AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL SECURITY FACTORS IN
EGYPTIAN FOREIGN POLICY FOLLOWING THE 2011
ARAB UPRISINGS

by
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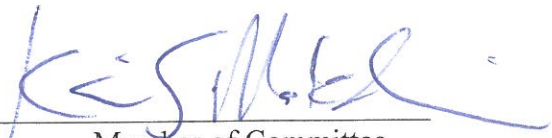Political Studies and Public Administration

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AN ABSTRACT FOR THE THESIS OF

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Title: External and Internal Security Factors In Egyptian Foreign Policy Following the 2011 Arab Uprisings

For most of its modern history, Egypt held a central position in the regional political system of the Middle East. From 1952-1970, President Gamal Abdel Nasser strove to turn Egypt not just into a regional power but a regional hegemon in its own right. His successors however had to deal with the lasting economic and political impact of Nasser's decisions and so were forced to address domestic affairs such as the economy, thus weakening Egypt's influence in the region. With the beginning of the Arab Uprisings in late 2010, longtime dictators such as Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, Muammar Gadhafi in Libya, and Ali Abdullah Saleh were removed from power with the hope that more open and representative democratic systems would take their place. However, as soon as the uprisings began, a countermovement by the remaining governments in the region such as Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf countries began to mobilize. The aim of these regimes was either to vie for control in the new regional arena or simply try to ensure their own survival. In the process, the regional alliance system that was forged after the 2003 US invasion of Iraq was also thrown into disarray. During this process of upheaval, Egypt played an important role due the important geostrategic location of the country in the Middle East and its influence on other actors in the region.

An important point to notice is the divergence in foreign policy between Abdel Nasser and his successors. To Nasser, his legitimacy was based on his position as the standard bearer of Arab Nationalism and which is what drove his foreign policy strategy. To this end, foreign policy emphasized Egypt's role as a regional power and placed the country at the head of the Non-Aligned Movement and the campaign to resist the continued influence of the imperialist powers on their former colonies. The pattern of foreign policy decision making in Egypt following the death of Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1970 however shows a trend of continuity marked by a passive focus on internal and economic affairs and a gradual weakening of Egypt's role in regional affairs by acquiescing to the neoliberal, Western led word order . Despite some minor differences in the circumstances of faced both internally and externally both pre and post 2011, the essential desire of all Egyptian leaders after 1970 have shown a persistent focus on internal security, which would only be achieved at the expense of its role as a regional leader. This is important for two reasons. The first is the dramatic break between Gamal Abdel Nasser and his successors in how foreign policy should be conducted. The second is the inability of 2011 uprisings to significantly change the priorities of the Egyptian leadership when it comes to the subservient role that foreign policy plays in regard to domestic consideration.

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To my wonderful family.
Without their support and encouragement,
even starting this thesis
would have been a much more difficult endeavor.

CHAPTER I

REGIME SECURITY THROUGH BALANCING THREATS
A PATTERN OF CONTINUITY

Over the last several years, the Middle East has gone through series of political upheavals that have warped pre-existing notions concerning the region. According to Ibrahim Zabad, the culture of politics in the Middle East could be defined as "a long historical arc of authoritarianism". Zabad then goes on to assert that this historical legacy would suggest (without pre-determination) that the region might suffer the curse of having to function in perpetual authoritarianism[1].

With the removal of authoritarian governments came the collapse of the pre-2010 political status quo. In such a climate, regional powers such as Egypt would take sides in order to assert their positions within the regions, while global powers would support regional powers to ensure their roles as the regional hegemons and by extension minimize the risk of conflict. However, with power vacuums opening up due to multiple states being in the throes of civil conflict such as Syria and Yemen, the post-2003 alliance and alignment system has unraveled and regional powers have had to scramble to salvage whatever influence they still command. With this in mind, Egypt is facing an existential crisis of its own. Even though the country has avoided spiraling into conflict just like several of its neighbors, the events of the Arab Uprisings have not left the North African nation untouched. When analyzing the trajectory of events in the Middle East after 2011, several questions must be answered: What was the progression of the events of the Arab Spring that led to the current situation faced by Egypt within the

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[1] Ibrahim, Z (2017). *Middle Eastern Minorities: The Impact of the Arab Spring*. New York: Routledge. 9

context of the overall Middle Eastern alliance system? And what role does Egypt play within this overturned regional paradigm?

I will address these questions drawing on approaches that explain how Third World governments base their decisions on the idea of "Regime Security" in that the ultimate goal of any authoritarian government will be consolidation of its power and assurance of its survival. In order to do so, it learns to identify its threats to their existence and so to adapt to craft a policy centered on balancing those threats which is based around a reinterpretation of the balance of threat theory that is usually advocated by many realist scholars.

The research will be conducted through a comparative analysis of alliance system theories within the current available literature and will be argued by looking at Egyptian diplomatic history of the Middle East over the last six years. The research will use empirical evidence by relying on three separate but interconnected case studies to assess the way the Arab Spring uprisings have impacted the way that Egypt deals with both regional traditional allies and opponents. The countries used in these case studies will be Saudi Arabia, Israel, and the United States. Two questions will be central: 1-What are the identifiable circumstances that affect which type of behavior is to be expected? 2- What conclusions can be drawn from understanding the foreign policy behavior of Third World governments.

The first part of the research for this thesis will look at the period of Egyptian history before the uprisings from 1952 up to 2011. The purpose of this historical overview will be to identify the variables that influenced Egyptian foreign policy in the pre-2011 era, thus identifying the similarities and differences with the post-2011 period. The research will be conducted through a survey of the chronology of the events that

have transpired since 2011 as well as a comparative analysis of the narrative progression between the various case studies that will be used and the identification of the significant events. The data will be collected using empirical evidence by relying on three separate but interconnected case studies to assess the way the Arab Spring uprisings have impacted the way that Egypt deals with both traditional allies and opponents.

The countries used in these case studies will be Saudi Arabia, Israel, and the USA since these actors are amongst Egypt's most important partners within the pro-Western alignment system in the Middle East.

A. Why these case studies?

Although the circumstances of their alignments with Egypt differ, each of these cases illustrates a contributing factor to the survival of Egypt's various regimes. In the case of Saudi Arabia and the USA, Egypt's various leaders maintained alignments with them for considerable periods of time and they always included financial and material aid to the Egyptian governments and thus represent the pragmatic evolution of Egyptian foreign policy.

These cases underscore the inadequacies of existing alignment theories in their current form in fully explaining the changing alignments. Traditional balance of threat theory alone cannot explain why Egypt has changed its alignment with these countries at so many intervals despite consistency of the regional systemic order. It was common for Egypt to shift its alignments with Saudi Arabia and the USA frequently during the same government. The selection of these cases raises questions about their representativeness. They do not all come from the same geographical area, they do not share similar

histories, nor ideologies, and the realignments used to fluctuate quite frequently depending on the circumstances involved with the exception of Israel which only faced one change in alignment. If one digs in deeper, one can find more interesting factors that compensate for the superficial differences. These include experiences with colonialism, economic development, and existential interests such as security. They fundamentally represent the various scenarios that reveal the degree of complexity that lies behind the alignment decisions of Third World States.

B. Organization of the Chapters

The thesis will be presented in five chapters with each chapter being split into sections that will look at Egyptian relations with Saudi Arabia, Israel, and the United States respectively. The first, second and third chapters will collectively breakdown Egyptian foreign policy from 1952-early 2011 , which will span the administrations of Gamal Abdel Nasser, Anwar Sadat, and Hosni Mubarak. The first objective will be to provide historical context and understand the external and internal factors that influenced the decision making process of these various leaders and so help to understand their respective foreign policy objectives. The second objective will be to enable a comparison of Egyptian foreign policy before and after 2011. This comparison reveals that the motivations that drove the foreign policy behaviors of the various leaderships were reliant on the circumstances of their times and their ability to influence the outcomes of their decisions based on their perception on what constituted the most pressing threat posed to their continued existence. For example, during Gamal Abdel Nasser's time in office, Egypt became a revisionist power with the intent of becoming a regional power and lead a Middle Eastern bloc that would be able to stand up to British

interventionism and so upend the regional order that had existed during the imperial era. Initially, Abdel Nasser was intent on focusing on Egypt's economic development so as to be able to meet these ambitious goals since the national economy was still heavily reliant on agriculture and was based around a social system in which a few landowners controlled most of the economy while the vast majority lived in peasant like conditions. The refusal of the West to provide economic and military aid and the defeat of the Egyptian army in the Suez Crisis of 1956 forced Abdel Nasser to reevaluate his priorities and so align with the Soviet Union. Unlike Abdel Nasser though, Anwar Sadat and Hosni Mubarak lacked the influence needed to maneuver in the regional system and take risks in foreign policy. The situation was made worse by the dire economic circumstances that Egypt was placed in due to the policies of the Abdel Nasser government. This combination of factors would lead to Sadat realigning Egypt with the USA, signing a peace treaty with Israel in 1977, and begin to liberalize the economy in order to attract investment and refill Egypt's drained coffers. Mubarak would follow his predecessor's footsteps and conduct a cautious and inward looking foreign policy that eschewed adventurist policies in favor of diplomacy and coalition building.

The fourth chapter will look at the foreign policy of the administration of Mohammad Morsi. It should be noted first that realistically, Egyptian foreign policy did not change much during this period of time and witnessed a strategy of appeasement towards both Saudi Arabia and Iran as a way to prevent Egypt from having to align itself with either side and thus possibly get itself dragged into a regional crisis. It should be noted that despite the more pacifist and balanced foreign policy during this time and despite the fact that Morsi was only president for one year before being overthrown in a military coup, this period of post-2011 Egyptian history is important because of what

Morsi represented. He was the first and only person to become president of Egypt since 1952 without first having been in the military. What was even more significant was that he was a member of the Muslim Brotherhood which historically was repressed by the military-backed governments of Abdel Nasser and his successors. While Morsi adhered to a strategy of continuity in foreign policy matters, outside of Egypt his presidency was noteworthy for the antagonism which he inspired in Egypt's traditional allies such as Israel, the USA, Saudi Arabia, and the other Gulf countries due to two important factors. The first was that he was from the Muslim Brotherhood, as stated previously, and thus ensured that other regional powers would keep Egypt at an arm's length. A second factor was Morsi's willingness to make peaceful overtures to Iran in order so as to encourage Iranian investment in Egypt's economy and attract Iranian tourists. This placed Egypt in a difficult position having to prove itself to be a reliable partner to its regional allies while dealing with Egypt's social, political, and economic dilemmas according to the agenda of the Muslim Brotherhood.

The fifth chapter will look at the foreign policy of the Sisi administration which effectively took power after Morsi's removal from power. This period witnessed the return of the pre-2011 status quo and with it the empowerment and strengthening of the position of the Egyptian military in the nation's political system and economy. The appointment of Abdel-Fattah el Sisi to the presidency in June 2014 signaled the return of the Mubarak style authoritarianism to Middle Eastern politics and by extension the return and entrenchment of the pre-2011 regional system. Despite his ruthlessness in dealing with the internal opposition, Sisi pretty much continued Mubarak's foreign policies in favor of domestic affairs. Like his deposed predecessor, Sisi had to deal with a worsening economy and a deteriorating security situation. However, he could not rely

on internal sources of revenue to do this and so align himself with the foreign policy objectives of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in return for financial aid. In doing so, he effectively relinquished Egypt's claim to regional power but basically turned Egypt into a Saudi satellite state. Who Sisi would do this is a relatively simple answer. Sisi was facing significant internal problems caused by the deteriorating economic situation in Egypt and he needed an external source of revenue to help consolidate his position since he could not rely on internal sources without having to make substantial reforms. In return for financial assistance from the Gulf, Sisi would aid the Saudis and its allies in their own foreign policy endeavors, thus insuring that Egypt would not have to suffer the risks of continuing its role as a regional power since it could simply outsource that role to the Saudis.

That is not to say that he made things easy for the Saudis. He refused to join the Saudi led coalition against the Iranian supported Houthi rebels in Yemen, and broke ranks with Saudi policy towards Syrian president Bashar al Assad. Relations with the US were hardly better, as relations between the two countries became more frigid due to the insistence of the Obama administration on political and economic liberalization, which clashed with the conservative and security-oriented viewpoint of President Sisi. However, the election of Donald Trump to the Presidency would change that as both men had similar foreign policy views, which as aided by Trump's desire to become less involved in Middle Eastern affairs, thus giving more and more leeway to Sisi to enact his policies with greater autonomy. Finally, the only country that has seen consistent improvement in its relation with Egypt is Israel. Throughout the seven years since the removal of Hosni Mubarak, both the Morsi and Sisi governments have dealt with Israel pragmatically due to the beneficial bilateral security and economic ties that the two

countries have developed over the decades since the signing of the peace treaty in 1977. Despite his cordial relation with the Israelis, Morsi proceeded with caution towards Israel due to the unpopularity of the bilateral relationship. Sisi, on the other hand, was more enthusiastic about preserving the unofficial alliance between the two neighbors and since his ascension to the presidency, security coordination and economic cooperation has greatly increased.

C. What are the implications?

Looking at the evidence, several conclusions can be drawn up. In any authoritarian system, the first and last priority for any government would be its survival and preservation. However, these governments would also be deeply aware of their weaknesses and would tailor their foreign policies to balance the threats that posed the biggest risk to their survival. The most dangerous of these shortcomings would be their ability to mobilize and utilize their resources so as to be able to pursue their ambitions. With the exception of states such as Saudi Arabia which are blessed with massive oil reserves, most states in the Third World lack the ability to rely on internal sources of revenue and so would be forced to seek aid elsewhere.

Third world states such as Egypt learn to make compromises in their foreign policies since the structure of their systems does not allow for the internal security required to express influence abroad. The traditional definition of security and balance of power acknowledge that internal balancing takes place as groups combine to advance their interests. The job of a strong central government is to avoid a zero-sum scenario in which losers are removed from the equation completely. The problem is that the internal and external politics of the Third World resemble the definition of an anarchic state

system since the lack of strong internal institutions makes balancing extremely difficult. The realities faced by many third world states is that their systems and borders encompass many groups who resist domination from the top and as such the only unit of analysis is the leadership instead of the whole system. By extension, any analysis of the regional state system would have to look at the individual factors that are influencing their decisions and understand how these factor personally and existentially to the leadership

CHAPTER II

RELEVANCE OF NEOREALIST THEORY IN EXPLAINING THE ALIGNMENT BEHAVIOR OF THIRD WORLD STATES

In the standard interpretation of international security and alliance, a state will conduct their foreign policies in order to counter the most immediate external threat. As such, these states will band together and either balance against that threat or bandwagon together with it. Unlike in First World states, there are multiple factors at play in the decision making process in the Third World that go beyond the simple question of external security[2]. The problem that most Third World governments face is their ability to maintain stability in the absence of legitimacy. Due to the personalized nature of politics in the third world, and the lack of sustainable institutions to ensure the rule of law, their stakes are much higher in such systems and actually resemble the political systems described in much of Niccolo Machiavelli as being run by "Princes" who are constantly on the lookout for threats to their survival. However, the factors that influence foreign policy decision making in the third world today are substantially different than back in the Renaissance era. The essential questions are: What is the meaning of security in the third world and how does it compare to the interpretation embraced by the Third World? And what are the factors that impact a state's ability to conduct foreign policy and how does it relate to the concept of security from a third world perspective?

