.
  - b. The requirements of the Command and the contingents, along with the requirements of the decision to implement the Arab plan for the diversion of the Jordan River and its tributaries.
2. The second section contained an estimation of the different situations that might develop on the Arab-Israeli borders. It included:
- a. A detailed study of the ground, sea and air forces of Israel, based on reports submitted by the U.A.R. military intelligence service.
  - b. A survey of the probable military action on the part of Israel in the face of implementing the diversion plan; "Israel would definitely take military action at a certain stage of the diversion plan." (1)

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(1) Al-Ahram, 7th September 1964.

- c. A specific survey of the required military preparation, on all Arab fronts, to face any possible move on the part of Israel.
3. The third section covered points of political and strategic importance:
    - a. Amer pointed out that his military plan would only cover Arab confrontation of the Israeli forces, acting alone: it did not cover any foreign intervention in support of Israel, because that would fall under the responsibility of the Arab Political Command.
    - b. He stressed that the Arab States could face any military challenge by Israel, if the unity of the Arab military forces was achieved.
    - c. He warned against over-estimating as well as under-estimating the strength of the enemy, because such a miscalculation would lead not only to psychological errors but also to military errors.

At the end of the report, the meeting was adjourned, to be resumed at 6 p.m. on the same day.

The evening meeting started with a discussion of Amer's report. Hussein proposed that the report be studied by a committee of the Arab Higher Defense Council. The proposal was adopted.

Then al-Bahi al-Adgham submitted a project in which he proposed that "the Arab States surrounding Israel carrying the greatest responsibility in the field of defense ought to have a unified political command which could issue orders to the unified military command, and which would enjoy the support of the remaining Arab States. In other words, there should be two circles around Israel, an immediate surrounding circle, and an outer circle representing the Arab world as a whole." (1)

This project, according to al-Adgham, involved a form of a summit conference in miniature, having three organisations:

1. A unified political command that would have the final word.
2. A co-ordinating committee that would act as a liaison officer between the summit conference and the miniature one. (The Secretary-General of the Arab League, or any other political figure, could occupy this position).
3. The organisation of the Palestine entity, which should have full authority to take decisions and determine critical situations.

The Arab States are facing one enemy with one command and thus requires quick decisions on the part of the Arabs, he argued. (2)

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(1) Al-Ahram, 8th September 1964.

(2) Ibid.

On 7th September, 1964, at 9:15 a.m., the Arab Higher Defense Council met in order to discuss Amer's report. The Council consisted of the Ministers of Defense and Foreign Affairs and the Chiefs-of-Staff of the Arab States, the Secretary General of the Arab League, and the representatives of the Permanent Military Committee of the Arab League.<sup>(1)</sup>The Council could not reach an agreement, so it decided to adjourn at 11:00 a.m., and to resume its efforts in another meeting to be held at 5:00 p.m.

The Summit Conference then opened its meeting at 11:15 a.m. Ali Ali Amer summarised the discussions that were carried on in the Defense Council's meeting.

In its afternoon meeting, the Defense Council had two important points to resolve:

- I. The stepping-up of military preparedness in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan.
2. The freedom to move troops from one Arab State to the other as a measure of unifying the different Arab fronts. The Commander-in-Chief wanted to be given the freedom to use the forces under his disposition at the right time and place according to the plan which he had drawn up.

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(1) Chronology of Arab Politics, Vol II, No. 3, P.232

At the end of its meeting, the Council had before it four recommendations, one from each of the following States: Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. It was decided that the four recommendations would be submitted to the Summit Conference for consideration.

At 7:30 p.m., the Summit Conference held its second meeting on 7th September, 1964. The Secretary-General presented the four military recommendations. Discussion was opened but no agreement could be reached and as a result of this deadlock, the meeting was adjourned after four hours. (1)

On 8th September, 1964, the atmosphere that prevailed at the Conference was described as one of "optimism tempered with caution". The turning-point was Nasser's proposal to the Conference to discuss a plan for defining "the ultimate objective of collective Arab action and the intermediate goals towards this objective which should be reached gradually". (2)

This proposal was based on two main questions:

I. What should be the ultimate goal of collective Arab action, and what steps should be taken towards its realisation?

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(1) Al-Ahram, 8th September 1964.

(2) Chronology of Arab Politics, op.cit. P.232

2. What should be the plan followed for the realisation of these steps, one after the other?

The U.A.R. had formulated "headlines" for answering the above-mentioned question. It had also asked the Conference to participate in formulating the details for the realisation of the ultimate goal which was described as being "the liberation of Palestine and the termination of the Israeli aggression". (1)

The U.A.R. proposal also included the following points:

I. That the Conference should discuss ways and means of strengthening the Arab forces to such a degree that they would be able to attain the ultimate goal of collective Arab action. It should also discuss the mobilisation of the military, economic, and political potentials of the Arab States for the same purpose.

2. That the Conference should ask each Arab State to submit a detailed report covering its capacity to send military men and equipment for the reinforcement of the Arab States surrounding Israel; and to define specifically what would be its share of the responsibility of achieving the national goal under discussion.

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(1) Al-Ahram, 9th September 1964.

3. That the Conference should authorise the Unified Arab Command to draw up a detailed plan - on the basis of the information received in response to the above-mentioned request - covering the expenses, needs and time-limit for its implementation.

The Conference endorsed unanimously the proposal submitted by the U.A.R.

The discussion then centered on the four military proposals. The most important points discussed were: (1)

I. The Unified Arab Command had specific military demands that would enable it to protect the diversion plan against any Israeli attack. (These demands were rejected).

2. Ali Ali Amer asked to be given full authority to move troops from one Arab State to another. (This did not include any U.A.R. troops).

Helou refused to allow any Arab troops to enter Lebanon, except in a war situation and after consulting the Lebanese Parliament and getting its approval. The reason behind this attitude was described as "the peculiar circumstances" of Lebanon.

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(1) An interview with Mr. Ahmad al-Shukairi, 9th February 1966.



The plan also included the entry of Iraqi and Saudi troops into Jordan; Hussein refused to allow the entry of these or any other Arab troops.

On 9th September, 1964, another secret meeting was held. It opened at 6:20 p.m. and lasted till 8:15 p.m. At this meeting Nasser formulated a resolution which called for the immediate initiation of works on the Arab project for the diversion of the Jordan River and its tributaries. It was immediately approved by Hussein and Aref; Helou asked to be given enough time in order to be able to review the resolution with his delegation before giving any final opinion.

During the discussion of the probable military reactions on the part of Israel, Ben Bella declared that, in case of an Israeli aggression, the Algerian army would be put at the disposal of the Unified Arab Command. Similar assurances were made by Morocco and Tunisia. (1)

On 10th September, 1964, the morning meeting opened at 10:20 a.m., and lasted until 1:20 p.m. The discussion centered on the Palestine entity. After hearing al-Shukairi's report, Feisal asked for the floor, for the first time since the opening of the Conference, in his capacity as the head

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(1) Al-Ahram, 10th September 1964.

of the Saudi Delegation and not as the Chairman of the Conference, in order to explain the Saudi point of view.

Saudi Arabia, he stated, did not object to the idea of the entity, as such, but it did have some reservations on the manner of establishing the entity. Saudi Arabia understood by the resolution adopted at the first Summit Conference that al-Shukairi was authorised to submit a study in the form of a report to the second Summit, which would then have the final decision on the establishment of the Palestine entity.

Al-Shukairi replied by stating that:

I. He did not understand by the authorisation given to him that it was limited to the writing of a report; nor did any of the Arab officials whom he had visited in the tour make such an interpretation. When he knew that Saudi Arabia had some reservations, he on more than one occasion asked to meet with Feisal; but the only answer that he received was a telegramme stating that Saudi Arabia would formulate its opinion on the "entity" according to the decisions that would be taken by the other Arab States.

2. He did not claim that the process through which the "entity" was established was "ideal" or "perfect". He admitted that there were groups who had different plans. For example:

a) The Al-Baath party wanted to establish the "entity" on the remaining three parts of Palestine, namely, the Western Bank of Jordan, Ghaza, and al-H~~emma~~. It also wanted membership in the Palestine Congress to be based on elections.

Al-Shukairi explained that he did not have any objection to the theory as such, but emphasised that the Palestinians at the present do not have any sovereignty over the land, although it belongs to them; and if we could assume that the land was given to them, who would defend it against any immediate Israeli aggression?

As for the impracticability of holding elections, some of the Arab States (such as Syria, Iraq and Saudi Arabia) do not apply the system of elections to their own citizens. And if elections were held, who would ensure that the Palestinians living in Jordan and Lebanon (for example) would be allowed to have free elections without governmental interference?

b) Jordan would never consent to the establishment of any form of a Palestinian Government on the Western bank, the most important among the parts of Palestine outside Zionist control.

c. Lebanon had agreed to the establishment of the organisation as a political "entity", with no

power to assume national or military responsibilities.

- d. The Arab Higher Committee also suggested elections<sup>s</sup> as the basis for the "entity". According to al-Shukairi, the Committee does not exist except in the person of Hajj Amin al-Husseini; all of its members had died except Mohammad Darwaza, who had resigned.

Then al-Shukairi added the following remarks:

- I. He pointed out that the Palestine question at the United Nations level had been reduced to a question of "helping the refugees". He suggested that the path that ought to be followed for its revival would be through organised Palestinian action.

2. He proposed the establishment of a financial institution for the liberation of Palestine. Its target should be the collection of 45 million pounds sterling, to be collected by levying a tax of 5 fils on every barrel of oil, half a piaster on every pack of cigarettes, movie ticket, etc. The 45 million pounds would be distributed in the following manner: 15 million to Jordan, in order to enable it to dispense with U.S. aid; 15 million to the P.L.O.; and 15 million to the Unified Arab Command.

(This project was transferred to the Committee on

the Financial Institution for study. It was rejected in December 1965, because of the opposition of the oil-producing countries). (1)

Upon hearing al-Shukairi's explanations, Feisal declared that Saudi Arabia would give up its reservations on the "entity" after the latter proved its effectiveness and necessity.

Al-Shukairi retorted that it would be impossible for a Palestine "entity" to prove itself effective and necessary without collective Arab support.

Ben Bella added that, even if there were no perfect "entity" at the beginning, and if there were elements objecting to the process through which it was established, it would still be imperative that the entity be given full support by all the Arab States in order to enable it to face the requirements of the present stage of the struggle.

The afternoon meeting opened at 6:20 p.m., it discussed the Palestine Army. After hearing the report submitted by the Commander-in-Chief of the Unified Arab Command, the Conference turned its attention to the place where the army should be stationed. Jordan claimed that it had a peculiar position: since its own army was composed of Pales-

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(1) An interview with al-Shukairi, 9th February 1966.

-tinian and Jordanian elements, the setting up of an independent Palestine Army on the Western bank would create serious complications. In order to avoid this deadlock, Nasser declared that the Ghaza strip and the Sinai Penninsula would be placed at the disposal of the Palestine liberation army. He also proposed that the resolution related to the establishment of this army should be adopted by the P.L.O. Executive Committee, and should be endorsed by the Summit Conference. The proposal was unanimously adopted.

As for financing the army, the Conference decided that each Arab State should contribute a sum proportional to its share in the Arab League budget.