In order to understand the factors that drive foreign policy in the third world, we must comprehend the internal systems of these countries and how their domestic

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[2] Ryan, C.R (2009). *Inter-Arab Alliances: Regime Security and Jordanian Foreign Policy*, Gainsville, Fl: University Press of Florida, pg 12-17

policies impact their foreign policies and vice versa. These include the ability of a

government to mobilize resources, to the threats that they believe they face and maybe

even the way that their own citizens view them. In is important to remember that instead

of simply balancing these threats, a state might choose to appease them in order to

balance a secondary set of threats that are not normally defined according to standard

international relations theory. In the third world, this will often mean appeasing other

states which can pose less pressing threats through alliances or alignments in order to

counter more immediate domestic threats. Since the dominant goal of Third World

leaders is to defeat the threats arrayed against them, they will sometimes protect

themselves at the expense of promoting the long term security and prosperity of the

state. Any First World state that wishes to deal with these countries must therefore

understand their motivations and their outlook.

A. Definition of Alliances and Alignments

Within the literature concerning alliance systems, Jeremy Pressman provides

one of the narrowest definitions of what constitutes an "Alliance". In his 2008 book

"Warring Friends", Pressman discusses the reasons that states into alliance systems with

other states from a narrow perspective. His main argument that states will primarily

enter into alliances in order in order to achieve "Alliance Restraint". In Alliance

Restraint, the objective of a major power would be to enter an alliance with another

states either to counter the threat of a third state or instead to restrain another state.

Pressman explains that: "Alliance restraint is an actual or anticipated diplomatic effort

by one ally to influence a second ally not to proceed with a proposed military policy or

not to continue an existing military policy."[3]. In this regard, alliances act as a mechanism of control so that more powerful actors can influence and control weaker actors within the alliance itself. He uses the argument that alliance restraint by a powerful actor is used more often to restrain states that are within the alliance so that they will not fight each other rather than to counter an external threat. In summary, according to Pressman, alliances are purely military enterprises that are managed through diplomatic means. However, the main weakness of this focus on the military aspect of alliances narrows the discourse on the reasons why countries enter alliance systems. Another weakness is its practicality. Pressman's definition of alliances and countries enter them is based on the assumption that all countries are rational actors that enter into alliances for the same reasons.

A third weakness of this definition of alliance theory is that the very definition of what constitutes an alliance has changed, especially over the course of the 20th century. Both Curtis Ryan and Glenn Snyder contextualize this by explaining the difference between "alliances" and "alignment". In Curtis' book *Regime Security*, Curtis defines "alliance as being "a formal subset of alignment. Alliances are promises between two or more states, involving clear declarations of future intentions regarding mutual assistance in security and defense matters" (Ryan, page 5). He goes on to explain on page 5 that Arab politics are more characterized by shifting informal alignments and as such, a "focus solely on alliance can capture only a fraction of the dynamics of inter-Arab relations". Alignment is a far broader concept than alliance and thus provides a more flexible approach to understanding foreign policy decision making in the so-called "Third World". Building on the work of Glenn Snyder, Ryan defines

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[3] Pressman, J. (2008). *Warring Friends: Alliance Restraint in International Politics*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. pg. 8

alignment as an informal relationship between two or more states, thereby involving "expectations of political and economic support that may include, but is not restricted to, security affairs" (Ryan, 5). This is due to the fluid nature of diplomatic relationships between states in the third world.

B. Balance-of-Threat Theory, Omnibalancing, and Regime Security

In his 1987 book "The Origins of Alliances", Stephen Walt helps to bridge some of these differences by building on the work of Kenneth Waltz who developed the "Balance of Power" theory which argues that states develop their military capabilities and develop alliance systems in order to balance the power of other states with comparative capabilities. Walt refines Watz's work by putting forward the "Balance of Threat" theory. He justifies his reasoning by explaining in his introduction that even though distribution of power in an alliance system is an important factor, "the level of threat is also affected by geographic proximity, offensive capabilities, and perceived intentions" (Walt,5). This theory explains that states ally with other states in order to balance the threat that other states pose to them rather than to enhance their own power as Waltz suggested. This balance is achieved either through balancing (allying with a strong power against another) or bandwagoning (allying with the state that poses the threat so as to stave it off). Walt makes the argument the while bandwagoning does happen in alliance systems in a limited number of cases such as during wartime, balancing is generally the more common approach due to two reasons. The first is that is it the safer strategy since it would be to "join with those who cannot readily dominate their allies, in order to avoid being dominated by those who can" (Walt, page 18). It is important to note that Pressman does addresses Stephen Walt in his literature review by

explaining that while balance-of-threat theory does have an important role to play within alliance politics, there is more to alliances than what Walt than merely power or threats. However, Walt has a point in his approach since states are constantly worried about their own security and in the absence of a global authority to ensure peace, these states would take steps in order to secure themselves. However, this approach limits the scope of the ability of a scholar to analyze the ways that states have reacted in the environment of the Arab Spring since much of the focus of Arab states is on other states that are experiencing internal collapse due to civil conflicts and thus do not pose an obvious external threat.

In contrasts to many scholars of international relations who tend to focus strongly on the alliance systems and decision making behaviors between global actors such as Europe and the United States, Stephen Walt studies the behavior of Middle Eastern States and looks at the relationship between both client states and their sponsors, thus offering a perspective into the factors that influence the foreign policy decision making of Middle Eastern states such as the threat projected by rival states for regional hegemony. According to the definition of the Balance of Threat theory, alliances occur when a state initiates cooperation with another state in order to achieve mutual security goals. In such an analysis, states are regarded as internally and functionally similar enough that it is not required to consider their internal characteristics as factors when deciding foreign and security policies. It is the condition of international anarchy which instead dictates state behavior, including alignment. It posits the argument that states do not align unless it is in the face of a common security threat, and that states align with each other in order to help them counter tangible threats from other states. Walt continues to state that if a state cannot balance to counter the

threat, then it will bandwagon with the threat, thus preserving the state's independence by surrendering some of its autonomy to the more powerful state actor. In his later work, Walt fleshes out bandwagoning by explaining that it involves an unequal exchange where the weaker state makes asymmetrical concessions to the dominant power and accepts a more submissive role. Bandwagoning basically suggests a willingness to support or tolerate illegitimate actions by the dominant ally. This applies greatly to the relationship between Egypt and Israel after the signing of the peace agreement. Essentially, in return for peace and economic relations, Egypt would tolerate Israel's policies in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This is proven by Egypt's shift from being the flagbearer of anti-Zionism to becoming a mediator whenever conflict arise between Israel and the Palestinians such as in 2012 and 2014. With this in mind, Walt's definition of bandwagoning as being more akin to a zero-sum cannot be applied here since Egypt has gained by achieving peace with the Israelis due to the military and financial assistance provided by the Americans. This would make the relationship more akin to Jeremy Pressman's definition of an alignment since both Israel and Egypt tethered themselves to the US in order to refrain from conflict.

In a counterargument presented in his 1991 book "Choosing Sides", Steven David partially rejects the neorealist argument that nations enter into alliances simply to confront external threats. Instead, he argues that realistically, in the case of many third world countries, the state is unable or unwilling to guarantee stability and security for its citizens. At its core, David refines Walt's "Balance-of-Threat" theory by expanding on Walt's definition of threats to include domestic threats to a nation's security. It must be stressed that David does not reject the tenets of traditional neorealism but rather emphasizes the need to look at all of the factors that influence political actors that are

involved within the alliance and alignment system. This attempt by third world nations to balance one type of threat in order to appease another is called Omnibalancing. To be more precise, "Omnibalancing incorporates both the need to appease secondary adversaries and the need of leaders to balance against both internal and external threats in order to survive in power. It is conditional on regimes being weak and illegitimate and on the stakes for domestic politics being very high"[4]. Omnibalancing endorses the realist perspective of the international system as anarchic, and it accepts the primacy of power, rationality and interests, which inevitably lead to conflict. In fact, the pillar of Omnibalancing lies in its focus of the realist school on the role of human nature, in which survival is paramount and that there are clear hierarchies of issues that exist in which survival is of paramount importance. It is just that David simply places responsibility on national leaders and internal factors rather than states and the exclusive role of the international system due to the deeply personal nature and construct of Arab politics. Omnibalancing therefore suggests that leaders will align in specific ways primarily to enable them to deal with threats at national level, specifically those that rebel against their rule and maybe even threaten their survival.

A primary example would be the threat posed by the Muslim Brotherhood. Nearly every regime in Egypt since 1952 has had an ingrained paranoia of Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood and viewed them as one of the most serious internal threats to their legitimacy and survival. In current time, this paranoia has extended outwards to become an external threat as well. It is the belief of the current military backed regime led by President Sisi that were the Muslim Brotherhood or another group with a similar belief system to gain prominence in countries such as

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[4] David, S. R. (1991). *Choosing Sides: Alignment and Realignment in the Third World*. Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press. 7

Syria, then they in return would pose a threat to the military's control of Egypt by empowering other similarly Islamist groups to challenge the military for control of the country. In response to such threats, Egypt has tried to establish closer relations with embattled regimes such as the Assad regime in Syria, while maintaining relations with traditional allies such as Israel. Marc Lynch put it best in his preface when he explained that "with only a few exceptions, Arab leaders have proven that they would do virtually anything to hold on to power. They pushed back popular uprisings through violent repression, political and economic co-optation, and the manipulation of identity politics. They fought their battles for political survival not only at home, but across the region's many new battlefields"[5]. The balancing act that Egypt has been obliged to take so as not to isolate itself diplomatically however has placed an enormous strain on its relationship with longstanding allies such as the USA, Saudi Arabia, and the other Gulf countries since Egypt's diplomatic positions mean having to realign its interests with those of Iran and Russia, the Gulf primary geopolitical opponents in the region. At the same time, Egypt needs to maintain good relations with its regional allies such as the Gulf monarchies since they are important sources of funding and investment for the country as well as providing crucial political support. This concern for its own security has also led to awkward relationships with other regional powerbrokers such as Saudi Arabia, which has launched its own initiative to back regimes friendly to the kingdom such as the government of embattled Yemeni president Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi and opposition groups that it can control such as the rebel groups in Syria that are fighting the Assad regime. While initially supportive of Saudi Arabia's agenda in the Middle East, Egypt has now also strained that relationship by withdrawing itself from the coalition fighting

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[5] Lynch, M. (2016). *The New Arab Cold Wars: Uprisings and Anarchy in the Middle East*. New York, NY: Public Affairs. pg XVI

the Houthi rebellion reestablishing relationships with and then subsequently openly supporting the Assad regime. Israel is also another important factor to look at when discussing Egyptian foreign policy. Ever since the normalization of relations between Egypt and Israel at Camp David in 1979, the two countries have developed a rapport on matters relating to security and economics especially related to the issue of the Gaza Strip. Relations between the two became more complicated during the Morsi period despite Morsi's promise uphold the peace treaty with Israel due to his close ties with Hamas, and his condemnation of Israel's offensive in the Gaza Strip during the 2012 Operation Pillar of Defense, even though Egypt mediated a ceasefire on November 21, 2012. Relations between the two countries improved significantly during the Sisi regime. Sisi, for his part, maintained the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel without the controversy seen during the Morsi era. One example is when Egypt brokered a ceasefire during another round of fighting between Israel and Hamas in 2014, but with the added stipulation of allowing the Palestinian Authority government of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to take over control of the Gaza Strip in future peace deals. Sisi is also known for his hostility towards Hamas due to their historically friendly relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood. As a result, the Sisi administration has supported crackdowns on both organizations. The chasm between the two allies only widened due to the changing attitude of the Sisi administration towards the Assad regime where it became obvious that Obama wanted the removal of Assad from power while Sisi favored keeping him in an attempt to return to the pre-2011 status quo.

Schweller[6] actually rejects some of David's criticisms. He posits first according to the measures of power described by Walt, states with illegitimate leaders, weak

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[6] Schweller, R. L. (1994). Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In. *International Security*, 19(1), 72-107

governmental institutions, and little ability to mobilize economic resources are weak states that are likely to bandwagon anyway. Second, the claim that fragile states often bandwagon with secondary adversaries to counter their principal domestic threat is consistent is consistent with Walt's argument that states balance against the most dangerous threat to their survival. Essentially, it can be argued that Walt does not disregard the role of domestic threats in deciding foreign policy, but rather argues that these threats are play a subordinate role, since the external threats posed by anarchic international system will forces states to tailor how they counter those threats based on their overall capabilities. The argument posed by Levy and Barnett about the "resource-providing" function of alliances which states that "states select alliance partners in order to obtain side payments of material assistance, such as economic or military aid"[7] is tested by Walt in *The Origins of Alliances* and comes to the conclusion that little support for the a . As a final point of defense, Schweller points out that since Walt's critics have not proposed a comprehensive alternative theory to challenge the "balance-of-threat" theory, then it should hold up as an explanation of alliance choices. But Schweller also makes counterarguments to this. He explains that with the exception of Levy and Barnett, Walt's critics accepted his premise that alliance choices are best examined as a response to threat, though some such as David and Ryan expanded their focus to include internal threats as well as external threats. As a consequence, those who argue for "domestic sources" have not questioned Wat's definition of bandwagoning as giving in to the most menacing threat. He goes on to argue that the central premise of balance-of-threat theory disproportionately favors balancing over bandwagoning since Walt defines bandwagoning as capitulation, and thus only examines those alliances that

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[7] Walt, S. M. (1987). *The Origins of Alliances*. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press.pg 188. For Walt's test of this hypothesis, see ibid, pg 219-242

are formed as a response to significant external threats. Schweller argues instead that alliance choices are motivated more by opportunities for gain as well as threat. Since balance-of-threat theory is designed to consider only cases in which the goal of the alignment is security, then it will systematically exclude alliances which are driven by profit. The reasoning then goes that when profit rather than security drives alliance choices, then there is no reason why states should be threatened or cajoled to join the bandwagon since they will do so willingly.

In continuing with Omnibalancing, there is a significant shortcoming in David's Omnibalancing theory is that it is based on a bipolar model of international relations which is rooted in the Cold War, thus giving this idea of having to take one of two sides. In the case of Egypt, the story is much more complicated since the Egyptian leadership has to take into consideration the interests of other regional as well as international actors in the Middle East, which is made all the more complicated since the divergence of interests might be obvious in one case but not so in another.

Curtis Ryan delves even deeper into the debate and helps to bridge the disagreements between Walt and his critics. He credits Stephen Walt with shifting some of the debate on alliances and alignments by focusing on the role of the "Global South" countries in the international alliance system, thereby expanding the scope of the discourse. He also lauds Steven David for bringing attention to the fact that traditional Neorealist thought cannot be applied convincingly enough to explain the reasons behind the foreign policy actions of many third world states, such as the drive for regime survival and internal stability. However, he criticizes them for not moving away far enough from traditional scholarship due to the substantial influence of the Cold War in their work since the case studies used only look at the nature of alliances between

superpowers and client states while completely ignoring the relationships between the various third world actors themselves. Ryan emphasizes that one of the reasons why third world alignments such as the Middle East are so difficult to understand using Neorealist theory is due to the lack of or weak mutual defense pacts among Middle Eastern countries. As such, Ryan uses a regime security approach where he draws on the insights of Neorealist thinkers while also incorporating explicit links to external threats, internal political economic factors, and domestic politics. By doing, Ryan borrows heavily from the Social Constructivist School in order to avoid creating a dichotomy where one would have to presents alignments and alliances as being primarily driven by external military security fears or by internal materialist motivations. To bridge the gaps, the regime security approach transfers decision making agency from the states to the ruling regimes. The main premise is that regimes in the third world are paranoid about their own existential security. In simple enough terms, alignments are made and utilized by a ruling political regime in order to maintain its own security and long term survival. While external defense against other state actors is part of the cost of regime survival, the costs of maintaining a ruling political coalition and ensuring internal stability take paramount importance. Instead of separating the state from the regime, the two become one political actor. In summary, the security of the state ensures the security of the ruling regime. Mohammad Ayoub actually put it best when he that it is often "difficult to disentangle issues of state security from those of regime security in the Third World"[8]As such, any alignments that are established within the regional system which enhance the security of the regime in turn equates to the enhancement of the security of the state. What must be remembered is that

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[8] M.Ayoob (1995), The Third World Security Predicament: State Making, Regional Conflict and the International System, Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 9

alignment decision will be primarily motivated by the most pressing needs of the regime at any one time. A key feature of an international alignment would be to act in effect as a transnational coalition, in which political elites would collaborate across national borders and support each other's' ability to govern and survive.