Aref opened the way for immediate contributions by stating that Iraq would donate 1 million pounds sterling for the army. This prompted the ruler of Kuwait to contribute one million. Aref added another million, again prompting Kuwait to add a million. Libya then contributed half a million, and Saudi Arabia one million.

At the end of this meeting, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Sudan, (the four Arab States which had not theretofore signed the Joint Arab Defence Pact) decided to sign it before the close of the Summit Conference.

Al-Shukairi issued a communiqué in which he declared that the Conference, at its morning meeting, had endorsed the establishment of the P.L.O. as an organ representing (in both realms: the Arab and the international), the people of Palestine and its determination to carry out its national aspiration of liberating Palestine.

He also declared that the P.L.O. informed the Conference during its evening meeting that the Executive Committee had adopted a resolution in which it decided to establish the Palestine Liberation Army, and that the Conference approved of it and promised to endorse the resolution.

The Conference had also decided that the budget of P.L.O., excluding the army, would be one million dinars.(1)

C. The Final Communiqué:

On 11th September, 1964, the Arab Summit Conference issued a communiqué in which it declared that:

1. The Conference adopted a unanimous definition of the Arab national cause as that of liberating Palestine from Zionist imperialism and pursuing a plan of joint Arab action, both during the present stage - for which plans had already been laid down - and at the next stage for which

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(1) Al-Ahram, 11th September 1964.

it had already been decided to make preparations.

As for the preparations for the present stage, the Conference adopted the necessary resolutions:

- a. To begin immediate work on the Arab plans of exploiting the Jordan River and its tributaries.
  - b. To welcome the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organisation as a support for the Palestine entity and a vanguard of the joint Arab struggle to liberate Palestine. (It also fixed the obligations of each Arab State towards the P.L.O.).
  - c. To endorse the decision taken by the P.L.O. to establish the Palestine Liberation Army.
2. The Conference decided to continue the processes set in motion by the first Summit Conference.
- a. It discussed the political and economic reports on Arab relations with foreign countries, and the outcome of the visits that had been paid to foreign countries by the Arab Foreign Ministers. The Conference decided to continue these contacts, and to complete the reports before implementing the resolution adopted at the first Summit Conference, according to which the Arab States would fashion their relations with foreign countries



on the basis of each country's attitude towards Palestine and other Arab issues.

- b. The Conference decided that the follow-up committee set up by the first Summit Conference should continue its operations by meeting once a month at the existing level, and once every four months at the Premiers' or Deputy Premiers' level in one of the Arab States. The meeting of the Premiers or Deputy Premiers would be considered the executive body of the Conference of the Kings and Presidents of the Arab States. It would undertake the implementation of the plans laid down by the Summit Conference. It would prepare the proposals that would be submitted to the Conference of the Kings and Presidents of the Arab States. And it would be able to call for an unscheduled meeting of the Kings and Presidents in case of an emergency or situation necessitating an urgent meeting.

3. The Conference, prompted by its belief in the solidarity of Afro-Asian countries, decided to support the outcome of the second African Summit Conference, held in Cairo in July 1964. The Arab Conference expressed its optimism about the development of African unity; and noted that events proved that neo-imperialism had used, and was still using, Israel as a tool to achieve its ambitions in

the developing countries, contrary to the aspirations of those nations to progress, power, and unity, and in keeping with the neo-imperialist desire of maintaining unlawful foreign exploitation in those countries.

The Conference stressed that the just causes of the peoples, and their right to achieve freedom and self-determination and to get rid of imperialism and racial segregation should be considered as a single cause, and that Arab-African cooperation should be on the basis of their history, geography, and common interests and aims. (1)

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(1) The Arab League, Statement by the Council of the Kings and Presidents of State,  
11th September 1964. pp 5 - 11

CHAPTER VIII

BETWEEN THE SECOND AND THIRD SUMMIT CONFERENCES

In mid-June, 1965, Mohammad Hassanein Haikal, a leading Cairo political writer and a close friend of Nasser, stated that only a miracle could now save the Arab summit policy; and he made it clear that he did not believe in miracles. (1)

The reason for the scepticism expressed by Haikal, and showed by many Arabs in mid-1965, were manifold. The most important of these reasons were the following:

A.- Suspension of Work on the Jordan Water Schemes:

The Arab Premiers held a meeting from 26th May until 30th May, 1965, in which they discussed the diversion scheme. At this meeting it was made clear that the implementation of the Arab diversion plan was in grave danger, because the Arab States could not reach an agreement on the formation of a joint Arab force which would be capable of providing effective air and land protection against probable attacks by Israel on the diversion works. (2)

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(1) Al-Ahram, 18th June 1965.

(2) Al-Mouharer, 13th May 1965.

The situation could be summarised as follows:

1. The Syrian Government had been pressing for immediate action against Israel. And it had publicly invited U.A.R. land and air forces to be stationed on its territory. The U.A.R. had proclaimed that it would be willing to offer such assistance under certain guarantees. At the same time, however, the U.A.R. made it clear that it would not consider itself under any obligation to assist Syria unless there was an immediate Israeli threat of occupying a piece of Syrian territory. As a result of some limited Israeli attacks, in which the U.A.R. did not come to the aid of Syria, Syria suspended the work on the diversion plan.

In spite of its "verbal ferocity" Syria had shown that it was not yet prepared "by means of a more aggressive defence of its diversion project to provoke such a threat".(1)

2. Lebanon's position had been similarly ambivalent. On 8th January, 1965, al-Ahram reported that the primary problem facing the Prime Ministers in their session, which was due to open on 9th January 1965, was "Lebanon's attitude on the diversion plan in its territory. Lebanon

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(1) The Guardian, 13th September 1965.

had not yet approved of the choice of any spot lying in its territory," (1) as a diversion site.

The Premiers' Meeting was held from 9th to 12th January, 1965. Lebanon maintained that it could not go ahead with its diversion project unless adequate protection was forthcoming from the Unified Arab Command. At the same time Lebanon had been reluctant to grant the Command the necessary facilities, such as the right to station Arab troops on Lebanese territory to ensure the demanded protection.

On 14th January, 1965, Helou received Oweini, the Prime Minister, and Takla, the Foreign Minister, to report on the Premiers' Conference. At this meeting, Takla expressed the position taken by the Lebanese Delegation at the Premiers' Conference regarding the diversion plan. Takla explained that the Lebanese Delegation was faced with one of three alternatives:

- a. To withdraw from the Conference.
- b. To accept the installation of the Wazzani pumping station in Syria, on the mouth of the Banias River. This would force Lebanon to accept the stationing of about 2,100 Arab troops of the Unified Arab Command in South Lebanon for the purpose of protecting

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(1) Al-Ahram, 8th January 1965.

the enemy's access to the station through Lebanese territory.

- c. To accept the installation of the Wazzani pumping station inside Lebanese territory. This would make Lebanon responsible for the pumping and protection operations; the Unified Arab Command would not intervene except on the explicit request of the Lebanese Army command, endorsed by resolutions from the Government of Lebanon and its Parliament.

It was the third alternative that was adopted by the Lebanese Delegation. (1)

As a result of this announcement, public opinion in Lebanon was aroused; and the Lebanese Parliament asked to be informed of the secret resolutions that were adopted at the Premiers' Conference.

On 16th January, 1965, the Lebanese cabinet held a three-hour extraordinary session, under the chairmanship of Helou. Takla explained to the cabinet "the reservations made by the Lebanese Delegation about the entry of Arab forces into Lebanon, and stressed that Lebanon would not shy away from its obligations, emphasising however the need for explaining that the Arab

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(1) Al-Hayat, 17th January 1965.

military commander will have no right to order troops into Lebanon before obtaining consent from the Government, even in the event of war". (1)

At the end of the meeting a statement was issued in which it was announced that the Cabinet endorsed the policy of the Delegation regarding the diversion issue. It was also announced that the Government would seek prior sanction from Parliament, which would empower it to summon Arab forces, if the need arose in connection with the Lebanese plans for diverting the course of the Hasbani River waters and the installation of the necessary water pumps on the Wazzani River. (2)

On 21st January, 1965, the Lebanese Parliament met in a secret session from 8:00 p.m. until 3:00 a.m. on 22nd January, 1965. At the end of a heated debate, in which maps were spread and alternative diversion plans were offered, from which Lebanon would be the sole beneficiary, a statement was issued. The statement proclaimed that the Lebanese Parliament authorised the Cabinet to decide whether and when Arab troops should be allowed to enter Lebanon. The Cabinet, however, must first consult the Lebanese Army Command, and the Parliament must be notified of the steps taken. The circum-

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(1) The Daily Star, 17th January 1965.

(2) Ibid.

stances in which the Cabinet might allow the entry of other Arab troops were described as "a possible attack threatening the security of the country, or when this entry was required because of emergency military considerations demanding urgent measures". (1)

3. There had been indications that the U.A.R was preparing Arab public opinion for the possibility that the Summit Conference might give up the diversion scheme altogether. Nasser had been waiting for a convenient opportunity to make such an announcement.

On 31st May, 1965, Nasser delivered the opening speech at the second Palestinian National Congress, meeting in Cairo. In this speech he announced that:

a. The Arab League was a path, but not the path, for the liberation of Palestine.

b. Collective Arab action had represented the interaction between facts and aspirations. This interaction had been accompanied by contradictions and distrust between the Arab States. Distrust existed between Iraq and Syria, and the U.A.R. and Syria. And an actual war that was being fought between the U.A.R. and Yemen on

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(1) Al Hayat, 22nd January 1965



one side, and Saudi Arabia and Britain on the other, because of the Yemeni revolution. Other feelings of mistrust had been manifested by not allowing armed forces of certain states to enter territories of other Arab states to ensure their defence.

As a result of all these instances of distrust, collective Arab action - as exemplified by the resolutions adopted at the Summit Conferences - had been exposed (and had been exposing, along with it, the Palestine question) to auctions, bargains, contradictions and acts of buying and selling. The Syrian Government had been talking about an immediate war with Israel. Before taking such a step, the Arab States should have the minimum defence requirements, and then they could declare war according to the plan agreed upon at the Summit Conferences (which defined the goal of collective Arab action as the augmentation of self-defence, and which defined the final goal as that of liberating Palestine).

Nasser declared that the Syrian Delegation to the Premiers' Conference, which was held in May 1965, requested the stationing of a U.A.R. airforce in Syria. He replied by saying that "the problem between us and the Syrian Government was not military; it was a problem of distrust. What would be our guarantee, if we sent them

air-planes, that they would not claim that the U.A.R. pilots had made conspiracies against them? We had told them that we would send an air force if they would give us an air-base which would be protected by our forces so as to be assured that it would not be attacked."(1)

The Arab States could not declare war on Israel at the time when many of them would not be able to defend themselves, at the time when Israel would have the support of big powers, and at the time when the U.A.R. had 50,000 of its military men fighting in Yemen.

"Under all circumstances the summitry policy could not lead to the liberation of Palestine. It could not be liberated by conferences or speeches or resolutions."(2)

c. The path that would lead to the liberation of Palestine is Arab revolutionary action. The fact that P.L.O. had been established could be considered a defeat to those slogans calling for the liquidation of the Palestine problem and its people.

The people of Palestine would be the vanguard of the revolutionary action.

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(1) Ah-Ahram, 1st June 1965.

(2) Ibid.

In short Nasser was telling the Palestinians that they were the vanguard; that the U.A.R. would assist them with the liberation of Palestine; but that this assistance would not be given now.

B. The Yemeni Question

At the end of the second Summit Conference, Feisal paid a private visit to Nasser. The aim of this visit was to hold direct talks between the two leaders in order to come to an agreement over the Yemeni question. Several meetings were held between the two parties. They were attended by Prince Sultan, Defence Minister of Saudi Arabia; and Field Marshal Abdul Hakim Amer, the First Vice-President and the Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

On 14th September, 1964, a communiqué was issued stating that agreement had been reached on the following points:

1. Saudi Arabia and the U.A.R. undertook to make the necessary arrangements and to mediate between the Yemeni parties concerned in order to provide the necessary atmosphere for the solution of the problem by peaceful means.

2. Saudi Arabia and the U.A.R. resolved to co-operate in solving the existing dispute between the parties concerned in Yemen, and were determined to put an end to the present military entanglement.

3. Saudi Arabia and the U.A.R. announced their determination "to co-operate in every field, and to support one another under all political, material and moral circumstances." (1)

This agreement was not put into effect because subsequently Nasser insisted that the ousted Imam and his family should not participate in the future government of Yemen, and that the republican regime should be maintained, while Feisal rejected both demands with equal firmness.

Thus, throughout the year which intervened between the second and third Summit Conferences, the problem of Yemen was the main threat to the holding of the third Summit Conference.

In order to save the third Summit Conference, another attempt was made to end the war in Yemen.

On 22nd August, 1965, Nasser visited Feisal in order to discuss again the Yemeni question. Talks were

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(1) Al-Ahram, 15th September 1964.

held between the two leaders, at which neither the Yemeni royalists nor the republicans were present. On 24th August an agreement was signed between the two leaders at the Khuzam royal palace in Jedda. (1) It stated that the aim of the talks was to make it possible for the people of Yemen to exercise their free will in order to provide an atmosphere of peace, in addition to the removal of all causes of "transient disagreement" between the U.A.R. and Saudi Arabia.

The two leaders, the agreement went on to say, after getting in touch with the representatives of the people of Yemen and all their national forces, decided that the question of Yemen could be solved through:

- "1. Giving the Yemeni people the right opportunity to decide and affirm their view as to the kind of government they want in a popular plebiscite, to be held at a date not later than November 23rd, 1966.
- "2. The remaining period up to the date of the plebiscite shall be considered a transitional period to prepare for the plebiscite.
- "3. Saudi Arabia and the U.A.R. will co-operate in forming a transitional conference of 50 members representing all the national forces and people of authority in Yemen, after consultations with the various Yemeni groups in accordance with the

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(1) Al-Ahram, 25th August 1965.

agreement to be reached. The Conference will meet at Harad (in Yemen) on November 23rd, 1965, and will undertake: determination of the system of government during the transitional period and until the popular plebiscite is held; formation of a provisional Cabinet to be in charge of the government during the transitional period; determination of the form and kind of the plebiscite which will be held by November 23rd, 1966, at the latest.

- "4. The two Governments shall adopt the resolutions of the above-mentioned transitional Yemeni conference, support them, and co-operate to ensure their successful implementation. They declare from now their acceptance of a joint, neutral follow-up committee of both, to be in charge of the plebiscite should the conference decide the need for the presence of such a neutral committee.
- "5. Saudi Arabia will immediately stop military aid of all kinds and the use of Saudi Arabian territory for operations against Yemen.
- "6. The U.A.R. will withdraw all its military forces from Yemen within 10 months beginning on November 23rd, 1965.

- "7. Armed fighting in Yemen will be stopped immediately and a joint peace commission from both sides will be formed to: supervise the cease fire through a special supervisory commission; supervise the frontiers and ports, and stop all kinds of military aid. Food aid will continue, under the supervision of the peace commission. The said commission will be entitled to use all the necessary travel facilities within Yemeni territory as well as use Saudi Arabia territory, if necessary.
- "8. Saudi Arabia and the U.A.R. will co-operate and act positively to ensure the carrying out of this agreement and impose stability in Yemen until the proclamation of the result of the plebiscite, by forming a force of the two countries to be used by the commission when necessary to prevent any departure from this agreement or any action to obstruct it or provoke disorder against its success.
- "9. In order to promote cooperation between the U.A.R. and Saudi Arabia and enable this cooperation to continue beyond the present phase to the normal phase which should prevail over relations between the two countries, there will be direct contact

between President Abdel Nasser and King Feisal to avoid any difficulties in the way of carrying out this agreement." (1)

The agreement represented significant concessions by Nasser: it did not stipulate that the ousted Imam and his family would not participate in the future government of Yemen; nor did it specify the form of the future government - which could be a republic, a monarchy, or an imamate.

C. Failure of some Arab States to implement Resolutions pertaining to the Federal Republic of Germany:

The Arab Governments had agreed, at their first two Summit Conferences, that they would regulate their relations with foreign countries according to the attitude those countries took towards Israel. With the question of West Germany, their intentions were put to the test. The background of this question is as follows:

In 1957-58, West Germany purchased from the U.S. about 1,000 of the M-48's - a 49-ton tank with a 90-millimeter gun that was developed in the earlier 1950's, and was then being replaced by M-60 tanks. These were

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(1) The Times (London); 25th August 1965.



sold under the condition that the West Germans would not resell or transfer them to another country without the approval of the U.S. Government. (1)

In March 1960, Dr. Adenauer and Mr. Ben Gurion met secretly in New York. Mr. Strauss, then Defence Minister of West Germany, arranged, after consulting in advance the U.S. Government and getting its approval, (2) "to supply Israel with arms and military equipment worth some 320 million marks". (3) The agreement was put into effect in the summer of 1962. (4) And since then, West German agencies had been shipping to Tel-Aviv German built Fiat G 91 fighter aircraft, naval vessels, armoured vehicles, signalling equipment, and 11 of M-48 tanks. (5) Of the amount of 320 million marks agreed upon in 1960, "some 200 million marks had been accounted for by the end of 1964." (6) The weapons delivered to Israel included purchases, with West German money, from Sweden, Switzerland,

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(1) The New York Times, (International Edition)  
1st February 1965.

(2) The New York Times, (International Edition)  
18th February 1965.

(3) The Economist, 6th February 1965.

(4) The Observer, 21st February 1965.  
op. cit.

(5) The Economist, 6th February 1965.

(6) Ibid.

Britain, and the U.S. (1) Along with the goods, technical instruction had been offered to Israel. For instance, a detachment of 45 Israeli officers attended a course at the Bundeswehr weapons training school at Münster. (2)

In June 1964, the new Chancellor, Dr. Erhard, asked the U.S. Government to excuse him from completing the task accepted by his predecessor. The answer was no; and an additional 200 of the M-48's - ~~As~~ 49 ton tanks were added to the delivery. These tanks sailed to Israel on British ships from Portsmouth. (3)

The news was reported by the New York Times, before the U.A.R. had reacted to it. Perhaps the aim behind this move was to put the U.A.R. on the spot and force it to speak out, thus opening the door for negotiations between West Germany and Israel over the questions of the West German scientists in Egypt, and the recognition of Israel by West Germany.

As a reaction to the West German policy, al-Ahram published, on 24th January, 1965, a brief announcement

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(1) Spectator, 19th February 1965.

(2) The Economist, 6th February 1965

(3) The Observer, 21st February 1965

to the effect that Herr Ulbricht, the Chairman of the East German Council of State, was expected to come to Cairo in February, 1965. (1) By publishing this news, the U.A.R. presumably intended to put pressure on Bonn to drop its arms deal with Israel. Perhaps it also intended to force Bonn to drop its reserve about its Middle East policy and to make some declaration on what it intended to do about Israel's demand for recognition.

On 31st January, 1965, Dr. George Federer, the West German Ambassador in Cairo, met with Nasser; and on 1st February, 1965, Federer was ordered to Bonn by his Government, in order to give a full report about his conversations with Nasser, during which he evidently failed to impress Nasser with Bonn's opposition to Ulbricht's forthcoming visit.

On 1st February, 1965, Herr Von Hase, the official spokesman for the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, told journalists in Bonn that "a visit by Herr Ulbricht, the arch-enemy of German unity, if it were carried through, would bring with it deep changes in the relations between the German and the Egyptian peoples and between the Governments". (2)

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(1) Al-Ahram, 24th January 1965.

(2) The Times (London), 2nd February 1965.

He also warned the U.A.R. that German development aid was at stake. (The U.A.R. had received 25% of all the Federal Republic's capital aid to the Arab League States; she had already received a total of 795 million D.M. [about £70 m.] and a similar aid programme was due to begin in May). (1)

The West German Government would regard the Ulbricht visit to the U.A.R. as de facto recognition of East Germany; and this would cause Bonn to break its diplomatic relations with Cairo. (2) This attitude was in line with a 10-year-old policy decision, labeled "The Hallstein Doctrine" which was officially defined by Dr. Adenauer in a speech to the Bundestag on 22nd September, 1955, in these words:

"The Federal Government will ~~in~~ future regard the establishment of diplomatic relations with the 'German Democratic Republic' through third countries with which it has official ties as an unfriendly act, calculated to deepen the division of Germany". (3)

On 10th February, 1965, Mr. Ali Sabri, the U.A.R.

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(1) Ibid.

(2) The Times (London), 27th January 1965.

(3) The Times (London), 24th February 1965.

Prime Minister, said in the U.A.R. National Assembly that "to settle the dispute between the two countries, West Germany had given assurances that it would:

"End arms support to Israel.

"Ensure that no arms shipments were in transit to that country.

"Not supply arms in the future to areas of tension."(1)

On 12th February, 1965 the Federal Government announced that "there would be no more arms deliveries to areas of political tension; the Egyptians had been told that there must be no visit to Cairo by Herr Ulbricht; and Bonn expressly retained complete freedom over its future relations with Israel". (2)

Dr. Erhard said that Bonn was negotiating with the Israel Government on how to fulfill the remainder of the D.M. 320 M. (about £29 m.) agreement on arms deliveries, about 80% of which is reported to have been fulfilled. Germany, he said, would not break agreements. He left open the possibility that either civilian items or credits would be supplied instead. (3)

As a result of this announcement, Israel began to

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(1) Al-Ahram, 11th February 1965.

(2) The Times (London), 13th February 1965.

(3) Ibid.

exert pressure on the West German Government to change its policy towards the U.A.R.

On 15th February, 1965, the Knesset debated for four hours the relations between Israel and Germany. Eshkol declared that "the German Government must continue to observe its obligations to Israel in the spirit and the letter .... Let it be perfectly plain and open, Germany's duty is to help Israel with the equipment necessary for her security." (1)

Mr. Eshkol warned that "recent developments" would oblige Israel "to consider very carefully the significance" of its relations with West Germany. (2)

This was a threat that Israel would mobilise world public opinion against West Germany if it did not reconsider the stand which it had taken. Eshkol remarked that the statements made by the West German leaders had already aroused "an indignant reaction in Israel among the Jewish people and in the world at large. In the light of history the German people and its leaders ought to be meticulous in their obedience to .... Germany's

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(1) The New York Times, (International Edition),  
16th February 1965.