One of Ryan's greatest allies is F. Gregory Gause III, who shares the same opinions as Ryan concerning decision making amongst Middle Eastern states. In his 2003 article "Balancing What?", Gause emphasizes the importance of threat perception by asking the question "How states prioritize the potential threats they face in making alliance decisions". In his cross-examination of Jordanian, Syrian, and Saudi policy towards various conflicts in the Persian and Arabian Gulf, Gause concluded that Middle Eastern political leaders view external challenges to their own domestic security, such as transnational ideologies such as political Islam or reform movements such as the secular democracy, as being more serious threats than those based on military capabilities. Gause sees his argument as being rooted in the Realist tradition since it is concerned with factors such as states, power, and security. However, Ryan would argue that Gause is also essentially arguing against Waltzian Neo-realism since the latter paradigm eschew and ignore the domestic and transnational variables that Gause and Ryan endorse in their arguments. However, this argument goes back to David, Schweller and Walt. What is essentially happening in omnibalancing for the sake of regime security is bandwagoning to appease an external threat so as to balance an internal threat by receiving an external source of revenue without having a rely on domestic sources and thus endangering the regime.

Korany, Noble, and Brynen lend their support to omnibalancing and regime security by criticizing traditional realism itself. They contend that realism suffers from

two basic deficiencies: The first is the conception of international relations is does not distinguish between the internal and international politics but instead separates them. The second is that there is a flawed distinction between what they term "high" politics, which deal with outside threats against which the states is forced to defend itself against, and "low" politics which is concerned with the internal environment which is often seen as less threatening. The authors build on what they consider to be valid while fixing the existing defects. The authors note that the Arab world – and maybe the Third World as a whole – is characterized by two basic features: internal fragility and external vulnerability. The blame can be put first on the "artificial state-formation process in the Arab world" which has led to a constant state of precariousness and instability. The implications are of "the impression of a state at war with its own society and also that society at war with itself"[9]. The second factor to be blamed is the economic dependency which poses a serious threat to internal stability and state sovereignty due to interference by outside powers. This can be explained due to the inability of the state to provide for its people due to either mismanagement or the emergence of security dilemma. A good example of this is the focus on Nasser and later Sadat on spending resources on their militaries between 1967 and 1973 in order to counter the threat posed by the Israelis, which had the effect of strengthening the military but strangling the economy, thus forcing major changes by a Nasser's successors.

C. Budget Security

A common criticism against contemporary realist scholarship is the habit of overlooking or minimizing the effects of economic factors on the ability of countries to implement their foreign policy objectives. A good starting point is best explained by

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[9] Korany, B., Noble, P., & Brynen, R. (Eds.). (1993). *The Many Faces of National Security in the Arab World* (pg.12-13). London: The Macmillan Press.

Mohammad Ayoub in his "Subaltern Theory"[10], which advocates that third world states are generally weak, and are therefore often economically and militarily dependent on external benefactors. As a result, third world states are more concerned with short term gains. Additionally, third world states are usually limited in their foreign policy interactions to their close neighbors since they lack the clout to assert themselves in other areas. This limited interaction tends to focus on matters of security thus limiting them to interact with other states that possess similar characteristics as them.

In a challenge to neorealism, Barnett and Levy shift the focus of internal security squarely toward economic factors. They argue that international alignments, especially those from the third world are more accurately explained as decisions made on the basis of economic needs and the effect of those needs on regime stability over time. They root their argument in the security dilemma due to the fact that authoritarian regimes focus on arms procurement to offset the risks posed by their contentious political legitimacy. They argue that such mismanagement of resources leads to two outcomes. The first is that if a government relying on external support for either arms or financial support could lead to the diminishment of national autonomy, thus stoking popular outrage over any symbol of external influence or domination. A prime example of this was in Egypt from 1971-1972, when Anwar Sadat conceded an enormous amount of authority to the Soviet Union in exchange for military hardware to beef up the Egyptian army just prior to the outbreak of the 1973 Yom Kippur War. The second is that even if a country has the necessary resources, extracting them may provide short-term military security but at the cost of damaging the economy in the long term, thus reducing the long term military potential and security of the state, which can be interpreted as an internal

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[10] Ayoub, M. (2002). *Inequality and Theorizing in International Relations: The Case for Subaltern Realism*. International Studies Review, 4(3), 27-48.

security dilemma since this military spending reduces a state's ability to satisfy domestic welfare goals in the short and long term (the guns-butter trade off analogy). In the long run, this can generate social discontent and undermine political support for the regime.

Similarly, Laurie Brand brings economic variables to bear on alignment choices by arguing that the domestic economy is the key element behind foreign policy choices, including alliances and alignments, in direct contrast to most neorealist approaches. In the end, for Brand, the key is budget security for which she provides a convincing case in the importance of economic factors in Arab alignment decisions[11]. Ryan however, argues that this approach may remain "uni-causal" despite being a compelling alternative to most neorealist approaches since an extreme in either direction may lead to an unspecified model. According to Ryan, if the neorealist emphasis on an external balance of threats as advocated by Walt tends to neglect domestic and economic factors, then becoming emphasizing budget security too closely may leave out the insights of traditional perspectives such as the role of external threats and the military dimensions of security. His conclusion is that economic variables must be examined in a broader context that takes into account the multiple influences of alliances and alignments in the Third World.

Budget security plays a much larger role in the narrative outlined by Raymond Hinnebusch in his 2014 book "The Foreign Policies of Arab States". Since the Second World War, Egypt had a balance of payments deficit that had to be filled from other sources. From 1948 to 1958, it was filled from existing currency reserves. From 1958 to 1964, Egypt received aid from both the Eastern and Western bloc. From 1965 to 1972,

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[11] Brand, L.A. (1994). Economics and Shifting Alliance: Jordan's Relations With Syria and Iraq, 1975-1981. *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* 26(3), 393-413

the Soviet Union subsidized the debt. From 1973 to 1977, it was the turn of the oil producing Gulf countries, and since 1978, the US became the major supplier of economic aid. However, it became increasingly clear over time that the era of revolutionary enthusiasm and activist politics that defined the Nasser period led to increasing economic crises and so would contribute to the evolution of a more inward-looking and less activist foreign policy. The failure of the government's development efforts to meet the needs of an increasing population resulted in higher unemployment, lower standards of living and the potential for political instability. By 1975, economic concerns became the prime driver of government policy for the next several decades.

D. Role of Identity

Identity politics have historically always played an important role in foreign policies, whether they are small communities, nation-states, or transnational ideologies such as the Pan-Arabism and Pan-Islamism, such as was the case in the Middle East. However, the reality is that it was never as clear cut as that and there has usually been a disconnect between the practical realities of the decision making process and the lofty idealism embraced by the masses. In his 2015 book, *The International Politics of the Middle East*, Hinnebusch begins his analysis of the role of identity in the Middle East in the first half of the 20th century by divorcing the marriage between identity and the nation state. He justifies this by pointing towards the historically weak sense of national identity among the Arabs due to being constantly under the control of one empire or another as well as the condemnation amongst many that the current borders were impositions of imperial powers such as the English and the French. As such, this allowed for the rise of supranational ideologies such as pan-Arabism. In contrast with

most Middle Eastern nations, Egypt had the benefit of having a strong sense of national identity which was also complemented with an Arab-Islamic identity. This double layered sense of self led to a perception of Egypt as being the natural leader of the Arabs. It was this commitment to Pan-Arabism that powered Nasser's ambitious foreign policy and gave him the political legitimacy that was lacking in so many other Arab governments. Hinnebusch also credits Gamal Abdel Nasser with consolidating the Arab content of Egyptian identity.

Hinnebusch goes on to say however that this balance between national identity and the strong sense kinship with the Arabs also meant that decisions based purely on national interests such as Sadat's peace deal with the Israelis in 1977 were deeply controversial and damaging to regime legitimacy, a problem which would plague Nasser's successors for years to come. Despite this attachment to regionalism, both Hinnesbusch and Michael Doran[12] pan-Arabism as a political ideology would greatly weaken following the defeat of the Arab armies in the 1967 war, which saw Egypt losing control of the Sinai Peninsula up to the right bank of the Suez Canal. The increased sense of insecurity following the defeat and the growing militarization of the conflict encouraged a resort "self help" among the front line states. While this insecurity brought a collective sense of solidarity against the Israeli threat, it eventually gave way to individualism among the various actors, especially in the aftermath of the 1973 war, in which Egypt institutionalized the primacy of state interests when it accepted a separate peace deal with the Israelis in 1977. The oil boom of the 1970's put the nail in the coffin for Arab nationalism due to the differentiation of the Arab interests between rich and poor. This led to two outcomes: oil revenue encouraged state-building separate

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[12] Doran, M. (2001). Egypt. *In Diplomacy in the Middle East: The International Relations of Regional and Outside Powers (*pp. 97-120). London & New York: St Martin's Press.

and increased the material wealth of the middle classes, allowing for their cooptation by the state. The difference in wealth also encouraged individual states to develop their own separate foreign policies, which also increased security dilemmas among the Arab states.

F. Gregory Gause indirectly builds up on Hinnebusch's and Doran's work in the policy paper "Beyond Sectarianism". He attacks the established view that current events are based on sectarian affiliation such as Sunni versus Shiite and instead claims that what is occurring is essentially a "balance of power" game. This is an important point since it strengthens the mandate that state interests trump grand ideology in the long run and instead decisions are conducted according to national interests. It must be noted however, that in referring back to Curtis Ryan, national interests in the Middle East usually mean regime interests due to the personalized nature of Arab politics and as such, the limitations inherent in the state systems of Third World countries forces pragmatism to take the place of identity and ideology as the main driver of foreign policy.

E. Relevance of these Theories

While there are always multiple factors that affect the decisions of governments in the Third World when it comes to foreign policy, the long term objective for them is constantly the survival of their respective regimes. This stems from a deep understanding of their vulnerability to internal threats that could be potentially made worse by the influence of external factors such as foreign intervention by a great power or the ambitions of a regional rival. In order to secure their long term survival, third world leaders would logically identify the greater threat to their existence and take the

required measures to address it. In the case of Abdel Nasser, his source of legitimacy arose from his reputation as the leader of the Arab nationalist movement, which necessitated balancing external threats from Israel, regional competitors as well as the great powers in order to appease the expectations of his own people. However, in the long term, practical considerations take over and become the primary drivers of foreign policy. In the case of Sadat and his own successors, economics and rising domestic rivals would force them to abandon the goals set out by Abdel Nasser and so require them to concentrate their efforts and resources on managing these internal threats, thereby forcing them to appease foreign threats. This meant signing a peace treaty with Israel, aligning with the United States and surrendering a greater share of Egypt's influence over to other regional actors.

CHAPTER III

EGYPTIAN FOREIGN POLICY UNDER GAMAL ABDEL NASSER, 1952-1970

A. Introduction

After removing King Farouk from power and establishing the Republic of Egypt, the new regime established by the Free Officers led by Gamal Abdel Nasser, focused on consolidation of power and the dismantlement of the vestiges and foundations of the previous government. It wasn't until Nasser had secured his position that Egyptian foreign policy began to materialize. In his manifesto, *The Philosophy of the Revolution*[13], Nasser identified three circles of foreign activity priorities: the Arab, African, and Islamic. Of these three, the Arab circle was the most important Nasser envisioned a leading role for Egypt within the Arab world. The rising popularity of pan-Arabism and Arab nationalism provided an opportunity to expand Egypt's influence in the region and legitimizing him as the flagbearer of Arabism. His initial policies though focused around reforming the economy, but escalations with the Israelis and the rise of other Arab nationalist leaders forced Nasser to change course and so force him to spend more and more resources on foreign policy and military adventures so as to consolidate his authority over his power and by extension protect his power. Unlike with his successors, the threats to Nasser's regime were primarily external and so his prima objective was to balance out the threat posed not only by Israel, but also the threat posed by foreign powers such as the Europeans and later the Americans to subjugate Nasser into their own spheres of influence and so reestablish a great power-client state power relation. What helped him in his endeavor to confront these foreign threats was his

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[13] Abdel Nasser, G. (1954). *The Philosophy of the Revolution*. Cairo: Mondiale Press

ability to play both the Western and Soviet blocs against each other to provide him with the material aid he needed to advance his regional ambitions without sacrificing his autonomy. It was only towards the last few years of his administration did circumstances force him to fully align himself with the Soviet Union, thereby abandoning his role as an independent and non-aligned leader so as to contain the existential threat that Israel posed to his survival.

1. Egyptian-Saudi Relations

In the years immediately after the Egyptian Revolution of 1952 relations between Egypt and Saudi Arabia were cordial, driven by mutual suspicion of the Hashemites reigning in Jordan and Iraq at the time. This arrangement built up upon a pre-existing anti-Hashemite alliance that was formed by King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia, King Farouk of Egypt and President Shukri al-Quwatli of Syria after the foundation of the Arab League in 1945. Subsequently, Nasser and King Saud of Saudi Arabia co-operated to limit the reach of the Baghdad Pact, which they felt was designed to increase the influence of Hashemite Iraq. As a result, the two countries signed a bilateral military pact in 1955, and worked to successfully prevent Jordan from joining the Baghdad Pact. Egypt came to have extensive involvement in the Saudi army, economy and education system. However the alliance was undermined by Saudi anxieties about the Egyptian government's promotion of anti-monarchical forces in the Arab World.

The creation of the pro-Western Baghdad Pact in 1955 presented Nasser's first serious foreign policy challenge. Nasser was adamantly against any such Western led defense pacts since in his opinion, they represented nothing more than a new form of imperialism, in the same vein as the mandate system used after the First World War.

Nasser was also concerned about the balance of power within such a system since it would be dominated by the former imperial powers and as such compromise his country's sovereignty. In a meeting with then US Secretary of States John Foster Dulles, Nasser explained his position in that: "small nations included in the circles of pacts cannot stand on an equal footing with big powers. They cannot discuss matters on an equal basis"[14]. The Baghdad Pact was perceived to be an alternative to his own vision for regional defense. The Egyptian version stressed the dual objectives of regional cooperation under Egyptian command under the banner of Arab Nationalism as well as non-alignment from great power blocs. The Pact also threatened Egypt politically and diplomatically. Should other Arab states such as Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon join the defense pact, then Egypt would be left isolated and thus would be forced to join the pact, thereby sacrificing political autonomy. Another important landmark in Nasser's quest for a leading role in Middle Eastern politics was the Afro-Asian conference in Bandung, Indonesia in April 1955. The conference was organized with the goal of addressing the concerns of newly independent Third-World nations about their place in the Cold War and their apprehensions of being swept up in any great power confrontations. During the conference, Nasser took the initiative, and established a trio between himself, Tito of Yugoslavia, and Jawaharlal Nehru of India in which they articulated the notion of "positive neutrality", a term which was subsequently adopted by the non-aligned movement.