(2) Ibid.

primary moral duty to help strengthen Israel". (1)

The concept of "areas of tension" adopted by Bonn was challenged by Eshkol because it was not a question of "an objective state of tension between two parties but of threats and preparations for aggression against Israel by the Arab States." (2)

If West Germany were lost to Israel as an arms supplier then the people of Israel would have to pay higher taxes in order to purchase substitute arms elsewhere. The arms from West Germany had been delivered to Israel on exceptionally favourable terms that would not be offered by any other friendly nation. (3)

The result of this threat was an announcement by the Federal Government on 15th February 1965, that it would re-examine all economic aid to the U.A.R. in the event of the visit by Ulbricht to Cairo taking place as planned at the end of February, 1965. Prior to this announcement Bonn had intended to wait until Ulbricht completed his visit, and then to examine the manner in which he was received, i.e. whether as a Head of State, or as an ordinary visitor, in order to formulate the

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(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid.

line of policy that it (West Germany) would adopt towards the U.A.R. But, with the new announcement, Bonn intended to soften the blow to Israel by warning the U.A.R. and the other Arab States. (1)

In an interview with Der Spiegel, Nasser declared that he would recognise East Germany if the Federal Government would cut off economic aid to the U.A.R. Nasser was supported by Ben Bella, who promptly announced that his Government would follow suit. The attitude of the other Arab States was doubtful, and in order to clarify it the personal representatives of the Arab Heads of State were to meet on 22nd February to decide on a common course of action. (2)

The meeting was held as scheduled. It lasted for four hours, at the end of which it was announced that:

1. If West Germany continued arming Israel, the Arab States would break off relations with her and by implication would recognise East Germany.
2. If West Germany took any measure against the U.A.R., the Arab States would consider it a hostile action

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(1) The Times (London), 16th February 1965.

(2) The Times (London), 22nd February 1965.



against them all and would meet it with a unified Arab position. (1)

On 24th February, 1965, Ulbricht arrived in Cairo, and Bonn implemented its threat of cutting off the economic aid to the U.A.R.

On 1st March, 1965, a joint communiqué was issued in which the U.A.R. and East Germany pledged to establish closer economic relations through new trade and payment agreements, amounting to \$100 million (£36 m.). The communiqué also declared that East Germany recognised "the rights of the Arab people of Palestine, including their inalienable right to self-determination. It also supported the Arab position relating to the Jordan River". (2)

From 4th to 7th March 1965, the West German Cabinet debated how it should respond to the Ulbricht visit to the U.A.R. (3)

On 7th March a five-point government statement of policy was issued:

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- (1) U.A.R. Information Department, Arab Political Encyclopedia Documents and Notes, January-March 1965, P.96
  - (2) Ibid. pp.120-122
  - (3) The Times (London), 8th March 1965.

- I. The U.A.R.'s invitation and reception of Ulbricht had been answered by the cut-off of West German economic aid including cessation of government underwriting of long-term commercial credits.
  
2. West Germany would respond to any further "up-grading" of the East German Republic with measures appropriate to the provocation.
  
3. West Germany would seek to establish diplomatic relations with Israel, a step "directed against no Arab State".
  
4. Bonn stood by its decision of a month ago to cease military aid to Israel and would reject any attempt by any party to the Middle East conflict to influence West Germany's policy, "particularly with respect to the formation of relations with Israel".
  
5. By its presence in the Middle East the Federal Government will continue to strive for a reduction of tension together with its allies, which have repeatedly appealed to the responsibility of the Federal Republic of Germany for stability and peace in the Middle East. (1)

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(1) The New York Times, (International Edition), 8th March 1965.

The decision taken by West Germany to seek the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel prompted Sabri al-Khawly, Nasser's personal representative, to ask for an emergency meeting of the representatives of Arab Heads of State to discuss a request submitted by Iraq and Jordan for an urgent meeting of the Arab Premiers. (1)

The meeting of the representatives of the Arab Heads of State was held on 9th March, and the P.L.O. (in the person of al-Shukairi) submitted a draft recommendation which stated that:

1. The Arab Governments should break off relations with Bonn the moment that West Germany effectively established relations with Israel.
2. The Arab Governments should withdraw their ambassadors from Bonn immediately as a sign of disapproval.
3. The Arab Governments should stop economic cooperation with West Germany.
4. The oil-producing Arab States should warn countries exploiting their resources that the Arab Governments would halt dealings with them unless they ceased

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(1) Guardian, 9th March 1965.

material and military co-operation with Israel. (1)

This plan was unanimously approved by the representatives of the Arab Heads of State. However, it was subject to the approval of the Foreign Ministers, who were due to meet on 14th March, 1965. (2)

On 10th March, 1965, Nasser declared in a speech delivered at Shebin al-Kom, that if West Germany recognised Israel, the U.A.R. would recognise East Germany and sequester all West German property in Egypt. (3)

On the other hand, Bourguiba (who was visiting Beirut in the course of a Middle East tour) said at a press conference that, if the Arab States would boycott West Germany, the latter would not die and the harm might fall on the ones who made the boycott. He emphasised the need to be practical, and said that mere words did not bring the Arabs closer to their objective but delayed them from reaching that objective. He was prepared to go far in boycotting any country dealing with Israel, but the facts must be considered. Bourguiba said that he hoped that the representatives of Arab Heads of State would meet at the beginning of the ~~crisis~~ with West Germany

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(1) Al-Ahram, 10th March, 1965.

(2) Al-Ahram, 11th March 1965.

(3) Ibid.

and not after the challenge had been made. (1)

This last statement was a rebuke to Nasser who, in Bourguiba's opinion, was putting the other Arab leaders in a position where they could not publicly disagree with what he was saying and doing.

The decision to delay the cutting off of relations with Bonn (and, presumably, the establishment of relations with East Germany) until a West German Ambassador actually arrived in Israel, was designed to give the West German Government time for second thoughts, and perhaps to respond to the pressure that might be exerted by German businessmen. As for cutting all economic ties with West Germany, some Arab States were in a stronger position than others to boycott German goods. Kuwait for example, had sent less than one-fiftieth of its crude oil production to West Germany in 1963, whereas Saudi Arabia and Libya were more important suppliers of crude oil to West Germany,<sup>(2)</sup> and this could explain why Kuwait was more in favour of severing all relations with West Germany than were Saudi Arabia and Lybia.

Besides this, the U.A.R. had been hinting that Arab oil-producers could exert more of their potential

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(1) Al-Hayat, 12th March 1965.

(2) The Times (London), 12th March 1965.

influence on behalf of Arab causes. These hints had been mainly directed at Saudi Arabia, and to a lesser extent at Libya, because Iraq and Kuwait had been indicating their readiness to back Nasser's line. Thus Nasser was aiming at exposing Saudi Arabia as one of the major Arab oil-producer states which was dragging its feet - although Feisal had tried to avert such a situation by recalling his ambassador from Bonn.

On 14th March, 1965, the Foreign Ministers of the Arab States met for three hours in an attempt to come to an agreement over countering West Germany's relations with Israel. But, although the immediate target was West Germany, the underlying issue was: Who was ready to stand up and be counted with Nasser and against Israel?

The Foreign Ministers had to decide upon the recommendations adopted by the representatives of the Arab Heads of State. Up till then, four Arab States (namely, Tunisia, Libya, Morocco and Lebanon) had not yet fulfilled the first recommendation, which was the immediate withdrawal of Arab ambassadors from Bonn. The first meeting of the Foreign Ministers was therefore taken up by persuading those States to take such a step.

The debate among the Ministers was greatly sharpened by the news that "the Israeli Government had

agreed to open diplomatic relations with West Germany." (1)  
The decision taken by Tel-Aviv meant that the Arabs, if they would follow the recommendations before them, must decide at that session whether to break their relations with Bonn and open diplomatic relations with East Germany.

On 15th March, 1965, the Foreign Ministers held another meeting, and it was obvious that there was a split among them on how to deal with the decision of West Germany to recognise Israel.

A statement issued by the Arab League said that the Foreign Ministers decided to break relations with West Germany if it recognised Israel, and that all Arab ambassadors in Bonn would be withdrawn immediately as a warning.

But later Sayyed Nawfal told newsmen that Tunisia, Morocco, and Libya had balked at making decisions. He said that "the three countries said they could not agree on these decisions under the present circumstances and that they might in the future if there were changes in the situation". (2)

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(1) The Times (London), 15th March 1965.

(2) New York Herald Tribune, (European Edition),  
16th March 1965.

Mongi Slim, the personal representative of Bourguiba, told reporters who asked about the attitude of his Government: "Are we meeting to punish ourselves or to punish Israel?" (1)

Despite the three dissenting votes, the majority adopted a resolution which called for the withdrawal of ambassadors; a diplomatic break with West Germany; an economic break with West Germany if it took an aggressive stand against any Arab country; and a reiteration of the resolutions adopted at the 1964 Summit Conference on reviewing relations with foreign countries on the basis of their stand on the Palestine question. (2) However, the Foreign Ministers failed to reach a decision on a proposal to extend diplomatic recognition to East Germany.

Al-Ahram, in its issue of 15th March 1965, said that six of the thirteen states favour recognition of East Germany if diplomatic relations were established between Israel and West Germany. These were the U.A.R., Iraq, Algeria, Kuwait, Sudan and Yemen. (3)

The Arab popular reaction to West Germany's dec-

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(1) Ibid.

(2) U.A.R. Information Department, Arab Political Encyclopedia, Documents and Notes, January-March 1965.P.103

(3) Al-Ahram, 15th March 1965.



ision was violent. West German property was attacked in Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen.

On 23rd March, 1965, the fifth Arab oil conference called on the Arab States to halt oil shipments to any country that "economically boycotts an Arab State or proves detrimental to its economic interests." (1) The resolution was obviously directed against West Germany in favour of the U.A.R. It did not have any practical impact because its decisions are not binding on the Arab States, because Libya and Saudi Arabia had announced that "they did not want to go along with an economic boycott of West Germany". (2)

On 13th May, 1965, the Federal Government of Germany issued a statement of policy in which it declared that the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel was an "important step towards the normalisation of the situation in the Middle East". It was not directed ~~against~~<sup>against</sup> anyone. It did not hurt anyone. The German people were bound by ties of friendship with the Arab States. (3)

Letters were exchanged between Erhard and Eshkol; their text was published simultaneously in Bonn and Tel-Aviv.

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(1) The New York Times, (International Edition),  
24th March 1965.

(2) Ibid.

(3) The Times (London), 14th May 1965.

The Chancellor wrote:

"The attitude of the Federal Republic of Germany in the past proves that it is aware of the peculiar position of Germans in relation to Jews all over the world. It fills me with gratification that our two countries have been able to reach agreement." (1)

Eshkol wrote:

"I am conscious of the fact, Mr. Chancellor that it is thanks to your personal initiative and determination that a satisfactory solution has been found at this significant juncture in the relations between our two countries". (2)

The letter of the Chancellor also mentioned three specific issues on which agreement was reached:

1. Outstanding military aid:

This was converted into an economic settlement. The Federal Government had given Israel in the past few days 64 million D.M. (about £5,760,000). Israel was free to use this money as it pleased.

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(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid.