While the Baghdad Pact standoff and the Bandung Conference greatly enhanced Nasser's prestige internationally and helped to cement his position domestically, Nasser was still reliant on the West for arms but two factors would lead him to shift his

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[14] F. Gerges, *The Superpowers and the Middle East: Regional and International Politics, 1955-1967*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1994, page 25

alignment to the Soviet Union. The first was an Israeli army raid on an Egyptian

military position in February 1955 which led to dozens of casualties among the

Egyptian armed forces. This incident left Nasser feeling threatened and humiliated in

front of his people and the army; more so the latter since the Egyptian army was the

backbone of his support. Initially, Egyptian domestic policy emphasized investment of

Egypt's meagre resources on economic and social development rather than the military.

The Gaza raid caused regime priorities to flip 180 degrees, and the military attained a

new centrality in Egyptian development policy which was partially driven by the wave

of Arab nationalism that erupted as a result of the raid. The second factor came from the

West. Nasser's initial choice for arms procurement was the United States. However, the

Eisenhower administration placed severe conditions on the purchase of military

hardware, with the most important condition being the signing of a peace treaty between

Israel and Egypt. For Nasser, this was unthinkable since it would mean at best the

marginalization of his political ambitions and at worst political suicide due to the

blowback from the Egyptian people as well as other Arab nations. Faced with such

unacceptable demands, Nasser decided to take a gamble and break the Western arms

monopoly in the region by inviting the Soviets to make their own offer. When news of

the deal was leaked, Eisenhower tried to dissuade Nasser from taking such a course of

action by warning him that there would be severe consequences if the deal was

finalized. Nasser ignored the warnings and concluded the agreement with the Soviet

Union.

 According to Shama, the Czech arms deal and the Bandung Conference "marked

the beginnings of Nasser's political alliances. The former event brought the Soviet

Union and Egypt into a close military and political alliance, one which would last for

the rest of Nasser's tenure. The second event sowed the seeds of the non-aligned movement, which Egypt helped create and vigorously supported"[15]. Instead of learning their lessons, the Americans continued along this hardline path by imposing sanctions on Egypt and withdrawing financial support from civilian assistance projects in the country, with the most important of these being the Aswan High Dam Project. According to Gerges, the rules of the international system of states were still written by the great powers, and small states were merely pawns in the struggle between the Cold War's bipolar game of nations. In short, by refusing to play by the rules, Nasser had to be put in his place[16]. Nasser perceived the American machinations as an attempt to discredit him to the point where he would be removed by the Egyptian people and replaced by someone more responsive to American demands. Nasser's reaction to the sanctions was to nationalize the Suez Canal Company on July 26, 1956 and so break the last symbol of foreign economic domination in the country.

The Suez crisis of 1956 proved to be a watermark in modern Middle Eastern history. The war established Egypt's position as a regional hegemon and greatly popularized Nasser's Arab Nationalist ideology. However, this popularity would prove to be a double-edged sword with the unification of Egypt and Syria in 1958 with the creation of the United Arab Republic. The sage began in 1955 with the conclusion of several military and economic treaties between the two countries. A mutual defense pact was signed in 1955, followed by a 1956 agreement on industrial cooperation, then a 1957 agreement which was aimed at unifying the economies of both states. Syria at the time was a bastion of Arab Nationalist sentiment and there seemed no better time for unification. The Baathists saw their chance at gaining a powerful ally that would propel

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[15] Shama, Nael (2014). *Egyptian Foreign Policy from Mubarak to Morsi: Against the National Interest*. (New York, New York: Routledge), page 25.
[16] Gerges, *The Superpowers and the Middle East*, page 52

them to political power and took it. In January 1958, a group of nationalist and Baathist-affiliated officers in the Syrian military approached Nasser with a demand for an immediate union with Egypt with the excuse that the country was at risk of a coup by the Communist Party due to their growing influence. Nasser initially rejected the demand since he had previously explained his belief that any deal on constitutional unity must take place gradually over a five year period. Nasser eventually conceded to his visitors' appeals and so announced the creation of the United Arab Republic on February 22, 1958. While the union elated many Arab Nationalists, it would prove to be first of several debilitating miscalculations on Nasser's part.

There is still substantial debate over what influenced Nasser's last-minute affirmation to the union but according to Shama, strategic considerations would have played a big part. Syria played an important role in Egyptian foreign policy and a hostile regime in Damascus would have threatened Egyptian interests in the region. He was especially wary of the spread of Communist influence in Syrian affairs and the possibility of the communists taking over as well as the reactions of the Americans to avert such a scenario. He also recognized the leverage such a union would bring him in the regional arena.

The United Arab Republic was created in a hasty manner with no planning on how to reconcile the economies and the social structures of the two countries. Instead of a federation, the UAR was completely dominated by Egyptians and Syria was treated as a colony instead of part of a state. Nasser outlawed all political parties in the country, thereby crippling Syrian political life. In the process, Egypt tried to reorganize the economic system along Egyptian lines by imposing Nasser's socialistic political and economic system on a weaker Syria, thus creating backlash from the Syrian business

and army circles. What truly weakened the new union was the inability of the Egyptian state to find a suitable political system due to Nasser's unwillingness to share power with the Syrians As a result, the great experiment of Arab territorial unity lasted less than four years. A secessionist attempt in Syria by pro-Baathist elements of the Syrian army took place on September 28, 1961 that ended with Syria's declaration of independence from the UAR. The conspirators were however willing to renegotiate the terms of the union in favor of a more equitable power sharing system between the Syrians and Egyptians. Nasser refused to grant them this concession and initially mobilized the armed forces to crush the coup attempt. However, he stood his army down at the last minute when he realized the he had no allies left in Syria and decided to cut his losses by accepting the independence of Syria.

To look back at Saudi Arabia, the Saudi were witnessing these developments and became more antagonistic towards Egypt. This was due to the opposing ideologies of the two countries. Egypt was backed the Soviet Union, came to represent the Non-Aligned Movement, and was a nominal advocate of secularism and republicanism. All these were in strong contrast to the Saudis, who represented absolute monarchism, Islamist theocracy and were generally close to the United States and United Kingdom. By 1958, Egyptian-Saudi relations had deteriorated to its absolute lowest. This antagonism led to an increased escalation in the "Arab Cold War"[17] which manifested itself in the North Yemen civil war.

Despite the fiasco of the UAR, Nasser's foreign policy strategy didn't change substantially and in fact Nasser doubled down on his use of military force to achieve his objectives. This was shown when he decided to intervene militarily on the side of the

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[17] Kerr, M. H. (1971). *The Arab Cold War* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Republicans who had overthrown the monarchy prior to the outbreak of the North Yemen Civil War. The war itself originally began in late 1962 when the Northern Yemeni ruler Imam Ahmed passed away and his son and successor Mohammad el-Badr was removed in a revolutionary coup that abolished the Imamate and declared the Yemen Arab Republic. The ousted Imam Badr managed to rally supporters and friendly tribes in the northern part of the country and civil war ensued for the next eight years. The Royalists were supported by the Saudis with lesser involvement from the Jordanians, while the Republicans were supported militarily by the Egyptians and by extension the Soviet Union. The civil war continued until peace talks led to a ceasefire and the recognition of the new republic by Saudi Arabia. The war however proved disastrous for the Egyptian army. The Egyptian armed forces were trained and equipped to fight conventional wars, yet most of the fighting in North Yemen was conducted guerrilla style. To add insult to injury, the longer the war dragged on, the Egyptians invested more manpower and materiel, until a full third of the Egyptian army was fighting in North Yemen. As a result, the Egyptians suffered severe casualties as well as loss of equipment. It is estimated that by the 1967, the Egyptians had suffered 15,000 dead, wounded and missing. The preoccupation that Nasser had with the war in Yemen led him to make important miscalculations that led to the 1967 war at a time when the Egyptian army was still heavily engaged in North Yemen, thereby leaving them woefully unprepared to defend Egypt against the Israeli onslaught. The war was so devastating to the Egyptian army that many Egyptian military historians and Nasser himself later on, would call Yemen "Egypt's Vietnam". In fact, Israeli historian and former ambassador to the US Michael Oren wrote in a 2002 study about the North Yemen Civil War that Yemen was so costly to the Egyptians, "the imminent Vietnam

War could easily have been dubbed America's Yemen"[18]. In all fairness to Nasser, his decision to intervene in Yemen was due to two reasons: First, the Yemeni civil war would provide a way to sustain Egyptian leadership in the region as a way to absorb the negative effects of the failure of the UAR. Second, by balancing external threats in Yemen, Nasser would also be able to balance domestic threats by reaffirming his authority in the country and silencing his detractors who blamed him for not doing enough to progress the agenda of Arab Nationalism.

2. Egyptian-Israeli Relations

From 1948 until 1967, Israel had never been a central concern of Cairo, which tailored its policies toward the Zionist state with the condition that any action towards it would have to conducted in tandem with the impact on the wider Arab arena. From 1948 to 1956, Nasser's Israel policy was to destroy the British regional security system. From 1957 to 1967, Egyptian policy objectives towards Israel were to hold the balance in Arab affairs, thereby commanding the respect of the great powers without actually going to war with Israel. After the catastrophe of the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel became a problem in its own right and policy objectives toward Israel became focused on changing the strategic balance between the two enemies rather than to alter inter-Arab alignments.

As stated previously, in his quest to assert Egypt's dominance as a regional hegemon, Nasser committed a series of strategic miscalculations that would have serious consequences. The decision to nationalize the canal shocked the entire region. Not only did it cement his position within the country, his popularity within the region

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[18] Oren, M. *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East*. Presidio Press. (2002) page 9

skyrocketed, making Nasser the undisputed hero of the Arab World. Western opinion however was anything but positive. The British were particularly enraged and swore to challenge the upstart Nasser's claim on the canal. Prime Minister Anthony Eden saw an opportunity to rid himself of Nasser's threat to British interests in the region. In a message that Eden sent to Eisenhower, Eden explained that they were preparing a military force to attack Egypt as a last resort and take Nasser down a peg. The Americans were not convinced of the endeavor and sought political and diplomatic solution to the crisis. The French and Israelis had their own agendas and so joined the expedition. The French wanted revenge against Nasser for his material support of the Algerians in their war of independence against the French, while the Israelis wanted to gain control of the Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula, thereby ending the Egyptian blockade of the Straits of Tiran, as well as punish Egypt over its support for Palestinian *Fedayeen* commando raids on Israel's western border during the previous two years by allowing the Palestinians to use the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula as launching pads. On October 29, 1956, Israeli forces moved across the border, defeated the Egyptian army in the Sinai, captured Sharm al-Sheikh and thereby guaranteed Israeli strategic control over the Straits of Tiran. Britain and France issued their ultimatum and sent in paratroopers. True to form, Nasser did not capitulate. He sought the aid of the Soviet Union and appealed to world public opinion.

The joint Anglo-French-Israeli gambit backfired spectacularly. The invasion was met with global condemnation and both the United States and the Soviet Union responded to events by demanding a cease-fire. In a resolution before the United Nations, the United States also called for the evacuation of Israeli, French, and British forces from Egypt under the supervision of a special United Nations force. This force

arrived in Egypt in mid-November. The Soviets went one step further and sent a communique to the British and the French warning them that London and Paris were in range of their nuclear missiles. The aggressors eventually gave in. The British withdraw all of their troops, the French followed suit by removing their last troops on December 22, 1956, and the Israelis were the last to leave on March 19, 1957. Despite suffering a military defeat, the Egyptians scored a political victory since they were not only able to maintain their sovereignty, but also retain control of the Suez Canal.

However, the Six-Day War of 1967 would prove to be the worst of all. In May 1967, reports began reaching Nasser's ears that the Israeli military was concentrating substantial numbers of troops at the border with Syria, supposedly as a response to Syria's support of the Palestinian *Fedayeen* and an all-out attack on Damascus seemed imminent. In the meantime, Nasser was exposed to a vicious radio propaganda campaign against him by reactionaries who accused him of hiding behind the UN forces stationed at the Suez Canal since the 1956 war eleven years earlier as well as criticizing him for investing soldiers and resources fighting other Arabs in Yemen instead of targeting Israel. This series of events put Nasser's legitimacy in question and threatened his primacy in the region. To salvage the situation as well as his reputation and position, Nasser took a number of dramatic steps. He ordered the UN peacekeeping forces stationed along the Suez Canal to leave at once, remilitarized the Sinai Peninsula, and blockaded the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli shipping. In response to Nasser's maneuvers, the Israelis went on the offensive. On June 5th, 1967, the Israeli air force launched a massive coordinated aerial assault against Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, destroying their fleets and crippling their militaries. By the end of the war, Arab losses were astronomical. The combined Arab armies suffered tens of thousands of casualties and

the loss of much of their military hardware. To add insult to injury, the Israelis occupied the Sinai Peninsula, the Golan Heights, as well as the West Bank including Jerusalem. The war was the last straw for Abdel Nasser, and that while he retained his popularity, he never regained his standing as the undisputed leader of the Arabs. It must be remembered that all the measures he took during this period of time were not meant to lead to war with the Israelis, "but rather to maintain his legitimacy in Egypt and the Arab World by appearing tough vis-à-vis Israel" (Shama, pg. 33).

Due to the defeat of his army and the occupation of the Sinai by the Israelis, Nasser was forced to readjust his strategy. So as not to appear to concede to the Israelis, Nasser rebuilt his forces and spent the next three years fighting a war of attrition with the Israelis. Cairo's dependence on the Soviet Union for military support deepened even further. In exchange for military support, Nasser had to acquiesce to the presence of thousands of Soviet military advisors on Egyptian soil as well as the leasing of Egyptian airfields and ports to the Soviet armed forces. However, before Nasser was able to make his move, he died on September 28th 1970. He was succeeded by his Vice President Anwar Sadat.

3. Egyptian-US Relations

Unlike his successors, who chose to align themselves in order to accrue material and financial benefits and secure their own power; Nasser's policies were actually radically different. In context though, Nasser and later Egyptian leaders all strove to preserve their power; it was just the tactics that differed. With the exception of the last three years of his administration, from 1967 until his death in office in 1970, Nasser went to great lengths to actually avoid having to explicitly take sides and so jeopardize

his political independence. This primarily had to do with him being able to burnish his Arab nationalist credentials, while also providing him the flexibility to play both the West and the USSR to grant him the material support he needed to modernize his economy and strengthen his military. This would have the benefit of allowing him to consolidate his control of the country, expand his influence in the Middle East, and be able to do so without actually having to deliver on his promise to the Arab world to go to war with Israel.

Nasser's first move was to oppose the creation of the Middle East Defense Organization, or as it was more popularly called the "Baghdad Pact". Nasser was against any and all Western created and led defense pacts which, to him, represented a covert form of imperialism and an attempt by the West to reestablish dominance in the Middle East, or as Shama put it: "Colonialism that is forced to exit from the door wants to return through the window." (page 24). In a meeting with US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, Nasser expressed his fears that any military alliances with the West would compromise his country's sovereignty and undermine its independence. His justification was simple: "small nations included in the circles of the pacts cannot stand on an equal footing with the big powers. They cannot discuss matters on an equal basis." (Gerges, pg 25)[19]

It must be noted however, that unlike his view towards Great Britain and France, Nasser did not see the United States as an imperialist state but was also wary of their activities and interests in the region This was due to several factors including US demands that Nasser cut off relations with the Soviet Union in exchange for aid, their support for Israel, and their desire to appease European allies during the Cold War.

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[19] Gerges, F. A. (1994). *The Superpowers and the Middle East: Regional and International Politics, 1955-1967*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Nasser was unwilling to take sides in the Cold War and so was faced with the dilemma of having to walk a tightrope between the two superpowers. To circumvent this obstacle, Nasser adopted a position of "positive neutralism", which he used as his platform in the creation of the Non-Aligned Movement. This centrist position allowed Nasser to hedge his bets by playing both sides off against other and gain material aid without having to overtly support anyone. This support would allow Nasser to strengthen his military, modernize his economy and empower him to fulfill his regional ambitions while insulating the Middle East from foreign influence.

Initially, Nasser desired closer relations with the Americans, since he greatly distrusted the Soviets at the time due to its early support for Israel and its willingness to use force to impose its authority such as in Hungary, which in Nasser's eyes made the Soviet Union just another imperialist power in the same vein as the British and the French. In the beginning the Americans were enthusiastic about the chance to work with Nasser, since he represented an opportunity to contain the spread of Soviet influence in the region. However, they were also aware that Nasser was a pragmatic nationalist who would not hesitate to shift his alignment towards the Soviets if it meant that he could get the material resources that he needed and so push Egypt towards the Soviet sphere of influence. The conditions seemed ideal for the strengthening of such an alignment and it would make sense for the Americans to reach out to the Egyptians. For his part, Nasser needed arms for his army to counter Israeli aggression after the Israeli launched a cross border raid on his troops and killing dozens of them, which left Nasser humiliated and threatened in front of his people. However, the Americans refused to provide him with the arms needed due to three reasons. The first was that providing such overt material aid to Nasser would alienate the British who despised Nasser for leading the charge

against their presence in the country. The second was Eisenhower's belief that the main importance of the Middle East was first and foremost as a provider of oil to Western Europe. After all, the primary reason the Americans wanted to contain Soviet influence in the Middle East to begin with was to secure the transportation of oil to Western Europe, which was Eisenhower's focus at the time. The third reason was Israel itself which was loath to see any American aid being delivered to a country that had attacked it in 1948 and that was publically declaring that its intent to quash the young nation. Despite Eisenhower's lack of enthusiasm for the Jewish state and his desire to implement a balanced approach to the Middle East, Eisenhower was constrained by the fact that Israel had powerful support in the Congress. There was also the added danger that military aid to Egypt might provoke the Israelis to launch a preemptive strike which would force Nasser to turn to the Soviets for help.

The situation was not helped by American who procrastinated on delivering the hoped for aid as well as their attempts to convince Egypt to sign a peace treaty with Israel in return for military aid since such an act would in Nasser's view weaken his regional position and delegitimize him in the eyes of his countrymen as well as the rest of the region. In the end, Nasser did exactly what the Americans feared he would and so turned to the Soviets for help, which culminated in the 1955 Czech arms deal, which meant the entry of the Soviets into the region and the end of Western monopolization of arms transfers to the region. The Eisenhower administration tried to dissuade the Egyptians from completing the deal by applying direct pressure on Egypt. Nasser was not dissuaded and the deal went through. The situation was not helped when the Americans withdrew its offer of financial assistance to for the Aswan High Dam project as retribution for Nasser's stubborn refusal to accede to American demands. This would

force Nasser to nationalize the Suez Canal which sparked the 1956 war between Egypt

on the one hand and a coalition of the United Kingdom, France, and Israel. Despite their

reservations towards Nasser, the Americans sided with the Egyptians in the war, which

would force the coalition to withdraw from Egypt, handing Nasser a massive

propaganda victory and elevating his standing in the Arab world. However, this

sequence of events only lowered Nasser's reputation in the eyes of the Americans, who

now viewed him as a dangerous and reckless man. An attempt at reconciliation was

made in late 1957, with the Americans acting on the belief that Nasser's recent tilt to the

USSR was temporary and would fall apart as soon as the Soviets overplayed their

hand[20] and that it was more beneficial to maintain good relations with Nasser since his

political position was fully secure. For whatever reason, nothing came of these attempts

and Eisenhower went back to mistrusting Nasser and believing that his intention was to

stymie oil exports to Europe.

Relations reached their lowest point in the aftermath of the US intervention in

Lebanon in 1958. Officially, the intervention was to prevent a communist takeover of

the country, but the primary objective was to assert the Eisenhower Doctrine and show

that the United States was adamant that any threat to its interests in the Middle East

would be countered, even with the use of military force. The situation was rectified

when the Americans accepted an Egyptian compromise proposal where Fouad Chehab

would be installed as President while the pro-Arab Rashid Karami would be made

Prime Minister. After this, relations gradually warmed again between Nasser and

Eisenhower and were helped when a coup in Iraq brought to power the Arab nationalist

Abdel Karim Qasim, who would enter into a rivalry with Nasser for regional leadership.

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[20] Brands, H. W., II. (n.d.). What Eisenhower and Dulles Saw in Nasser: Personalities and Interests in US-Egyptian Relations. *Middle East Policy Council,* 4(2), pg 3.

Eisenhower's successor John Kennedy continued with the normalization of relations with Egypt. Kennedy saw Nasser as a leader who wanted help his people and was willing to provide him with the necessary aid to do so. In turn, Nasser made attempts to reach out to Kennedy and he corresponded several time with him to convince him to lend his support.

However, Kennedy's assassination in November 1963 put an end to these endeavors, since Kennedy's replacement, Lyndon Johnson, had less positive opinions about Nasser. This was mostly due to Nasser's intervention in the North Yemen civil war, his criticism of US involvement in Vietnam, and the flow of Soviet arms to the country. The situation was made worse by the increasing number of attacks by Palestinians *Fedayeen* commandoes on Israeli infrastructure and military installations, which had the effect on increasing Israeli belligerency, since the attacks came from across Egyptian, Syrian, and Jordanian borders. The crushing defeat that the Arabs suffered at the hands of the Israelis proved two things to Nasser. The first was that American support to the Israelis would always trump support to the Arabs, which would have the effect of keeping an arms imbalance between the two sides and so stack the deck in favor of the Israelis. The second was that the defeat greatly worried Nasser since the loss of the war made him feel that his position was vulnerable. On 9 June, Nasser appeared on television to inform Egypt's citizens of their country's defeat He announced his resignation on television later that day, and ceded all presidential powers to his then-Vice President Zakaria Mohieddin, who had no prior information of this decision and refused to accept the post. Hundreds of thousands of sympathizers poured into the streets in mass demonstrations throughout Egypt and across the Arab world rejecting his resignation. Knowing that he still had the support of his people, Nasser retracted his

decision the next day. Nasser also began a low-level conflict with Israel along the armistice line in the Sinai Peninsula which would be called the "War of Attrition" so as to prove to his people that he still had the abilities to defend Egypt and combat the Israeli threat. However, the war had a great impact on the Egyptian economy and Nasser greatly needed to replenish his stockpiles in order to prove that he could fulfill these promises. As a result, he was forced to turn to the Soviet Union for financial and military aid, thus abandoning his policy of "positive neutrality" and completing the alignment to the Soviet Union.

B. Conclusion

Gamal Abdel Nasser proved himself a capable tactician who was able to maximize his leverage and manipulate events to suit his needs. For the most part he was able to achieve his goals and turn Egypt into a real regional power. He was able to assert his influence in such a way that he secured his legitimacy beyond the borders of his country and bolstered his reputation to near mythic heights. His role as the flagbearer of Arab Nationalism propelled his foreign ambitions and provided him with the independence to pursue his revisionist foreign policies. This independence also enabled him to manipulate both the West and the Soviet Union into providing him with aid to develop his economy and military without having to overtly choose a side. This I turn only bolstered his reputation in the Middle East, thus ensuring a circular movement of material and political benefits while also minimizing the risk to his own authority. However, this aggressive form of regional power play also ended up backfiring on him when he overplayed his hand with the Israelis and so was forced to side with the Soviets, thus sacrificing even more of his country's independence along the way. His

death in 1970 would leave his inheritor Anwar Sadat with significant internal problems that could only be resolved by abandoning his policies and forcing a paradigm shift that would have important consequences.

CHAPTER IV

FOREIGN POLICY UNDER ANWAR SADAT

A. Introduction

When Sadat took over from Nasser in 1970, he was at a severe disadvantage. He was a technocrat who was considered a competent administrator who stayed in the shadows and thus never built up a support base. Contrary to what his critics thought of him, Sadat would go on to leave one of the most lasting legacies in modern Egyptian history. Between 1970 and 1973, Sadat did not have the clout or political capital to depart from his predecessor's policies. The Nasserite paradigm would guide Sadat's behavior in the international arena for the next three years. He was however, a deeply intelligent man with his own agenda, and his opponents were soon to find out. The 1973 war helped Sadat to achieve his goals in immense ways. Despite officially losing the war, the overall performance, professionalism, and greatly improved combat capabilities of the Egyptian army rehabilitated its reputation and solidified Sadat's legitimacy as Nasser's successor, thereby giving him a free rein to pursue his own agenda.

According to A.E.H Dessouki, foreign policy under Sadat had four main objectives: First was the restoration of the occupied territories. Second was ending the grinding state of conflict with Israel. Third was the improvement of relations with the USA and rebalancing Egypt's relationship with the Soviet Union. And fourth was the modernization of the Egyptian economy through liberalization and foreign direct investment[21].

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[21] A.E.H Dessouki, *The Primacy of Economics: The Foreign Policy of Egypt*, in *The Foreign Policies of Arab States*, ed. Bahgat Korany and Ali E, Hillal Dessouki, Cair: AUC Press, 1984, 129

1. Egyptian-Saudi Relations

During the initial years of Sadat's rule, Egyptian-Saudi relations warmed considerably, but still remained frosty due to Sadat's close relations with the Soviets. Sadat had decided to turn to the Gulf in this time since the Soviets were unwilling to provide more aid. In order to attract greater material assistance from the Gulf, he believed that by distancing himself from the Soviets he could facilitate a rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Egypt and gain increased economic assistance. In July 1972, Sadat ordered the Soviets to reduce the number of advisors they had in the country from 15,000 to under 1,000. As expected, Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states responded favorably to the expulsion of the Soviets. Saudi and Kuwaiti oil money was made available at a special session of the Arab Defense Council in Cairo in January 1973. Egypt was allocated between $300 million and $500 million in hard currency for weapons and from $400 million to $500 million in balance-of-payments support. On top of this, Saudi Arabia helped finance the record arms shipment from the Soviets in March 1973.

The true scale of Saudi support for Egypt was revealed at the outbreak of the 1973 War. The Egyptians and the Saudis coordinated during the war by imposing an embargo on the sale of oil to the West in retaliation for their material support of Israel during the war. The repercussions of the embargo would be felt for years to come. The price of oil skyrocketed from $3 per barrel to $12 per barrel to reduce demand to meet the lower supply. The world financial system, which was already under pressure from the Bretton Woods breakdown, was set on a path of recessions and inflation that persisted until the early 1980s, with oil prices remaining elevated until 1986.

2. Egyptian-Israeli Relations

Little notable change occurred in Egyptian-Israeli relations in the first two years after Sadat's ascension to power. In fact, Sadat's first major move on that front was his "peace initiative" in early 1971, which was then followed by the uneventful passing of his "year of decision". This left the impression to observers that the Egyptian-Israeli conflict had moved to a more diplomatic phase. However, this was a front that hid serious structural problems. Egypt was forced to tighten its alliance with the which saw an increasing dependence on the Soviets in return for substantial increases in economic aid, which was needed to bolster Egypt's deteriorating economy and therefore Sadat's own internal political support. The economy was actually in such a bad state that by January 1972, there was rising discontent among the Egyptian people and Egypt's deficits skyrocketed. One reason for the deteriorating economy was due to his preparations for war. Direct military spending went up from 9.5% of GNP in the mid-1960's to 15% in 1970-71. Egypt was spending twice as much on the military as it was on development projects. Total financial indebtedness to the USSR reached $5 billion in January 1972 and increased to $5 million a day. Most of those funds were not even for weapons but rather payments for the seventeen thousand Soviet advisors in Egypt.

By autumn 1973, Sadat had exhausted his peoples' patience and the economy's remaining resources. There were substantial domestic pressures building on the government that would push it to war. The people were fed up with having to sacrifice so much to finance arms procurement for a war that did not seem to be coming and the governments was also becoming unable to pay back its debts. It was also unlikely that unless he went to war with Israel, whatever financial support he was getting from the Gulf would stop and they would refuse to help bail him out of his mess. Taking all this

into consideration, Sadat concluded that war remained the only lever that could reaffirm his political legitimacy and ensure the continuation of funds from the Gulf that would keep his economy standing and ensure his own political survival.

Sadat was quite aware of Egypt's military weakness compared to Israel and the dangers inherent in any military confrontation with the Zionist State. As such, Sadat proceeded to pursue a diplomatic solution to the issue of the occupied Sinai Peninsula. While diplomatic overtures were presented to the Israelis in 1971 and 1972, these were ineffective due to Israeli intransigence and American indifference. The 1973 war helped to recalibrate the balance of power and therefore gave the Egyptians substantial leverage in any future discussions.

The path towards a political settlement with Israel started with the signing of two disengagement agreements in 1974 and 1975, at the expense of relations with Syria. Sadat was determined to end the dangerous and wasteful status quo of no war/no peace at any cost. Two years passed and nothing happened. Sadat grew impatient and restless at the glacial pace of the peace process. His situation was exacerbated by food riots that erupted in major cities in Egypt that erupted in protest at the sudden rise in basic food stuffs due to the restructuring plan that was demanded by the IMF in exchange for financial assistance. In order to break the deadlock, Sadat travelled to Jerusalem and held official talks with Israeli officials. Other Arab countries were appalled at Sadat's overtures to the Israelis, but Sadat had set off on his path and nothing was going to change his mind. Eventually, Sadat's efforts paid off when Egypt and Israel signed the Camp David Accords in 1978 and the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty in March 1979. Sadat had achieved his desire of securing peace with Israel but he was to pay a very heavy price. As a result of Egypt's defection, it was kicked out of the Arab League and

the Organization of Arab Conference, as well as forfeiting its leadership position among the Arab states that opposed any sort of peace with the Israelis. Nasser also alienated himself from many Egyptians and created many enemies including active Socialists, Nasserite loyalists, and most importantly Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood. The latter group proved to be the most important since it was on the 6th of October 1981, that a cell of Islamic fundamentalists within the army would assassinate Sadat during a military parade commemorating the anniversary of the end of the 1973 war.

3. Egyptian-US Relations

Sadat took the initiative in changing foreign policy doctrine shortly after ascending to power. His earliest accomplishment was substituting the Soviet Union with the United States as Egypt's primary sponsor and arms provider. He also actively sought peace with Israel, began the liberalization of the economy towards capitalism, and lifted the ban on parties and replaced it with a controlled form of political opposition. Shortly after the end of hostilities between Egypt and Israel, Sadat met with then Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and the subsequent months witnessed a rapid rapprochement with the Americans and a cooling of the alignment with the Soviet Union. Sadat's short term concern was the return of the occupied Sinai Peninsula back to Egypt and he knew the only way that was going to happen diplomatically is through the Americans.