Eshkol stated that this conversion must not have an adverse effect on Israel's military potential.

2. Economic aid:

The Federal Government would enter, within the coming two or three months, into negotiations with Israel on future economic aid. This was to fill the gap which was created by the expiry of the 1952 reparations agreement, under which Bonn paid out a total of "\$600,000,000 worth of equipment and goods (principally ships, railway equipment, and heavy machinery) and some \$250,000,000 in the form of credits for the purchase of crude oil." (1)

3. Scientists in the U.A.R:

The Federal Government was going to take steps to apply existing legislations which would subject the recruiting of German labour by foreign countries to the authorisation of the labour office in Nuremberg in order to dissuade the German scientists from going to Egypt. (2)

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(1) Keesing's Contemporary Archives, 1965-1966, P.20734.

(2) The Times (London), Op. Cit. 14th May 1965.

Upon the formal announcement by the Federal Government of the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel on 13th May 1965, the U.A.R., Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Algeria and Yemen broke off diplomatic relations with Bonn. Lebanon did so on 14th May, and Kuwait, which was going to establish relations with Bonn, changed its mind. (1) And on 16th May, Sudan, after a cabinet meeting, announced that it was formally severing diplomatic relations with West Germany. (2) This left Tunisia, Libya and Morocco as dissidents who intended to maintain diplomatic relations with West Germany.

This serious split in the Arab bloc echoes the division which had appeared in March, when only ten of the thirteen Arab States had announced that they would break relations if Erhard went ahead with his intentions of recognising Israel.

As a result of this split, Al-Ahram announced on 15th May, 1965, that the U.A.R. had postponed its decision to recognise East Germany for the following reasons:

1. The pledge of Iraq, Algeria, and Yemen to take the same action as Cairo would redouble Cairo's responsibility, would face her with many-sided

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(1) The New York Times, (International Edition),  
15th - 16th May, 1965.

(2) The New York Times, (International Edition),  
17th May 1965.

obligations, and would necessitate consultation with those three States.

2. Cairo was anxious to preserve unity among the ten Arab States which decided to break with West Germany. It would not want to go further in a unilateral decision which would only increase division in the Arab world by creating a three-way (instead of a two-way) split.
3. Responsible circles in Cairo believed it necessary at that stage to prevent pro-Israeli elements in the Bonn Government from inciting the German people against the Arabs and picturing such a step by the Arab countries as a blow to German hopes of unification. (1)

Perhaps there were other reasons behind the "postponement" by the U.A.R. of its recognition of East Germany. The following reasons suggest themselves as possible explanations:

- I. Recognition of East Germany might jeopardise Nasser's claim to leadership in the non-aligned world, since no other **non-communist country** had

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(1) Al-Ahram, 15th May 1965.

recognised East Germany.

2. With only three other Arab States, (Iraq, Algeria and Yemen) prepared to follow suit, the recognition of East Germany might hurt Nasser's prestige in the Arab world.
  
3. Recognition might also cause the departure of a sizeable proportion of the 400 West German rocket and jet aircraft experts working in the U.A.R.

The decision taken by ten Arab States to dispense with diplomatic courtesies with West Germany did not radically upset Arab-German dealings, since some useful ties were unaffected by the breach of diplomatic relations. For example, although the embassies had closed, their consular departments remained operating; and the German consulates in Alexandria, Port Said, and Aleppo - like the German cultural institutes in Cairo, Aleppo and Damascus, continued to function as if nothing had happened. Thus, trade and cultural relations were scarcely affected. "In 1964 the total value of the 13 Arab countries' exports to West Germany was 2,866 million marks (of which oil accounted for 2,262 million marks), and the value of West Germany's exports to the Arab countries was 1,495

million marks. There were 4,283 Arab students at West German universities and technical colleges, of whom 1,200 were Syrians, 1,153 Egyptians, 795 Iraqis, and 631 Jordanians. In addition 402 young Arabs are at present apprenticed to West German industrial firms". (1) None of these students or apprentices were recalled.

The Arab States were faced with a clear-cut issue of principle, namely, the decision proclaimed at the Summit Meetings, that the Arab policy towards other countries should be shaped according to the stand taken by those countries towards the Palestine problem. In spite of the fact that this decision was unanimously approved, when it was put to its first serious test, it failed. As an Israeli commentator put it: " 'politique de grandeur' of adhering to one's guiding principle gave way to the needs of 'politique des intérêts'. Whenever a State or a commercial company stood against Arab pressure, the Arabs withdrew". (2)

Such an attitude on the part of the Arab Governments is a manifestation of a common fact, namely,

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(1) The Economist, 22nd May, 1965

(2) Y. Harkabi, The Arab-Israeli Confrontation - an Israeli View, (a paper submitted to the seventh annual conference of the Institute for Strategic Studies. This conference dealt with "The Middle East: The Strategic Issues" and was held on October 1 - 3, 1965, at Divonne-les Bains, France). P. 15.

that the unanimity which is manifested in their meetings is a superficial one. As long as this unanimity is not put to the test, it is a success, yet when it is put to the test, the division and the retreat of the Arab Governments begin to appear. So one can conclude that if on a clear-cut issue of principal the Arab Governments could not act unanimously, they would never do so.

D. Defection of Tunisia from common Arab policy regarding Palestine:

Bourguiba toured the Arab East in March and April of 1965. In this tour, he challenged the Arab contention that co-existence with Israel was impossible and that eventually the Arabs would have to liberate Palestine, even if they had to go to war with Israel. Instead of fighting, Bourguiba urged a step-by-step progress towards a settlement of the Palestine problem under which Arabs and Israelis could live peacefully side by side.

This was the first time since the assassination of Abdullah in 1950 that a responsible Arab leader had openly declared that a compromise over Palestine would be desirable; and the first time that such a view had entered the field of political discussion among Arab leaders.



After his return to Tunisia, Bourguiba delivered a speech before Tunisian students on 21st April, 1965, in which he again proposed a peaceful settlement of the Israel-Arab dispute on the basis of the United Nations partition resolution of 29th November, 1947. Under this resolution Israel would have to hand back about one third of the territory which it has been occupying since 1948 to a Palestine Arab State. Also Israel would have to permit the return to Israel of Palestinian Arabs. In exchange for this arrangement, the Arabs would end the cold war with Israel. (1).

Bourguiba described the policies of the Arab States towards Israel as inefficient; and he said that any Arab attack on Israel was bound to end in a stalemate. Thus the "scrap-iron" of armaments accumulated at enormous cost by the Arab States was absolutely of no use. He said that he did not believe in a military solution. He wanted to see a compromise which would enable the bringing to an end of the hatred and hostility which had raised "two neighbouring peoples" against one another.

Bourguiba denied reports that his envoys were

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(1) The text of this speech may be found in Al-Amal, (Tunisia), 23rd April 1965.

planning to meet Israelis, but suggested a general meeting between the Arabs and Israelis. If Israel would accept this proposal then he could immediately conduct exploratory talks to see if the Arab States would agree. Then he would study the conditions of a meeting in Rome or any other capital. And so the face of the Middle East would be transformed. (1)

An unofficial Israeli reaction to Bourguiba's declarations has been presented by J.Harkabi in a paper submitted to the seventh annual conference of the Institute for Strategic Studies. Harkabi said that Arab leaders had been raising the hopes of their people that Palestine would be liberated, and that success was imminent; but these declarations had always disappointed the Arab people. Israel had been hoping that the raising of such hopes might eventually have "the dialectic result of their abandonment and of change of heart .... The cumulative effect of failures to achieve their objective will strengthen the incipient recognition testified to by Bourguiba's pronouncement of the need to be freed from its hold. Once the existence of Israel is accepted, the main hurdle in the way to a settlement is overcome, as the rest will sink almost to insignificance. The ideology of destroying Israel, claimed to be operational, will become ritual, and will

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(1) Ibid.

finally be discarded as it is proved more and more impracticable. The postponement of war may be a first step towards its eschatologisation and may lead to its final repudiation." (1)

An official Israeli reaction to Bourguiba's declarations was Abba Aban's "Reality and Vision in the Middle East, An Israeli View", in which he stated that the destination of the Near East -

"lies not in an exclusive Arab unity, but in a creative diversity and pluralism. Three central issues must be resolved in Arab and Israeli thought before a new era can dawn: first, the image which the Arab world and Israel reflect each to the other; second, the tension between the idea of Arab unity and the more creative idea of Mediterranean cooperation; third, the idea of peace as a mutual necessity for both nations, and not as a gift of grace to be accorded by the Arabs to Israel...

"Although peace is not a condition of Israel's existence it clearly represents her highest interest. She is desperately hard pressed for territory. She is under no juridical obligation

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(1) J. Harkabi, The Arab-Israeli Confrontation - An Israeli View, op.cit. pp 21-22

to reduce her area below the meagre 8,000 square miles which she commands under the 1949 Agreements; these were concluded under United Nations auspices and cannot be modified without the consent of the signatory governments...

"In the Israeli conception the guiding motive of a peace settlement is not to change the character or structure of existing states, but to institute a dramatic and revolutionary change in the relations between them. The revolutions of which I speak can best be expressed in terms of an Open Region. Israel's land is small but wonderfully central. It is a nodal point of communication...." (1)

Another official Israeli reaction was that of the Prime Minister, Levi Eshkol. On 17th May, 1965, in his opening address at the last session of the fifth Knesset, Eshkol presented Israel's "peace terms" which could be considered as a reply to those of Bourguiba. Eshkol said:

"From the juridical point of view, the effort for peace in the area is rooted in two international obligations, one general and the other specific...."

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(1) Abba Eban, "Reality and Vision in the Middle East, an Israeli View," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 43, No. 4, July 1965, pp. 632-637.

The general obligation is the duty accepted by all states who are members of the United Nations and as good neighbours .... In addition there is the obligation in the armistice agreement of 1949.

"The peace settlement will be established on the basis of Israel as it is .... There may indeed be minor agreed mutual adjustments at certain points where there are hindrances to the daily life of the population.

"But this is the rule: peace comes to change relations between states, but not the states themselves.

"The settlement of the refugees in the Arab countries is the only solution compatible with their true and basic interests, as well as ours."(1)

Bourguiba's campaign for "peace with Israel" had thrown the Arab leaders into a confusion:

I. The campaign had "accentuated the dissensions between (a) President Nasser's supporters, Iraq, Algeria,

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(1) "Israel's Peace Terms", Jewish Observer and Middle East Review, 21st May 1965. P.7. (Emphasis added)

Yemen and - with some reservations - Jordan, and (b) his critics, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Libya, Tunisia, Morocco and the neutrals, Lebanon, Sudan and latterly Kuwait." (1)

On 29th April, 1965, at the conference of representatives of Arab Heads of State, Egypt, Syria and Iraq put forward a demand calling for the condemnation of Bourguiba personally for the fact that he had contemplated peaceful co-existence with Israel. Having him publicly pilloried would be a repudiation of his policy and a warning to other heads of state. This demand was forcefully opposed by Saudi Arabia, which was supported by Lebanon, Morocco, Libya, and - more cautiously, Kuwait.(2)

The final resolution of the conference declared that "to negotiate or 'co-exist' with Israel would violate the Arab League's Charter." (3)

2. "There are now two distinct schools of thought about the Arab summit decisions to go on building up armaments and armies, equip Palestinian forces and divert the Jordan headwaters.