The Soviets for their part were gravely concerned with Sadat's machinations, especially after Sadat purged the leadership of any Soviet-sympathizers in his quest to assert his dominance over the political apparatus. In an effort to bind Egypt closer to the

USSR and reemphasize Soviet-Egyptian relations, the Soviets had Sadat sign the Egyptian-Soviet Friendship and Cooperation Treaty in May 1971. Realistically, the treaty did little to change the relationship between the two countries except to reassert the ties between the two and to officially convert the alignment into a formal alliance. In 1975 though, Sadat abrogated the treaty and Soviet-Egyptian relations deteriorated, with the nadir being reached in 1981 when Sadat expelled the Soviet ambassador from Egypt amid accusations from Sadat and other high-ranking officials that the Soviet Union was interfering in Egypt's domestic affairs.

When it came to the US, Sadat knew that appeasing the Americans would help Egypt regain its territory and potentially revive the economy. Sadat knew that if Egypt had continued along the path that Nasser had paved, then Egypt would have faced isolation and would have been placed under immense pressure with serious consequences for its internal stability and its regional standing. Add to that the lack of trustworthy and capable allies; it was only logical that Sadat would bandwagon with the US, thereby appeasing a greater external threat and so freeing resources to balance internal threats such as the rising Muslim Brotherhood. In exchange for American services, Egypt could serve American interests in the region by helping to curtail the influence of communism and being a conduit for American hegemony. This would greatly benefit the Americans since having an important Arab partner on their side would lend them credibility with other Arab states. The Americans moved quickly to help consolidate this new alignment. In 1976, the Americans provided an initial supply of transport aircraft. After the signing of the Camp David Accords, the assistance program took off. The United States agreed to provide Egypt with $1.5 billion worth of arms including F-16 fighter jets, tanks, anti-aircraft weapons and armored personnel

carriers. The deal would expand to a five year program which saw the United States provide $5 billion worth of weapons.[22] Economically, the United States rushed to help as well. The Americans recognized that Sadat's approval depended on raising living standards, and so the Americans poured funds into Egypt. By 1985, American economic assistance had reached $11 billion, which was more than twice the amount the Soviet Union had provided to Egypt over twenty years. American economic assistance also took the form of additional investment and preferential treatment in Western markets. To a great extent, the alignment with the United States had met Sadat's needs and the alignment became an undisputable fact.

Sadat also had personal reasons for wanting to realign with the Americans. On a personal level, Sadat loathed the Soviets and by the end of the 1970's, Sadat perceived the Soviet Union as an enemy due to the lackluster support that the Soviet Union provided the Egyptians during Nasser's time. To his credit, Sadat was a pragmatist who had little taste and even less patience for ideologies and grand strategy and so assailed himself of the trappings of Arab Nationalism and non-alignment and instead pursued a practical and interest-driven foreign policy.

B. Conclusion

The circumstances that forced Anwar Sadat to act in the way he did were substantial. Between economic disorder and the threat of internal discord, his ability to shift events in his favor was nothing short of masterful. Granted, the only way he could save his country was to destroy his predecessor's legacy. By appeasing the Israelis and isolating Egypt from the rest of the Arab world, Sadat was freed from the responsibility

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[22] David S. R. (1991). *Choosing Sides: Alignment and Realignment in the Third World*. Baltimore. The John Hopkins University Press, pgs 8-9

of having to live to Nasser's reputation. In doing so, he was granted the freedom to alter the future of his country and so set the stage for what would come in the 21st century. His successor Hosni Mubarak would inherit a country that was in a position to reorient itself in such a way that it could maintain a leadership role in the Middle East without actually having to take on the burden of being the sole regional leader and by extension insulate his country from conflicts that would have otherwise dragged it even further down.

CHAPTER V

FOREIGN POLICY UNDER HOSNI MUBARAK

A. Introduction

After Sadat was assassinated, his own vice president Hosni Mubarak would come to succeed him. In his first full statement after he was sworn in a president on October 14, 1981, Mubarak emphasized that would continue his predecessor's policies such as honoring the Camp David Accords and the peace treaty with Israel. But while Mubarak was a pragmatist like Sadat, he was also much more cautious and balanced in his viewpoints and actions. Recognizing that tensions in the region were dangerously high and that Sadat's maverick, go-it-alone style of diplomacy left Egypt diplomatically isolated, Mubarak set out to rehabilitate Egypt's position in the Middle East and rebuild bridges with his neighbors by making variously conciliatory gestures towards the Soviet Union and the Arab States while upholding Egypt's newfound relationship with the United States and Israel. In a speech given in November 1981, Mubarak declared that Egypt was willing to deal with anyone with no conditions or reservations as long as they did not interfere in Egypt's domestic affairs. Early on, Mubarak faced the same dilemma of external and internal pressure when it came to foreign policy decision making. Unlike Nasser, Mubarak followed Sadat's lead closely by opting to appease external threats such as Israel, the US, and even other Arab states while balancing internal threats. What provided him the flexibility that eluded Nasser and Sadat was that he wasn't constrained with the fear of his personal standing among the Egyptian people.

1.Egyptian-Saudi Relations

One of Mubarak's primary objectives was to break Egypt's diplomatic isolation and bring the country out of the cold in a way that did not jeopardize the peace treaty with the Israelis and the newly minted special relationship with the United States. One way he accomplished this was by ceasing hostile propaganda campaigns against the Arab states that were used by Sadat. Mubarak also communicated with other Arab heads of state in a friendly and balanced manner while repeatedly claiming that Egypt's peace with Israel did not and will not hinder its relationships with other Arab states and that Egypt had the willingness and capability to accommodate the interests and concerns of all sides.

Mubarak's political and diplomatic reformations were tested when Israel launched a massive ground assault into Lebanon in June 1982 in order to dislodge Palestinian liberation movements who were using the southern part of the country to launch guerrilla raids and attacks into the north of Israel. Since Egypt was constrained by the peace treaty, it responded by providing non-military assistance to the Lebanese and the Palestinians, as well as a verbal declaration of support to the Palestinians and condemnation of Israel's actions. Mubarak was forced eventually forced to bow to the public outcry caused by the Sabra and Shatila massacre and so withdrew the Egyptian ambassador to Israel.

Mubarak finally caught a break with the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-1988. Mubarak used the war as an opportunity to prove Egypt's commitments to its neighbors by providing massive amounts of military aid to Iraq. Mubarak also intensified his efforts to find a political solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Since Egypt was speaking so openly and assertively in support of Palestinian rights,

other Arab states such as Libya and Syrian could no longer accuse the Egyptians of standing on the sidelines on the issue. Egypt's proactive diplomatic efforts reaped rewards for Mubarak when in 1984, Egypt reestablished formal relations with Jordan, thereby ending Egypt's isolation in the Middle East. The eruption of the Iran-Iraq War and the increasing fear of Iranian influence spreading throughout the Middle East pushed the Gulf countries towards adopting more prudent and realistic foreign policies, thus accelerating Egypt's return to the Arab fold. By January 1987, Egypt had regained its full membership in the Organization of Islamic Conference and in November of the same year, the Arab League permitted its member states to reestablish diplomatic ties with Cairo, thus formally reintegrating Egypt into the Arab system. Throughout the 1990's and early 2000's, Mubarak's foreign policy towards its Arab counterparts focused primarily on economic concerns and limiting its political involvement to mediating disputes between the various Arab states as well as acting as the go-between between Arab states and Israel, which bore fruit in 1994 with the signing of Jordan's own peace treaty with the Israelis. In summary, Mubarak's strategy was to play a leading role in the region but abandoning the slogans of Nasserite pan-Arabism.

2. Egyptian-Israeli Relations

When it came to Israel, Sadat's rapprochement with the Arab world was not complemented by any substantial change in its attitude towards Israel. Due to Israel's provocative and aggressive maneuvers such as the annexation of the Golan Heights and the invasion of Lebanon, relations between Egypt and Israel remained low-key and some analysts dubbed the situation as a "Cold Peace".

Mubarak's political and diplomatic reformations were tested when Israel launched a massive ground assault into Lebanon in June 1982 in order to dislodge Palestinian liberation movements who were using the southern part of the country to launch guerrilla raids and attacks into the north of Israel. Since Egypt was constrained by the peace treaty, it responded by providing non-military assistance to the Lebanese and the Palestinians, as well as a verbal declaration of support to the Palestinians and condemnation of Israel's actions. Mubarak was forced eventually forced to bow to the public outcry caused by the Sabra and Shatila massacre and so withdrew the Egyptian ambassador to Israel.

It was during Mubarak's time however, that the military came to start exerting more influence over the economic and political affairs of the Egyptian state. The problem started when Egypt went through a severe economic crisis when the liberalization programs initiated under Sadat and continued under Mubarak caused backlash against the regime since only the bourgeoisie saw the dividends from the shift towards capitalism while the vast majority of Egyptians saw their quality of life fall due to inflation as well as the corruption and cronyism by the new bourgeois class. The economic crisis encouraged the growth of Islamic fundamentalist groups which threatened the legitimacy and survival of the Mubarak regime. What compounded the situation was the ability of these groups to infiltrate all major public institutions. As a result, the loyalty of the military began to be called into question, since it was radicalized army soldiers who had assassinated Mubarak's predecessor. Mubarak attacked both issues simultaneously. First, the security apparatus such as the intelligence services were given the go-ahead to launch a massive crackdown on all Islamist groups, irrespective of whether they were involved in terrorist acts or not. When it came to

solving the economic crisis, a proposal was crafted whereby the pace of liberalization and privatization was accelerated thus giving more power to the private sector. Businessmen were invited and encouraged to aid the recovery of the lagging economy, in effect increasing their influence with the regime and deepening the alliance between the business class and the government.

In the early 1990's, the escalation of the First Gulf War and the existential threat posed by the emerging Islamic Republic of Iran accelerated Egypt's complete return into the Arab fold. According to Cantori, Egypt had not changed but "it was the Arab state system that had changed"[23] It was within this new environment that Egypt took the opportunity to push the arguments onto other Arab states of the benefits of pursuing a foreign policy based on realist strategy instead of the past idealisms of Arab nationalism. Egypt gained tremendously as a result of this paradigm shift in collective foreign policy. This approach persuaded other Arab states to either accept a peaceful settlement with Israel (such as what Jordan did in 1994) or at least to settle for a status quo of no war and no peace. The former argument served Egyptian interests since it would have necessitated direct Egyptian participation. By January 1987, Egypt had regained its full membership in the Organization of the Islamic Conference and by November of the same year, the Arab League, which had met in Amman, permitted all member states to reestablish diplomatic ties with Cairo, thereby formally reintegrating Egypt back into the larger Arab political system.

As the 1980's gave way to the 90's, Mubarak continued with his balanced and pragmatic approach in foreign affairs. At peace talks that were held in Madrid in 1991 to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Egypt took opportunity of the momentum

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[23] L.Cantori, "Unipolarity and Egyptian Hegemony in the Middle East", in *The Middle East after Iraq's Invasion of Kuwait* (1993), ed. Robert Freedman, Gainsville: University Press of Florida

generated by the talks to actively promote direct negotiations between the Israelis on the one hand and the Palestinians and Syrians on the other. Despite not being directly involved in the Oslo negotiations, Egypt's efforts at encouraging reconciliations between the various antagonists delivered results. In 1993, the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles was signed and in 1994, the Jordan-Israel Peace treaty was signed and ratified, making Jordan the second Arab country to conditionally recognize the State of Israel. A third victory was in the making when the Syrians and Israeli achieved crucial progress in their own negotiations before the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin put an end to any further discussions. Egypt even made it a point to host gatherings at Cairo and Sharm el-Sheikh to promote peace whenever negotiations faltered or conflict erupted.

3. Egyptian-US Relations

In his first speech after becoming president[24], Hosni Mubarak declared his full commitment to its obligations and emphasized that he would honor the Camp David Accords and the peace treaty with Israel. He spent the rest of the 1980's trying to mend relations with the Soviet Union and the Gulf countries while maintaining Egypt's special relationship with the United States. His efforts to balance Egypt's relations with the two superpowers compelled Mubarak to mend the gap with the Soviet Union. A few months after his election, Mubarak asked the Russians to provide technical assistance several industrial projects. Subsequently, a bilateral trade agreement was signed and full diplomatic relations signed. The purpose of these diplomatic overtures was to also lessen Egypt's hyper-dependence on the USA, especially in the area of weapons

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[24] Shama, N. (2014) *Egyptian Foreign Policy from Mubarak to Morsi*, New York: Routledge. pg 38-39

procurement. The aim was to diversify their suppliers and achieve some measure of self-sufficiency in arms production. Despite Mubarak's efforts to lessen reliance on the US, a decline on oil prices deeply affected Egypt's policies and forced it to follow inward-looking policies and resort to heavy borrowing. As a result, from 1986-1992, per capita income only grew by 10 percent. Mubarak also began repairing relations with the Soviet Union as a way to balance out Egypt's diplomatic relationships with both superpowers, but primarily so as to readjust Egypt's relationship with the United States since it had become too dependent on the US. This was especially evident in the area of military procurement since Egypt became completely dependent on arms purchases from the US. By diversifying their arms suppliers, the Egyptians would hope to achieve some measure of self-sufficiency in arms production. A short while after Mubarak became president; he sent a request to the Soviets asking them to provide technical assistance on several industrial projects. Over a period of time several high level visits were exchanged and a bilateral trade agreement was signed. While the revamped bilateral ties between Egypt and the Soviet Union were nowhere near to what they had been under Nasser, the Egyptians were able to place themselves in a more favorable position since it could straddle the fence between the US and the Soviet Union, thereby gaining short term material benefits from both without having to pick sides.

Between 1991 and 2001, Egypt's peace strategy was aimed to accomplish several objectives. The first was for the sake of Egypt's own economic development where the country's resources could be invested in the civilian sector instead of the military. The second objective was the augmentation of Egyptian-American relations and ensuring that the Americans would be satisfied in Egypt's performance as a capable and productive partner in the region, thus ensuring the continuation of financial and

military aid that has allowed Egypt to develop economically while equipping its military without the need to rely on domestic financial resources to do so. A third objective was rebuilding Egypt's standing in the Middle East and proving that it can still play a leading role in the region without becoming caught up in national entanglements nor populist demands. These policies began to show dividends early on. Mubarak's decision to participate in the First Gulf War resulted in the US taking the lead in relieving Egypt of half of its debts, which were followed by European and Arab states. Overnight, Egypt's external debts decreased from $44 billion to half that sum.