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(1) "Bourguiba Backwash", Foreign Report (Economist), 6th May 1965, P.908

(2) Ibid.

P. 908

(3) Al-Nahar, 30th April 1965.

"The Egyptians and Iraqis, while not professing to see clearly what the end will be, believe this to be the only possible policy. Any other would spell weakness - and loss. But President Bourguiba's intervention has jolted some other Arab States into wondering if they can endure endless years of pursuing such hazardous provocative policies.

"Not that they necessarily want to seek peace in the Bourguiba fashion. General Hafez of Syria, on the contrary, persists in his original belief that now (or never) is the time to go to war with Israel. It is rather a yearning for decision that President Bourguiba has aroused. King Feisal of Saudi Arabia probably best expressed this when, on hearing the Bourguiba proposals, he told some of his advisers that he would be prepared to make any sacrifice for a practical and durable solution. Should the Arab Governments make a definite collective decision - either to fight or negotiate - Saudi Arabia, he said, would back them to the hilt. But he seems to be convinced that Egypt, Algeria and Iraq do not want a show-down with Israel, and that therefore any arrangement that might help the Arab refugees ought to be reconsidered - even at the cost of a little loss of face." (1)

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(1) Foreign Report, op. cit.

E. Other Relevant Developments of the Period:

1. The Second Conference of the Non-Aligned countries was held in Cairo from 5th - 10th October, 1964. Fifty-four countries participated in the Conference among which Palestine attended as an observer.

In the final declarations of the Conference, it was stated that the Conference endorses the right of the people of Palestine to liberate its country, and to self-determination. (1)

2. The P.L.O. was able to establish the Palestine Liberation Army in some of the Arab States, namely, the U.A.R., Ghaza, Syria and Iraq.

The P.L.O. also received an invitation to visit Communist China. A Delegation headed by al-Shukairi visited Communist China on 15th March, 1965. On 22nd March a joint communiqué was issued. In the communiqué, Communist China recognised the P.L.O. as a national institution representing the struggle of the people of Palestine for their country. Communist China also invited P.L.O. to open an office in Peking. (2)

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(1) U.A.R. Information Department, Arab Political Encyclopedia, Documents and Notes, September - December, 1964, P. 119

(2) A Joint Communiqué issued by P.L.O. and the Republic of Communist China, 22nd March 1965.



(3) Another major development which occurred before holding the third Arab Summit Conference was the overthrow of Ben Bella on 19th June, 1965, at 2:30 a.m. by Colonel Houari Boumedienne, Defence Minister and Head of the Armed Forces. This coup took place 10 days before the Afro-Asian Summit Conference was due to open in Algiers. As a result the Afro-Asian Conference was postponed. (1)

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(1) Al-Ahram, 20th June 1965.

CHAPTER IX

THE THIRD SUMMIT CONFERENCE, SEPTEMBER, 1965.

A. Meeting of the Foreign Ministers:

The Foreign Ministers of the Arab States, with the exception of Tunisia, held between 9th and 13th September, 1965, six meetings lasting for more than 20 hours, besides the two meetings which were held by the Arab Defence Council, lasting for 7 hours, in order to prepare the agenda for the Third Summit Conference.

The Foreign Ministers studied reports submitted by al-Shukairi and Hassouna.

In his report al-Shukairi stated that the P.L.O. insisted on the formation of the Palestine Liberation Army, because the people of Palestine believed that only by military action could their country be liberated. He stated that the army had been established in Ghaza, Syria and Iraq, and it was necessary that it should be established in Jordan and Lebanon. Then he submitted the following recommendations:

1. The approval of the military plan submitted by the liberation army to the Unified Arab Command.

2. The acceptance of forming additional forces in the liberation army.
3. The adoption of the necessary legal procedures for the promulgation of obligatory military training (in accordance with the law currently in effect in Ghaza) to be enforced on Palestinians living in all the Arab countries.
4. The granting of the necessary facilities and immunities to the liberation army command.
5. The signing of a protocol related to the organisation of the Palestinian people in connection with their travel, residence, and work permits in the Arab States. (1)

Hassouna's report discussed the diversion plan. It pointed out that work on the Lebanese part did not start except on a very small scale - which was halted by an order of the Lebanese Government because the air-defence was not available, though the Arab Command had pointed out that the defence facilities at this stage were better than before, and that the areas of work in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon had the same defence facilities.

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(1) Al-Ahram, 11th September 1965.

In Syria work on certain operations had stopped as a result of Israeli attacks on those sites. In Jordan the work had been going on normally and the part completed amounted to three-quarters of what had been scheduled for this period.

Then the Secretary-General submitted the following demands to be presented to the Conference:

1. To continue work on the diversion plan, and to provide the necessary defence requirements.
2. To support the Unified Arab Command and to facilitate its work by having each Arab State fulfill the resolutions pertaining to it.
3. To abide by a unified Arab policy which would express the collective Arab will towards the countries that support Israel.
4. To put forward a plan for collective Arab policy in Africa and Latin America in which each Arab State would participate according to its abilities.
5. To ratify the agreements undertaken under the auspices of the Arab League, with a special emphasis on the financial side. (1)

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(1) Ibid.

On 13th September, 1965, the Foreign Ministers held their closing meeting at 5:00 p.m. and drafted the agenda, which was composed of the following items:

1. The political field

- a - the report submitted by the Foreign Ministers about the preparatory meetings.
- b - The report submitted by the Secretary-General of the Arab League.
- c - Arab solidarity.
- d - The international situation (a proposal submitted by Algeria).

2. The Military field (consisting of the report submitted by the Chief-of-Staff, which was divided into two parts:)

- a - A general description of the work of the Unified Arab Command. (This report was submitted to the Higher Defence Council).
- b - A special report about the military plans for the protection of the diversion plan. (This report was to be submitted to the Kings and Presidents in person, and was to be delivered to them at the meeting).

3. The Technical field:

A memorandum about the diversion plan and its implementation in accordance with the time schedule laid down by the first and second summit conferences, and the obstacles which were hindering the implementation of the project.

4. Two recommendations submitted by P.L.O.

(These were left to the Kings and Presidents to decide upon):

a - Concerning the general elections of the Palestinian people.

b - Concerning the popular organisation of the Palestinians.

5. Subjects resolved by the Foreign Ministers

which did not require submission to the Kings and Presidents:

a - To give financial aid to the Arab-gulf area through the Arab League.

b - To support the people of South Arabia in their struggle against British imperialism and to work for the liquidation of the Aden base.

c - To support the decision taken by the Representatives of the Arab States in the UNRWA council.

d - To see to it that those Arab States which had not yet paid their monetary obligations, amounting to £6,250,000 would take the necessary measures for payment.

e - To impose the plan for the levying of 3-6% tax on the Palestinians' income.

f - To disapprove the authorisation of 3 million pounds (probably sterling) for Arab information, and to entrust this task to the Arab League. (1)

B. Meeting of the Arab Defence Council:

The Arab Defence Council, which was attended by the Foreign and Defence Ministers, along with the Arab Chiefs-of-Staff, discussed the report submitted by General Ali Ali Amer.

Amer pointed to the agreement pertaining to the maintenance of the Arab armies and their movement in the Arab States, which stipulated that each Arab State would cover the expenses of its armies. In spite of this agreement, there were certain States (for example, Syria) which proposed that they should receive material compensation on the entry of any Arab force into their territories. Furthermore, Lebanon and Jordan had reservations on the entry of any forces into their territories.

Then Amer discussed the measures which were agreed upon in the movement of the Iraqi and Saudi forces to

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(1) Al-Ahram, 14th September 1965.

Jordanian territory; he pointed out that this subject could be set as an example of the obstacles that had been hindering the chief-of-staff from fulfilling his duty. The summit resolution had stipulated that forces from Iraq and Syria and Saudi Arabia would be stationed at certain points which would enable them to move at the right time for the support of Jordan and Lebanon in case of an Israeli attack, or of the probability that such an attack would be forthcoming, and the Chief-of-Staff was given full authority to make military movements on the basis that he would take into consideration in these movements from one state to the other before fighting starts, the constitutional statutes and the prevailing laws.

When the Chief-of-Staff got in touch with the Jordanian Government for implementing the above-mentioned resolution, it approved of the entry of the necessary administrative equipment for these forces, and of a number of military specialists in civilian uniform, but did not allow the forces themselves to enter its territory. As a result, the general command was forced to station these forces in specific areas inside Iraqi and Saudi territory. The presence of these forces at such distances would endanger the military situation in Jordan, because the movement of these forces during an actual war operation would



be vulnerable to an aerial attack by Israel. So the General Command had recommended that the Iraqi and Saudi forces should be allowed entrance to Jordan. Although the Arab Higher Defence Council had supported the general command in its opinion, the Jordanian Government asked that the question be raised at the Kings and Presidents Conference. (1)

C. Bourguiba's Memorandum:

On 12th September, 1965, the political bureau of the Socialist Destour Party, the national ruling and policy-making body in Tunisia, met in an emergency session under the chairmanship of Bourguiba and decided that Tunisia should not participate in the Third Arab Summit Conference, which was due to open in Casablanca on 13th September, 1965. (2)

On 13th September, Habib al-Shatr, Ambassador of Tunisia in Morocco, distributed a 17 page memorandum addressed by Bourguiba to all conference participants, explaining his absence.

In his memorandum Bourguiba explained the meaning of his declaration pertaining to the Palestine

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(1) Al-Ahram, 12th September 1965.

(2) Guardian, 13th September 1965.

question. He calculated that the best way to get positive support for the Palestine question was by using as a basis the United Nations resolutions which were not enforced because of Israel's objection.

His plan aimed at accomplishing one of two objectives:

1. Either Israel would abide by the United Nations resolutions (and this would be the less probable), and would allow the refugees to go back to Palestine. Such an acceptance would lead to the establishment of a free Arab Palestine State. This State would be a stepping stone to the final solution of the Palestine problem.
2. Or (and this would be the more probable), Israel would insist on refusing to abide by the United Nations resolutions. Such a refusal would weaken Israel's position on the international stage. The number of its supporters would be lessened. The Arab's position, in case they should decide to use force in applying international law, would become stronger.

After explaining his position on Palestine, Bourguiba proceeded to criticise the U.A.R.. Never,

in the course of their history, he asserted, had the Arabs been more divided than they were then. Never had they "slaughtered" each other more ferociously than since the day when Egypt took upon itself the sacred mission of unifying the Arabs.

What Arab country had not found a plot against its Government that originated in Cairo and that was financed by Egyptian capital? And what Arab country had not lived to regret having had recourse to Egyptian teachers?

Bourguiba said that the U.A.R. had tried to intimidate all the Arab States into breaking their relations with Bonn following the establishment of diplomatic relations between Germany and Israel.

He said that the aim of Arab unity should be stripped of sentimentality and fanaticism, and should be based on the need to struggle against economic under-development. "We have a right to ask ourselves with whom this U.A.R. is now united and what the two stars on the Egyptian flag are supposed to represent". (1)

Tunisia would boycott the Arab League as long as

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(1) Bourguiba Memorandum to the Third Arab Summit Conference, 13th September 1965. pp 4-32.

it represented an instrument of Egyptian hegemony over the Arab peoples.