After the events of 9/11, Egypt became one of the United States pillars in the Middle East. Egypt escalated its attacks on domestic terrorism within its own borders while taking the opportunity to continue the repression of non-violent Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood by using the excuse that they are all part and parcel of the same ideology and capability of causing harm. It should be noted that while mutual security agreements on collaboration against terrorism existed since the 1980's, this bilateral relationship escalated dramatically after the 9/11 attacks. When then director of the FBI Robert Mueller visited Egypt in January 2002, he explained that Egyptian authorities had been providing support in every field concerning the War on Terror, particularly in information exchange which, according to Mubarak in an interview with *Le Figaro*, was occurring on a daily basis. A US-Egypt Counter-Terrorism Joint Working Group was established and began working in July 2003. In May 2006, a report published by the US Government Accountability Office gave a detailed account of Egypt's contribution to the United States' military effort over three years: 40,000 military flights in Egyptian airspace, approval of expedited passage to 861 military ships through the Suez Canal, 100,000 patients treated in an Egyptian military hospital

in Afghanistan, and the training of hundreds of Afghan police recruits. However, Egypt's most significant contribution was in its acting as a frequent destination for prisoners in cases of "extraordinary rendition", in which US authorities seized suspected militants and then dispatched them to other countries for interrogation. Egypt however became more than just a destination for renditioned prisoners; it became infamous for the sadistic treatment of the captives that were brought to its prisons by Egyptian intelligence. According to former CIA agent Robert Baer: "If you want a serious interrogation, you send a prisoner to Jordan. If you want them to be tortured, you send them to Syria. If you want someone to disappear – never to see them again – you send them to Egypt."[25] This arrangement was hugely beneficial to Egypt since it reconfirmed Egypt's importance to American foreign policy in the Middle East as well as continuing US financial and military support.

B. Conclusion

Unlike his predecessors Nasser and Sadat, who were transformational leaders in their own right, Hosni Mubarak eschewed any claim to regional leadership and settled into his role as basically a mediator between the West and other regional powers within the parameters of the Western-led regional order. This would allow him to focus his energies on addressing Egypt's internal problems while simultaneously encouraging the delivery of material and political support from external sources. While lacking the decisiveness of his predecessors and appearing to willingly sacrifice his country's political independence for such support, these tactics were successful in ensuring his political survival for several decades. More importantly however, his style of leadership

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[25] Extraordinary rendition: a backstory. (2011, August 31). The Guardian. Retrieved July 6, 2017.

would set the precedent for his successors to follow. Both Morsi and Sisi, in their own ways, would continue Mubarak's strategy of appeasing foreign threats by balancing the interests of the various regional states involved

CHAPTER VI

FOREIGN POLICY UNDER MORSI

A. Introduction

When Mohammad Morsi was elected president in June 2012, it was widely expected that he would look to reorganize Egyptian foreign policy to reflect the agenda of the Muslim Brotherhood. However, Morsi proved to be more pragmatic than that. He recognized that the last thing he could afford to do was to generate uncertainty and tension in the region by moving away from the policies of his predecessors. The events of the 2011-2012 period following Hosni Mubarak's ouster from office led to a severe deterioration of the Egyptian economy. Even with massive financial aid from the Gulf, the economy kept falling apart and by the time of his election, Egypt's foreign currency reserves had dropped by half. He also faced a security situation in the Sinai Peninsula as well as along his border with Libya due to the eruption of the civil war there. His emphasis during that time would be to focus on internal affairs so as to stabilize his country's domestic situation. In order to do so, his foreign policy would prioritize reassuring its neighbors that Egypt would respect their regional interests and uphold all agreements and promises made in the past. The hope was that by doing so, Egypt could avoid the risk of being dragged into aligning with one side or the other while maximizing its position in the region and widening its external sources of revenue and support.

1. Egyptian-Saudi Relations

In order to understand the difficulties that faced Mohammad Morsi After the events of the 2011 Egyptian uprising against Hosni Mubarak, relations between Saudi Arabia and Egypt deteriorated rapidly and very little to no contact happened between the two countries. Things were only made worse when protests erupted in front of the Saudi embassy in Cairo who raised their voices against perceived mistreatment by Saudi authorities towards Egyptian pilgrims going to Mecca and thus were demanding the expulsion of the Saudi ambassador from the country.

In April 2012, Egyptian human rights lawyer and activist Ahmed al-Ghizawi was arrested after arriving in Saudi Arabia for unknown reasons. When news of his arrest arrived in Egypt, a thousand protestors demonstrated in front of the Saudi Embassy demanding the release of al-Ghizawi as well as other Egyptian prisoners in Saudi jails. Following the arrests, the Saudi government announced the closure of the embassy as well as other consulates in Egypt and the suspension of all consular services. This time, the head of SCAF Field Marshall Mohammed Hussien Tantawi directly involved himself in an effort to resolve the issue. Soon after the protests ended, Saudi Arabia announced that the Saudi ambassador would resume his duties at the embassy after intense efforts were made by the Egyptians to regain Saudi favor. On May 10, 2012, the Saudi ambassador announced that the kingdom would provide $500 million in aid to Egypt, and will deposit $1 billion at Egypt's central bank as part of the $2.7 billion support package that was agreed upon in 2011. On top of the financial aid, Saudi Arabia would also export $250 million worth of butane to Egypt to help shore up shortages in the country as well as $200 million to help small and mid-sized Egyptian

firms. However, by the time Morsi entered office; much of this promised aid had not been delivered.

During Morsi's short time in office, the Saudis acted pragmatically and decided to deal with him on equal terms despite the fact that he was previously part of and was the candidate of the Muslim Brotherhood, which has a very shaky history with Saudi Arabia's monarchy. However, the desire to maintain friendly relations overshadowed such historical squabbles and Morsi's first official trip overseas was to Saudi Arabia in July 2012. He would also emphasize that his "Islamist" government would moderate and his government recognized that the Gulf States were crucial sources of aid and investment while providing jobs to millions of Egyptians living in those countries.

However, some of his other diplomatic overtures only increased the suspicions of his detractors. In continuing his strategy of appeasing other regional powers and so increasing external of revenue, Morsi also reached out to the Iranians. He became the first Egyptian president since the 1980's to visit Tehran when he attended a meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement in August 2012. In February 2013, Iranian President Ahmadinejad reciprocated and visited Cairo in February 2013 where they discussed strengthening economic ties. This experiment failed due to the resistance of the Egyptian military and the conservative Sunni establishment to accommodate Iran in any way, as well the threat that the Gulf would suspend all economic ties.

Morsi also tried to improve ties with Qatar, due to Qatar's traditionally friendly disposition and support of the Muslim Brotherhood as well as to bypass the distrust that the Saudis still harbored toward the Brotherhood backed Morsi. The Qataris also courted Morsi with the hope that an alignment with Qatar would help to balance out Saudi Arabia and strengthen Qatar's attempts at conducting an independent foreign

policy separate from Saudi influence. In a show of friendship, Qatar provided Egypt $8 billion in financial support, gave Egypt a favorable gas deal to alleviate power shortages, and prepared plans to invest $18 billion in the Egyptian economy over the next ten years.

2. Egyptian-Israeli Relations

Fundamentally, Egyptian-Israeli relations underwent no changes after the fall of the Mubarak regime. After Mubarak was removed from power, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces immediately took over running the country on a temporary basis. One of their first foreign policy acts was to soothe American and Israeli concerns over the course of Egypt's post-Mubarak foreign policy by announcing that Egypt will continue to honor all international treaties that it had signed and ratified especially the Camp David Agreement and the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty. When it came to the issue of dealing with the Palestinians, the SCAF basically continued Mubarak's policies of balancing Israeli and Palestinian interests while keeping the Palestinians on a short leash. In May 2011, Egypt brokered a deal between Fatah and Hamas that ended years of internal conflict. The terms of the deal itself were pretty much the same that were proposed by the Mubarak regime in 2009. The difference this time though lay in Hamas' change of stance due to the effects of the Arab Spring. Hamas' main sponsor at the time Syria was starting to feel the effects of the Arab Spring with mass protests in the streets of major cities calling for the downfall of the Bashar al-Assad regime, which in turn began using more violent measures to counter the fledgling uprisings. Hamas' leadership came to the conclusion that Assad's backing could no longer be guaranteed, then they would have to moderate their previously uncompromising stands and go to the

negotiating table. In May 2011, the Egyptian government reopened the Rafah border crossing, considerably easing the Israeli imposed blockade that was placed on the strip after Hamas took over the area in 2007. The Egyptians did not reopen the crossing for humanitarian reasons though. In return for opening the crossing, Hamas had to abide by a long list of conditions and limitations that pertained to factors such as age, gender, purpose of visit and so on. In essence, the crossing was being operated according to the rules that were invented nd implemented by the Mubarak regime.

The real test for Egyptian-Israeli relations came in August 2011, when six Egyptian border guards were killed in an Israeli raid on Palestinian militants close to the border. A massive public outcry in Egypt soon followed with several days of demonstrations in front of the Israeli embassy in Cairo. While such incidents used to occur during Mubarak's rule, the SCAF did not have the same luxuries that Mubarak did and were forced to try and placate the protestors' demands by releasing an official statement that the Egyptian ambassador to Israel would be withdrawn and steps would be taken. That was as far as it got and the situation was diffused a short time later.

Foreign policy under Mohammad Morsi towards Israel continued the same route used by Mubarak. He simply could not afford to deviate from the formula even if he wanted to due to the economic crisis that the country was facing and the undesirability of upsetting one of Egypt's last important allies in the region. He upheld the peace treaty with Israel, and continued to outwardly support the Palestinians to a limited degree. He however, also balanced out pragmatism by lowering restrictions on Palestinians to appease his base which was staunchly pro-Palestinian. For example, in July 2012, Egypt began allowing Palestinians to freely enter the country without visa, giving the Palestinians living in Gaza an important lifeline. It was in November 2012

though, that Morsi achieved his most significant foreign policy victory. Between 14 and 21 November 2012, Israeli fought military campaign called Operation Pillar of Defense in the Gaza Strip due to a series of cross-border attack. At the end of the campaign, Morsi was able to mediate a ceasefire between the two sides which won him high praise from both Washington and Tel Aviv. Morsi's quick response and competent handling of the conflict gained him some credibility in the eyes of the Israelis as fulfilling the role of Israel's security assurer. He was also able to prove his capability at restraining the Palestinian militias whenever was needed as well playing the role of mediator whenever a conflict should break out.

3. Egyptian-US Relations

Egyptian-American relations have been interesting to say the least and not in a good way. The Americans inability to exert any leverage on domestic actors in Egypt has caused all sides to disavow the Americans as ineffective and untrustworthy. The Muslim Brotherhood distanced themselves from Washington while also courting their support due to multiple factors. The first was the amount of financial and material support provided to Mubarak and his predecessor Sadat in their campaigns to clamp down on the grass-roots organization. The second reason was the lukewarm reaction of the American government to their elevation to power in both the 2012 legislative and presidential elections that brought to power Mohammad Morsi. While the Americans were pleased to some degree that the Muslim Brotherhood did not deviate from foreign policy too much, their support for the rebellion against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, as well as their plan to implement religious law throughout the country instead of tackling existential problems such as terrorism and the economy further increased the

suspicions of the Americans as to the long term reliability of the Muslim Brotherhood. Even then President Obama went so far as to affirm his mixed feelings towards the democratically elected MB led administration by saying in November 2012 that he does not see Egypt under the current regime as either an ally or an enemy. The situation was not helped however by Morsi's diplomatic overtures to Iran, which the United States feared signaled a rapprochement with Iran at a time when the US was trying to isolate Iran to temper off its nuclear weapons program. In the end, despite the cool relations between the US and Egypt, the Morsi government's objective was to lessen reliance on the USA and shift to bettering relations with the Gulf as a way to attract foreign sources of revenue and a so stabilize the Egyptian economy and lift it out of recession.

B. Conclusion

Despite the best of his abilities, Morsi underestimated the ability of the Middle East state system to adapt to preserve itself. On the economic side, Morsi recognized the deep challenges that lay ahead for him and resolved to tackle it in the same pragmatic manner as his predecessors. However, his lack of understanding of the complexity of the regional order also undermined him. He failed to take into consideration the concerns of his neighbors and ignored the demands of important actors within his own country. As such, he failed to recognize the various factors that underlie ability of the state to function and was unable to influence the realignment of Egypt towards a more accomodationist position. So when he was eventually overthrown in 2013, his successor would immediately proceed to rectify his mistakes and adjust the state system to resemble to fit the formula that had proven so beneficial for past administrations.

CHAPTER VII

EGPYTIAN FOREIGN POLICY UNDER SISI

A. Introduction

When Abdel Fattah al Sisi was elected president in 2014, he launched foreign policy grounded in security matters and a return to a semblance of the pre-2011 status quo. As such, he doubled down on Egypt's alignment with its regional partners and emphasized the need to combat Islamic fundamentalist as the region's primary security threat. This also allowed him to consolidate his position by cracking down on the Muslim Brotherhood, which he saw as the most dangerous threat to his rule. This security minded foreign policy and the fact that he was from the military endeared him to the Saudis and the other Gulf countries, who lavished him with aid, with the idea that as they support his rule in Egypt so would he went it came to their regional agenda. While Sisi was willing to compromise on certain subjects, he was first and foremost a nationalist, and as such, placed his country's interests and sovereignty above all else. This put Egypt in the uncomfortable position of having to balance internal threats such as the economy and the security situation while also balancing its external threats by going against the interests of its regional backers.

1. Egyptian-Saudi Relations

While Morsi had gained credibility with the Saudi's, in the end they never trusted him and the Saudi were elated when he was deposed in July 2013 by the military. Their hope for the return of the military to power was evident as far back as 2011, when the Saudi government issued a statement which expressed "hope in the

efforts of the Egyptian Armed Forces to restore peace, stability, and tranquility"[26].The

Saudi government openly and generously supported the coup and strongly backed the

new government with tens of billions of dollars in financial aid and oil supplies. The

scale of the support was considerable. Between 2013 and 2015, the value Saudi,

Kuwaiti and Emirati support in oil shipments, cash grants, and central bank deposits

totaled at $23 billion. On top of that, at an international summit in March 2015, the Gulf

countries led by Saudi Arabia pledged another $12 billion in investments and central

bank deposits to help shore up the economy and buying time for Sisi to reform the

economy[27]. In return, Cairo pledged its full political, diplomatic, and military support to

Saudi Arabia. Egypt even went so far to agree to hand over the two strategically

important islands of Tiran and Sanafir which made up the Tiran Pass which sat between

the territorial waters of Egypt and Saudi Arabia and which also passed through

Jordanian and Israeli shipping. The plan was that once the transfer was completed, then

a bridge would be built between Saudi Arabia and Egypt as part of a much larger

economic development plan. By becoming so dependent on Saudi aid for its short term

economic gains, Egypt had placed itself in a bind when it came to Saudi foreign policy

due to Saudi expectations that Egypt would reciprocate and provide assistance and

support to Saudi Arabia's plans in the region. Realistically, the expectations from this

quid-pro-quo relationship were unreachable because the goals of the sides did not match

up. The only real point that they could agree on was the need to stabilize the Middle

East and undo much of the damage caused by the Arab uprisings but they disagreed on

how to even accomplish that.

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[26] "The Kingdom Expresses Hope that the Egyptian Armed Forces Efforts to Succeed to Restore Peace and Stability," *Al Riyadh,* February 2011
[27] K, Stephen, G. Michael. "Gulf allies pledge $12 billion to Egypt at summit". *Reuters*.

Despite the promises that Sisi had made towards Saudi Arabia to support it in its own foreign policy ambitions in return for keeping the economy afloat, Sisi still followed a nationalist foreign policy that prioritized domestic economic and security concerns that and refusing to become embroiled in foreign conflicts. One such conflict was Saudi Arabia's intervention in the three year Yemeni civil war. Once the Yemeni Civil War had broken out in 2015, Saudi Arabia sided with the internationally recognized government of President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi by leading a military coalition of 34 countries in intervening in the war, of which Egypt was a part of. This put it in a delicate situation since the Houthi rebels which the coalition was fighting against was materially being supported by Iran, which was also supporting Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in his own civil war and which the new Egyptian regime openly supported as well. Also, it must be remembered that Egypt had also previously involved itself in the North Yemen civil war from 1962-67, which ended up killing thousands of Egyptian soldiers and draining Egyptian coffers and limited resources, a fact that was especially important considering the state of the Egyptian economy in the current era. The Egyptian army could also ill-afford to send soldiers overseas to fight a foreign war since they were already occupied with fighting militant groups in the Sinai and preventing any spillover in Egypt from the conflict in Libya. As such, when it came to its participation in the Yemen war, Sisi made sure that Egypt would play a minor, if not symbolic role, and let Saudi Arabia take the lead. The survival of the Assad regime in Syria would ensure some degree of the continuation of the status quo that existed before 2011 and by extension would help to buoy up the Sisi regime in Egypt. Should Assad fall and Syria be taken over by the rebels, many of whom are Islamist, then this would encourage other Islamist groups and maybe even the Brotherhood itself to

attempt to do the same in Egypt and overthrowing the regime there. Taking all of this into consideration, it was in Egypt's best interests to maintain a balance between the agenda of its Saudi and Gulf patrons while also taking into consideration the maneuvers of Iran itself.

These disagreements would lead to Egyptian-Saudi relations become soured in several ways. The first was on Syria itself. In October 2015, Egypt voted in favor of a Russian-backed UN Security Council resolution on the peace process in Syria but which excluded calls to end the bombing on Aleppo city, which the Saudis had opposed even though the Egyptians also voted for a rival French resolution. The second reason was the lack of progress on the Tiran Pass transfer. The Egyptian government used the argument that the two islands are actually Saudi and that they were placed under Egyptian military protection in 1950 at the request of Saudi King Abdulaziz Al Saud. The opposition however, countered that the islands are actually Egyptian due to a treaty that was signed between Egypt and the Ottoman Empire in 1906 during the mandate that cemented Egyptian sovereignty over the islands. Despite originally planning on having the deal go ahead, an Egyptian administrative court blocked the transfer by restating that the two islands were Egyptian territory and that constitutionally the government had no right to cede national territory to other countries even though a separate court gave permission for the transfer to continue. In the meantime, the Egyptian parliament had already drafted and approved a treaty ceding sovereignty of the two islands to Saudi Arabia. Faced with a three way standoff between two competing courts and parliament, the matter was eventually referred to the Supreme Constitutional Court which eventually cleared the transfer in March 2018 by waiving aside all challenges to the transfer. To add oil to an already blazing fire, the Saudis froze

financial assistance and oil shipments to Egypt out of frustration for the inability of the Egyptians to hold up their end of the bargain with the transfer of the two islands. In the end on June 24, 2017, President Sisi ratified the agreement that ceded sovereignty over the Tiran Pass to Saudi Arabia, thus averting a potential diplomatic crisis and restarting Saudi oil shipments and financial assistance. However, the mere fact that Egypt is so willing to cede control of national territory in spite of the protestations of its people and risking massive protests for the sake of maintaining a beneficial short term relationship with Saudi Arabia showed just how dependent Egypt had become on Saudi financial support and goodwill despite the strain caused by Sisi's attempts at balancing an inward looking nationalist foreign policy strategy and accommodating Saudi strategic interests.

2. Egyptian-Israeli Relations

After the coup against Morsi succeeded in overthrowing him in July 2013, the Egyptian military was put back in charge. This time however, they had no desire to be temporary placeholders. Between 2013 and the election of Army Chief Abdel Fattah al-Sisi in June 2014, there was very little activity in foreign policy affairs. The administration of interim President Adly Mansour simply kept Egypt running until the army was able to effectively eradicate the Muslim Brotherhood's influence, thus minimizing the risk of blowback against the military and its civilian allies. Despite his credentials as a secular leader differing him from Morsi, Sisi continued the same policies of previous regimes with the objective of appeasing foreign threats so as to balance domestic ones such as terrorism and the economy. One major difference between Sisi and Morsi when it came to Israel was that under Sisi, Egyptian-Israeli relations improved greatly. Sisi's willingness to cooperate with the Israelis has been

noticeable. He also continued advocating for the Palestinian cause albeit more limitedly due to his antagonism towards Hamas since the Islamist group is known to be supported by the Muslim Brotherhood. It should be noted however that despite the growing ties between Israeli, Egypt, and to some degree with the Gulf countries, the Arab side has refused to publically acknowledge any interaction with the Israelis in security affairs and Iran due to the sensitivity of the subject and the Israeli's unpopularity in the Middle East. The Israelis funnily enough have been more candid about the positive developments. In a presentation at the London think tank Chatham House in November 2017, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that "the other guys are getting together with Israel as never before. And there is something that I wouldn't have expected in my lifetime, but we're working very hard to establish, and that is an effective alliance between Israel and the moderate Sunni states to counter the aggression of Iran". He continued by saying that "as you move towards the Persian Gulf, you will find that attitudes to Israel are mellowing considerably."[28]

A month after taking office, Sisi was confronted by the crisis of the 2014 Israeli invasion of the Gaza Strip which was named Operation Protective Edge which devastated the isolated strip and saw thousands of Palestinians (mostly civilians) and dozens of Israelis (mostly soldiers) killed in the nearly two month long conflict. On August 26, Sisi managed to broker another ceasefire with the intent of making sure that it lasts, going so far as expressing willingness to place Egyptian observer troops in the Gaza Strip as well as the West Bank. Sisi used the conflict as an excuse to clamp down even further on his domestic opponents by putting the blame on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as the source of extremism in the Middle East. So on the one hand; he is

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[28] M, Jonathan (Feb 5, 2018). Israel's "airstrikes" in Sinai show its growing Arab ties. *BBC*. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-42950490

intelligently using the conflict to his advantage by discrediting his opponents as fanatics and disrupters thereby holding himself as the figure of law and order (mostly the latter) in Egypt. On the other, he is establishing closer relations with Israel by breaking down Hamas as a source of conflict rather than a party with a credible perspective as well as isolating them from their sponsors such as Qatar by making them look toxic. This has had the effect of cutting Hamas from the larger Arab regional system thus making them dependent on its direct neighbors. The current crisis between Qatar and Saudi Arabia has effectively brought Hamas under the control of Egypt, since Qatar is now unable to provide financial assistance to Hamas thereby exasperating their internal issues and weakening their position. As a result, Hamas has been forced to moderate its position and go cap in hand to the Egyptians for vital supplies such as food and fuel. But this cooperation did not stop with the containment and pacification of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. A transformational moment came in the aftermath of President Trump's decision to move the US embassy to Jerusalem, thus fulfilling one of his campaign promises. While publically denouncing the move, most Arab governments kept silent about the issues, in what has been interpreted as tacit support for the move signaling the depth of cooperation between Middle Eastern states and Israel[29].

The area with the greatest amount of improvement in security cooperation was in combatting fundamentalist groups in the Sinai. The Sinai has historically been used as a base of operations for militant groups to launch attacks against the Egyptian army and police. However, with the rise of the Islamic State group in 2014 and Sisi's crackdowns radicalizing smaller numbers of the Muslim Brotherhood, the violence in the region dramatically escalated. One very notable incident occurred in late 2015, when

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[29] D.D Kirkpatrick (6 Jan, 2018). Tapes Reveal Egyptian Leaders' Tacit Acceptance of Jerusalem move. *The New York Times*

IS militants used portable anti-aircraft missiles to bring down a Russian commercial jet shortly after takeoff from Sharm el Sheikh, which killed all 224 people on board. By that time, it was obvious that the Egyptian army could not pacify the area despite its overwhelming numerical and technological superiority over the militants, and so the Israelis began to launch airstrikes in the region in coordination with the Egyptian army to help contain the threat posed by the group. According to an article by the New York Times in February 2018, the Israelis had launch 100 airstrikes in the Sinai over the last two years, which was around an average of one airstrike a week[30]. For Cairo, the intervention helped the military regain its footing in the Sinai Peninsula, while also securing Israel's border with Egypt.

   Egyptian and Israeli commercial ties also greatly expanded under Sisi, especially in regards to two key areas: the tourism sector, and the energy sector. Following the 2011 uprising, Israeli tourism decreased massively, reaching a low point in 2012 with only 133,620 Israeli tourists travelling to Egypt comparted to 226,456 in 2010. The numbers have been gaining steadily since then, but the relationship has been one-sided. In May 2016 though, a delegation from the Egyptian tourism industry met with the Israelis to discuss improving cross-national tourism such as expanding the number of Coptic Christians that will be allowed to visit holy sites in Israel, while the Israelis would reciprocate by encouraging tourism to Egypt. The energy sector would prove to be the dealmaker. Over the decades, Egypt has gone from being a net exporter of natural gas to becoming a net importer and so needed new sources of natural gas. In February 2018, a deal was struck with Israeli companies to export natural gas to Egypt for ten years at a total cost of $15 billion.

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[30] Kirkpatrick, D. D. (2018, February 3). Secret Alliance: Israel Carries Out Airstrikes in Egypt, With Cairo's OK. *The New York Times*.

3. Egyptian-US Relations

Looking back at the less than stellar relations between the USA and Egypt during the Morsi era, logic would have dictated that the overthrow of the Morsi government by the Egyptian army would relieve the Americans since they had experience in dealing with the Egyptian military and so would find it easier to deal with old faces. The opposite happened and relations between the two countries reached its lowest point since the Nasser era. As soon as the army took over, the Muslim Brotherhood and its supporters took to the streets in a sit-down to protest the army coup. The new regime had no plans to deal with the situation peacefully and so responded with the military unleashing itself on the protestors leading to the deaths of hundreds and the incarceration of many more. This relentless campaign against the MB in the following months only worsened with the number of deaths and incarcerations skyrocketing. Many of those incarcerated were sentenced to face capital punishment in kangaroo courts (although their sentences were eventually overturned or reduced). To the Obama administration, the situation was unacceptable and sanctions were placed on the Sisi regime. Joint training programs were cancelled, military and financial aid was suspended, and weapons deliveries were halted such as F-16 jet fighters and Apache attack helicopters. This only worsened the situation with secular Egyptians who embraced conspiracy theories that the Americans had a hand in placing the Muslim Brotherhood in power. These beliefs were fueled further due to the very real albeit thin tolerance shown by the Americans towards the Muslim Brotherhood and the Morsi presidency despite their own worrisome attitudes and actions towards their opponents such as the civil society and media during the Morsi era. Admittedly though, towards the end of his administration, Obama began lifting some of the sanctions on the Sisi

regime in an effort to diffuse tensions between Egypt and the USA due to the rise of the

Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria as well as to the increasing number of attacks

within Egypt by ISIS-affiliated groups as well as the security vacuum in neighboring

Libya caused by the deteriorating situation in the country between the rival Tripoli-

based Government of National Accord and the Benghazi based Parliament as well as the

rise of ISIS within Libya itself. In 2014, the BBC reported that the US had released over

$575 million in military and economic aid to Egypt that had been frozen since 2013.

Relations remained sour for the rest of the Obama administration due to Obama's

conditioning of further support on political reforms and the restructuring of Egyptian

weapons purchases to focus on counterinsurgency campaigns instead of purchasing

large tickets items.

Ever since Donald Trump was elected into office in November 2016, relations

between the two countries have greatly improved. Trump has made it a point to

overlook the Sisi regime's harsh methods of governance and has lifted the restrictions

that the Obama administration placed on Egypt concerning financial aid and weapons

purchases. Trump has also highly praised the Egyptian president and has stated that he

plans on visiting the North African nation sometime in the near future. The warming

ties between Sisi and Trump became more evident in February 2018 during a visit by

then US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to Egypt as part of a tour of the region. In a

speech with his Egyptian counterpart Sameh Shoukry, Tillerson reaffirmed that

Washington stood with Egypt against Islamist militants. Tillerson referenced the US's

close cooperation with Egypt on counterterrorism measures and that the two countries

had agreed to hold strategic dialogue talks at the ministerial level later this year.

Tillerson also stressed the need for free and fair elections ahead of the March

presidential elections without referencing what critics say is a crackdown on other candidates in the elections.

B. Conclusion

Sisi's approach to the regional state system could be considered a hybrid of Mubarak and Nasser. Sisi recognizes the importance of maintaining beneficial relationships with Egypt's regional counterparts and accommodating their interests so as to gain external sources of revenue and strengthen his legitimacy. However, like Nasser, Sis was unwilling to give sovereignty unless it was absolutely crucial to the survival of the regime. As such, it would prove to be interesting how Sisi will be able to keep up this balancing act in the future taking into consideration the precariousness of the regional system. For now however, the benefits have proven substantial and now that Sisi has won a second term, his ability to influence Egyptian foreign policy will be strengthened in the years to come.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Every country in the world acts according to the circumstances that they find themselves in and maneuver according to their ability to get what they want. of the core arguments of realism in that states are rational actors that are concerned with their own security and thus do what they can to ensure it by either maximizing their own power or by entering alliances with other states can provide leverage against an existential threat.

In the case of Egypt, two conclusions can be drawn. In the case of Israel, Egypt appeased the external threat in an attempt to divert resources towards balancing more important domestic priorities, thereby affirming Waltz's argument as well as David's omnibalancing. However, the case with the United States and Saudi Arabia provide more nuanced answers. Egypt's tolerance for the United States' role in the Middle East has markedly deteriorated since 2011. Traditional IR theory cannot explain this so easily since according to the definition of material power, the US vastly overpowers Egypt and thus proves the greater threat. However, the US has sacrificed its leverage in the region by overemphasizing its desire for stability while ignoring the interests and desires of regional powers. With the lack of assertive US leadership, Saudi Arabia has taken the reins in the region by pursuing a more aggressive foreign policy and therefore marginalizing US influence in the Middle East leading to the rise of a multipolar system constructed by regional powers such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, and at times Qatar. It can be summarized that the primary foreign policy strategy of successive Egyptian governments since 1970 has revolved around two central tenets. The first was economic with important focus building networks with sponsors such as Saudi Arabia and the US

to help protect and develop the Egyptian economy. The second was political since the various regimes suffered from weak legitimacy and an inability to project was the survival of the various regimes due to their weak legitimacy and inability to competently run the country without succumbing to demands to liberalize by the masses.

In comparing the various foreign policies of the different governments that have ruled Egypt since 1952, all of them have shared a common goal: the preservation of their authority. However, the tactics they used differed according to the circumstances of their time. For Nasser, this meant establishing himself as a regional power player with the ability to lead the Middle East and so be able to counter any influence by foreign powers. For his successors, regional interests had to take second place to national interests, with the most important being the economy. Whatever the objective, their ability to implement their foreign policies relied on their ability to balance the threats that they faced. This means that the definition of security must be expanded to fit the context of the Third World. This is crucial in the future since traditional theories of international relations revolved around the narratives of First World nations who only had to concern themselves with matters of external security. As a result, the study of international relations and alignment systems has taken for granted the myriad number of factors that influence foreign policies in most parts of the world, which leads to misunderstandings between the two sides and thus only aggravates the many conflicts that still exist and as seen in the various case studies, can even lead to the eruption of newer and more dangerous conflicts. Whether cooperation or competition will come to characterize the future of First World involvement in the Third World, it must be emphasized that productive foreign policies towards this region must not be guided by

irrelevant theories that are derived from a different historical experience and narrative that fails to address the complexities of the Third World. Their reality is dominated by the efforts of Third World leaders to do what they can to stay in power. By ignoring this simple fact undermines any effective understanding of the politics that drive the systems of most of the states in the world.

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