The Foreign Ministers met in an emergency session just before the opening of the Kings and Presidents Conference, and decided to reject the memorandum. They declared that it would not be presented to the Chiefs-of-State, because it was directed against the Palestine question and the U.A.R. (1)

D. Meetings of the Heads-of-State:

On 13th September, 1965, the Third Arab Summit Conference opened at 6:15 p.m. at Mansour Hotel, in Casablanca. It was attended by King Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan; Col. Hawwari Boumedienne, President of the Council of the Revolution and Premier of the Algerian People's Democratic Republic; Ismail al-Azhari, President of the Sovereignty Council of Sudan; F.M. Abdul Salam Mohammad Aref, President of Iraq; King Feisal al-Saud of the Saudi Arabian Kingdom; Lt. Gen. Mohammad Amin al-Hafez, Chairman of the Presidency Council of the Arab Syrian Republic; Jamal Abdul Nasser, President of the United Arab Republic; F.M. Abdullah al-Sallal, President of the Yemeni Arab

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(1) Al-Ahram, 14th September 1965.

Republic; Amir Abdullah al-Salem al-Sabah, ruler of the State of Kuwait; Charles Helou, President of the Republic of Lebanon; Amir Hasan al-Rida, representative of the King of Libya; King Hassan II of the Kingdom of Morocco; and Ahmad al-Shukairi, President of the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

The Conference was under the chairmanship of Nasser.

In the opening ceremonies Hassan II, the host of the Conference, hailed the Jeddah peace pact on Yemen and urged that an end should be put to Arab "conflicts and calumnies" which had been wrecking the Arab League since the first summit meeting held at Cairo in January, 1964.

Then Nasser delivered a speech in which he said that the goal of the conference was the liberation of Palestine. And he pointed out six positive developments which had occurred since the second summit conference.

1. The fact that the third summit conference was held at the place and time originally agreed upon.
2. The fact that the conference was held in the Arab West, which emphasised the unity of the Arab world from the Gulf to the Ocean.

3. The fact that the Yemeni peace agreement was signed, giving the Yemeni people the opportunity to move to the twentieth century by getting rid of the state of underdevelopment which had been forced upon them.
4. The fact that the Unified Arab Command had been established.
5. The fact that the Committee for the Diversion of the Jordan River had started its work.
6. The fact that the P.L.O. had been established.

In his speech, Nasser completely ignored Bourguiba's charges.

After the delivery of the two speeches, a two-hour closed meeting was held in which al-Shukairi gave a one-hour account of his contacts with the Arab Governments. He reported that he had made no progress in getting the Arab States to approve the protocol relating to work, residence, and travel of the Palestinians; and the recruitment and movement of Palestinian troops. Al-Shukairi pointed out that not a single one of the thirteen Arab States had paid the

assessments levied the previous September in Alexandria to build a Palestinian Arab Army, and that only Kuwait, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt had paid their dues for the political purposes (i.e. P.L.O.). (1)

Boumedienne urged that the Palestine Liberation Army should be organised in the form of guerillas rather than a conventionally equipped and trained force, as proposed by al-Shukairi. (2) The aim behind this type of training would be to carry the fight into Israel instead of having a standing army outside Israeli territory without any effective plan of campaign. (3)

Al.Shukairi also urged for a special tax for P.L.O. to be levied on the oil producing Arab States. Hasan al-Reda replied that his country was producing oil and not sterling pounds.

Also al-Shukairi's demands for special taxing and administrative powers over the Palestinians in the Arab States were turned down. (4)

On 14th September, the meeting was scheduled to

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(1) Time, 24th September 1965.

(2) The New York Times, 16th September 1965.

(3) Daily Star, 16th September 1965.

(4) The New York Times, (International Edition)  
20th September 1965.

open at 10:00 a.m., but it was delayed until 11:00 a.m. in order to give al-Shukairi an opportunity to finish his contacts with those Arab States which had some reservations on the P.L.O. requests, namely, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia. (1)

At the beginning of the meeting al-Shukairi informed the Conference that he was unable to achieve any results since, for example, Lebanon had refused to allow the Palestinian refugees to be given military training on its territory, and also refused to treat the Palestinians as it treated its own citizens. It only approved of treating them, as far as work, residence, and travel were concerned, the way it treated the other Arab nationals staying in Lebanon.

Then the Conference proceeded to discuss the military side of Hassouna's report, which covered the diversion of the Jordan River. It pointed out that Jordan, Lebanon and Syria had been hesitant to move ahead with the two-year-old project without being assured, by tight guarantees, that military protection against "pre-emptive" attacks by Israel would be offered." (2) At this point al-Hafez clashed with Nasser when the former accused the U.A.R. leader of

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(1) Al-Ahram, 15th September 1965; and Daily Star, 15th September 1965.

(2) The New York Times, (International Edition), 15th September 1965.



being lukewarm about the diversion plan. Al-Hafez reportedly alleged that Nasser had done nothing to provide the work on the diversion plan with the necessary backing and protection. Al Hafez declared that the stand taken by Nasser was very similar to that taken by Bourguiba in backing away from the idea of an Arab attack on Israel.

When the discussion reached this level, Nasser refused to be drawn into an argument with al-Hafez in the presence of officials. So he adjourned the meeting and convened a secret one limited to the Chiefs of State, the Arab League Secretary General and the P.L.O. Chairman. (1)

A mutual exchange of accusations on a "war of air-waves" between Iraq and Syria broke out. And after two hours of discussion it was announced that the Heads of the Arab States had decided to put an end to inter-Arab radio and press campaigns. (2)

After the meeting was adjourned a conference statement was issued in which it was declared that the 12 Arab leaders had "unanimously agreed on all steps to

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(1) New York Herald Tribune, (European Edition),  
15th September 1965.

(2) The New York Times, <sup>Op. Cit.</sup> 15th September 1965.

realise Arab solidarity and safeguard it in future". (1)

On 15th September, the Conference opened its fourth secret meeting at 10:00 a.m.. It was attended by Heads-of-State, Defence Ministers and Chiefs-of-Staff, along with Hassouna, al-Shukairi, and Ali Ali Amer. The topic of discussion was Amer's military report. After reading the report the meeting was further limited to the Heads-of-State, Hassouna, al-Shukairi and Amer, and was devoted to the secret discussion of the Unified Arab Command's military preparations.

"Ali Amer told the Conference that his forces would need men and equipment costing up to £150 million, and four years, to build up ground and air elements sufficiently to match the strength of Israel.

"This implied that the Arab States bordering Israel - Jordan, Lebanon and Syria - would not go ahead immediately with their original plans to divert the Jordan River headwaters because the Unified Command is not yet in a position to protect the engineering operations from Israel's retaliatory attacks." (2)

The report stated that the diversion work in Lebanon,

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(1) The Times (London), 15th September 1965.

(2) The Observer, 19th September 1965.

and Syria was at a stand-still because no agreement could be reached on adequate defence arrangements, particularly the provision of air-defence. Jordan and Lebanon continued to maintain the attitude of refusing to allow troops from the Unified Arab Command to enter their territory for the purpose of defending the diversion sites.

At this point Hussein and Amer clashed. Hussein said that "authorisation for Iraqi and Saudi Arabian troops to enter Jordan as requested by the Arab Unified Military Command, would be interpreted by Israel as an act of provocation and could lead to war. This was not the appropriate time to allow the troops in". (1)

Amer replied that he had information that Israel would attack any way as soon as diversion work started.

Al-Hafez left the meeting 15 minutes before it was adjourned, and there was no explanation for his early walkout.

On the same day, i.e. 15th September, the Foreign Ministers held, at the request of the Heads-of-State, a

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(1) Daily Star, 16th September 1965.

five-hour meeting beginning at 9:00 a.m. to review world developments. George Hakim, the Lebanese Foreign Minister said that "the Foreign Ministers convened to discuss international affairs, an item which had been added to the agenda at the request of the Algerian Government .... Some of the topics discussed centered around the Indian-Pakistani conflict, racial discrimination, disarmament and the Vietnam War.... The Foreign Ministers also undertook to prepare the final communiqué of the Summit Conference. (1)

The Heads-of-State resumed their meeting at 6:00 p.m. The discussion of Amer's report was carried on and it was obvious that there were only three states pushing hard for the diversion project, namely, the U.A.R., Iraq and Syria. The other Arab States were either resisting the project (e.g. Jordan and Lebanon) or staying on the sidelines. It was reported that Libya, Morocco and Algeria were among those States staying on the sidelines - particularly Morocco, which considered the diversion problem to be a Middle Eastern one. (2)

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(1) Ibid.

(2) The New York Times, (International Edition),  
16th September 1965.

Hassouna asked the Conference to allocate five million Jordanian dinars to the execution of the second and last stage of the Mukhaiba dam project. (1)

On 16th September, the Conference opened its meeting at 10:00 a.m. The discussion of Amer's report was continued. A British journal gave the following account of the discussion:

"Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Jordan refused to assign any troops to Major-General Ali Amer. And Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, the countries bordering Israel, persisted in their refusal to let him bring troops on to their soil. Syria made the points that Major-General Amer had taken his oath of loyalty to President Nasser only, not to other Arab Heads-of-State. He therefore could not be considered as an international pan-Arab figure, but merely as the U.A.R. President's agent. On the subject of the Jordan diversion, Syria and Lebanon then made the astonishing pronouncement that they wanted to get on - for their own sakes - with some schemes on the headwaters in their territories (the Baniyas and the Hasbani). But they wished to dissociate them entirely from

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(1) Al-Ahram, 16th September 1965.

the Arab projects to deprive Israel of water. That was as good as to kill the Arab plan." (1)

The account continued as follows: During this meeting Nasser attacked Syria and Jordan by accusing them that they had been aiding and abetting the Moslem Brotherhood to overthrow his regime in August 1965. Syria had been supplying the conspirators with funds and arms, while Jordan was supplying them with diplomatic passports. (The latter charge was true since many of the Moslem Brotherhood who had been rounded up in August had been carrying Jordanian passports. These were the men who had fled away from Egypt eleven years ago when Nasser cracked down on the Moslem Brotherhood. At that time the Iraqi monarchist regime provided them with passports which were withdrawn from them by the Republic. Since 1958, Jordan had been providing them with passports). Then Jordan pointed out that Egypt had been providing Jordanian renegades with passports. "The atmosphere was not improved by the fact that a little earlier President Nasser had had a row with President Aref of Iraq. This was because news had come that Iraq's Prime Minister, Brigadier Razzaq, had just taken refuge in Cairo. President Nasser believed that the Brigadier had been the victim of an anti-Egyptian plot. It was in this fever of suspecting the

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(1) "Arab Leaders Meet", Foreign Report, (Economist), 23rd September 1965, P.6

worst of everyone that President Nasser supported the newly proposed Arab solidarity pact." (1)

The text of the Pact reads as follows:

"Believing in the necessity of solidarity between the Arab States and the strengthening of the Arab ranks in the opposition to imperialist and Zionist plots which threaten Arab existence; confident of the utmost need to spare Arab potentials in preparation for the mobilisation of energies for the battle to liberate Palestine; convinced of the need for harmony and conciliation between Arab States, enabling them to play an effective role in establishing peace; desirous of providing an atmosphere pervaded by a spirit of friendship and brotherhood between the Arab countries so that the enemies cannot weaken the Arab nation; We, Kings and Presidents of the Arab States, meeting in Casablanca from 13th to 17th September, have declared ourselves bound by the following:

- "1 - To try to realise solidarity in dealing with Arab questions, especially the question of the liberation of Palestine;
- "2 - To respect the sovereignty of each of the Arab States and their existing regimes in

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(1) Ibid.

accordance with their constitutions and laws, and to refrain from interfering in their internal affairs;

"3- To observe the principles and ethics of political asylum in accordance with the principles of international law and conventions;

"4- To use the press, radios and other organs of information media in the service of the Arab cause;

"5- To keep discussion objective and criticism constructive in dealing with Arab questions and to end the campaigns of suspicion and slander in the press, radios, and other forms of information media;

"6- To review the Press laws in reach of the Arab states with a view to enacting the necessary legislation that will make it an offence to use words or engage in actions which go beyond the limits of objective discussions and constructive criticism and are prejudicial to relations between the Arab countries or make direct or indirect wounding reference to Heads of Arab States." (1)

On 17th September, the Conference opened its final meeting at 5:00 p.m. At the end of this meeting, which

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(1) The Arab Summit Communiqué, Bulletin of the Republic of Iraq, London, September/October 1965. P.6



lasted more than three hours, a communiqué was issued declaring, besides the already-cited "Arab solidarity pact", that the Conference had dealt with the various aspects of the Palestine question and had approved the Arab plans to liberate it, and to strengthen the Palestine Liberation Organisation and the Liberation Army. It had also approved the unified Arab plan to defend the Palestine cause in the United Nations and other international gatherings, and to resist the attempts to liquidate the refugee question.

The Conference also had decided to reinforce the Arab Unified Command and to pursue work to exploit the waters of the Jordan River and its tributaries in accordance with the plans agreed upon. (1)

One could say that similar decisions and pledges had been made at Cairo in January 1964, and at Alexandria in September 1964; but, due to Arab rivalries, fears and suspicion, these resolutions had remained largely a matter of oratory, scarcely exemplifying themselves in deeds.

The novel element of the third communiqué lay in the fact that an "Arab solidarity pact" was signed, which stressed that constructive criticism should be allowed.

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(1) The Arab League, Statement by the Council of the Kings and Presidents of State, 17th September 1965, pp 1-3

Yet this provision was limited by the fact that the communiqué did not specify or define what it meant by constructive criticism. This vagueness worked in favour of the Arab rulers who began to classify any criticism made, even if it were constructive, as a breach of the solidarity pact. Thus, the "Arab solidarity pact" was and is being used as a silencing weapon in the hands of the Arab rulers.

Besides this the solidarity pact, which re-affirmed the right of every Arab state to determine its own internal and external policies, and to maintain its own social system without interference from any other Arab State, was seen as an undeclared victory for Bourguiba.

It was also significant that neither Tunisia nor its president were mentioned in any of the public speeches that were delivered, or in the documents that were published. Moreover, Nawfal summoned the Ambassador of Tunisia in Rabat to give him a "communication" which was an invitation for Tunisia to sign the Solidarity Pact. (1)

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(1) The Observer, 19th September 1965.

The Pact amounted in effect to a truce among the feuding Arab States at the expense of Palestine, by leaving in the background any talk of war with Israel. This appeared very distant as one Arab leader after the other recommended caution about all-out action against the State of Israel. This was supplemented by the fact that a committee of the Arab Defence Ministers reported that it would be at least four years before the Arabs would have the military strength to be able to cope with Israel.

Another point of Arab discord which was not mentioned in any of the public pronouncements was the question of Arab-West German Relations. Silence on this subject could indicate that there had been a general agreement to shelve the problem.

Thus the third Summit Conference came to an end in an atmosphere full of doubt whether it will be followed by a fourth Summit Conference.

At this stage, our survey of the second phase of Arab summit and sub-summit conferences comes to an end.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

Although the second series of Arab Summit and Sub-Summit Conferences has not come to an end, the following concluding remarks can be made on the basis of the exposition presented covering two years of summit activities.

The study of the two sets of Arab Summit and Sub-Summit Conferences reflects an important aspect of Arab politics, namely, that political homogeneity among the Arab Governments is difficult to achieve. This lack of homogeneity has been playing a dominant role in the formulation of Arab policies since the nineteen thirties. It is the result of divergence in the interests of the Arab Governments - divergences which have been all through superficially plastered over. Any agreement among the Arab Governments is confined to those courses of action which do not favour one Arab State against another.

This is also the case in the relations of the Arab Governments with Israel. On the surface, the Arab Governments claim that they are all against Israel; but when it comes to practical decisions, it is difficult to adopt a policy which does not prejudice the

interests of one or more of the Arab Governments. Israel ends up by being rarely without the unsolicited support of one Arab Government or another.

In spite of the fact that there are differences between the two sets of Arab Summit and Sub-Summit Conferences, yet, upon further examination, it is noticeable that the differences are superficial, and that the similarities are more basic, since both sets were unable to make the right decisions.

The first set was characterised by the fact that the action taken by the Arab Governments was improvised and hasty. The war was a sort of a last-minute decision on the part of the Arab leaders. The Arab army officers were surprised when they received orders to move into Palestine. The war was not properly planned for, thus there was no co-ordination between the Arab armies. Nevertheless, the war did take place.

In the second set of Arab Summit and Sub-Summit Conferences, the Arab leaders shifted to the opposite extreme, namely, that of extensive deliberation followed by inaction. Technical committees were asked to draw up detailed diversion and defence war plans. Such plans were labouriously drawn up. But, when it came to the

implementation of their carefully laid out plans, the Arab Governments shied at the prospect and the studies were shelved.

The first set was characterised by action without machinery. Meetings were held at the level of Heads-of-State, or Ministers, or as sessions of the Council or committees of the Arab League. In other words, the machinery was a concentrated one, and was seldom subdivided into specialised committees. The second set, by contrast, was responsible for the creation of a large number of specialised committees and sub-committees, to advise the Arab leaders on their decisions or to see to it that the decisions of the Conference were implemented. The proliferation of committees and sub-committees has acted as a deterrent agent in the decision-making process. For example, the follow-up committee would meet to decide on an issue; the committee would reach a deadlock; it would refer the issue to the Foreign Ministers to decide on it; a deadlock would be reached here also; and the issue would be referred to the Prime Ministers; these, in turn, because of their inability to reach a decision, would refer the question to the Summit Conference. By the time the issue would be finally discussed at the Summit, it would be too late, and the Conference would come out

with a unanimous decision which - more often than not - would not be implemented by the member states.

The Arab leaders in the first set of Arab Summit and Sub-Summit Conferences announced their intention to go to war, and they acted accordingly, while the Arab leaders in the second set have been declaring less than bold words and their actions have been timid. Their declarations have run as follows:

We will fight Israel; no, we will not fight Israel, but we will stop it from diverting the Jordan River waters by force; no, we will not stop the diversion, but we will divert our own waters in our own lands so as to dry up the Jordan River; no, we will not divert our waters now, but will wait until we are prepared.

The decisions have had an ever-diminishing scope and reach.

The first set of Arab Summit and Sub Summit Conferences was characterised by the fact that the Arab leaders were unpopular, and yet they followed the wishes of their masses. The Arab peoples demanded war against Zionist aggression, and were able to put enough

pressure on their governments to make them go to war. On the other hand, in the second set, some Arab leaders have vast popularity among the masses, yet these leaders themselves have been acting in a manner which is dampening the enthusiasm of the Arab peoples, thus forcing many Arabs to lose faith in their "revolutionary" leaders.

The first set of Arab Summit and Sub-Summit Conferences resulted in the creation of unitary social regimes in some Arab countries, whereas the second set resulted in the solidification of the separatist, sectional, traditional, conservative, feudal regimes, by giving them the opportunity to get out of their isolated position and bestowing upon them (for a time) an aura of acceptability in the eyes of their revolutionary masses.

Both sets of Arab Summit and Sub-Summit Conferences have had defectors. In the first set, there was King Abdullah; in the second set, President Bourguiba. These two leaders called for negotiations and peaceful co-existence with Israel. In addition the second set has witnessed a new development in current Arab attitudes towards the problem of Palestine, namely, that of adopting the policy of indirect or de facto co-existence actively exercised. King Hussein of Jordan and the Lebanese Government have been the main sponsors of such a



policy which is based on avoiding giving offence to Israel and accepting Israel's warnings. On this basis, for example, the Jordanian and Lebanese Governments have been persecuting the al-Assifa men (Palestinian commandos).

Both sets of Arab Summit and Sub-Summit Conferences were followed by failure by the individual governments to implement resolutions pertaining to economic sanctions. In the first set, the sanctions pertained to oil; in the second set, to the Federal Republic of Germany. It is much easier, it would seem, to plunge into an immediate action, envisaged as a "one-shot" action, than it is to embark upon a protracted action which, it is recognised in advance, would necessitate continuous implementation and patient sacrifice over a long time. Furthermore, it is easier to implement political decisions, which are of a purely symbolic character, than it is to implement economic measures seriously affecting the day-to-day comfort, or even perhaps the well-being, of the rulers and the powerful classes of society.

Finally, the first set of Summit and Sub-Summit Conferences faced the task of preventing Zionism from effecting a radical revision of the status quo in Palestine; but the second set of conferences has faced

the opposite task of effecting a radical revision of the Palestinian status quo. Other things being equal, the defensive, conservative task of protecting the status quo is less difficult to accomplish than the revisionist task of altering the status quo. Yet other things are not equal: and the comparatively greater difficulty of the task faced by Arab leadership in the sixties, as compared with the task faced by their predecessors in the forties, is compounded by the relative advantages enjoyed by their enemy in the nature of the case. For the essential feature of the Arab-Zionist confrontation, then as now, is that it was and still is a confrontation of one enemy by an alliance or a coalition: a conflict between an individual unit and a group of political units. Only when coordination and solidarity among the allies are such as to make the alliance act as one unit, can the group nature of the alliance serve as an asset instead of a liability: under the opposite circumstances, group-action contains built-in elements of weakness vis-a-vis the single enemy.

In the first set of Arab Summit and Sub-Summit Conferences, the factors engendering singleness of purpose, unity of planning, and forcefulness of action were all lacking: the collective nature of Arab action

was a liability: the confrontation ended in Arab defeat. This much we know with certainty, for it is now a matter of history.

How about the second set of Arab Summit and Sub-Summit Conferences? The phase is still continuing, of course; and we cannot speak with certainty of the future. But we can point to the probabilities inherent in the situation.

Judging on the basis of the modality of collective Arab planning and action manifested thus far in the second set of Arab Summit and Sub-Summit Conferences, we may say that, although some defects of the first set have been remedied in the second, new shortcomings (which were absent in the first) have been present in the second. Unless unforeseeable changes occur in the quality of intra-Arab relations, it is highly probable that the second set of Arab Conferences will prove to be even less successful in altering the Palestinian status quo (i.e. in liberating and re-Arabising Palestine) than was the first set of conferences successful in preserving the Palestinian status quo, (i.e., in protecting Palestine and keeping it predominantly Arab).

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