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Anglo-Egyptian Relations

1939-1954

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Anglo-Egyptian Relations

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Ghandur

Dedicated

TO MY PARENTS

Acknowledgement

I am indebted to Professor Kirk for his great help, assistance, and guidance in the preparation of this thesis; to him I extend my thanks and my gratefulness.

Nimat Ghandur.
Nimat Ghandur

Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to study Anglo-Egyptian Relations during the period that extended between 1939 and 1954. The work will start with a general description of the situation in Egypt as it presented itself before the outbreak of the Second World War, so as to acquaint the reader with the Egyptian national aspirations and the British reaction to them. From 1939 on, the study will be concerned with the Egyptian struggle for complete and unconditional independence and the main stages of the contacts between the British and the Egyptians for concluding a settlement will be presented. The internal conditions in Egypt and the Egyptian-Sudanese relations will be given attention in so far as they affected the general course of Anglo-Egyptian relations.

The main question that faced the Egyptians was to realize their complete sovereignty and the British problem was how to provide appropriate means of defence for Egypt in its international geographic setting.

I depended on Western sources mainly for writing this thesis. Arabic sources and interpretations were very few. The publications of the Royal Institute for International Affairs were of great help and I depended on them more than any other source.

Table of Contents

Chapter I - Anglo-Egyptian Relations Before 1939	1-10
Egypt's Geographic Position	
The Historical Position of Egypt	
The Egyptian Political Scene in 1939	
The British Conception of Egypt's Position in 1939	
Italian Expansion in 1939.	
Chapter II - The War Period as it Affected Anglo-Egyptian Relations	11-28
From the Outbreak of the War until the entry of Italy.	
The Period of Active War in the Middle East and its impact on Egypt.	
The Recession of the War from the Middle East	
Conclusion	
Chapter III - Anglo-Egyptian Negotiations For Treaty Revision 1945-1947	29-51
Sidki's Negotiations with the British in Cairo and in London	
Presentation of the Egyptian Case to the Security Council.	
Conclusion	
Chapter IV - The Period of the Palestine War	52-66
The Effect of the Palestine War on Anglo- Egyptian Relations	
The Nile Waters Agreement	
The Suez Canal Agreement	
The Sterling Balances of Egypt	
Chapter V - The Wafd in Power, 1950-1952	67-87
Negotiations in Cairo	
Mohamad Salah Ud-Din's Negotiations with Bevin in London	
The Abrogation of the 1936 Treaty	
Fighting in the Canal Zone	
Conclusion	
Chapter VI - The Revolution in Egypt and the Anglo- Egyptian Negotiations	88-106
Hilali's Negotiations with the British Government	

The Attitude of the Military Group to Britain
and the Sudan, and the Sudan Agreement of
1953
Anglo-Egyptian Negotiations for Evacuation and
Defence
Conclusion

Conclusions

107-112

Bibliography

113-116

Anglo-Egyptian Relations Before 1939.

Chapter I.

The purpose of this section is to present a panoramic picture of the situation in Egypt before the year 1939. The factors that will here be discussed help to explain why the British or the Egyptians acted as they did. One can hardly deny the relevance of the geographical position of Egypt to the Anglo-Egyptian question. The historical situation of Egypt prior to the outbreak of the Second World War, the Egyptian political scene in 1939, the British conception of Egypt's position in that same year, and the problem of Italian expansion, are all factors of importance and will therefore be discussed in this section.

Egypt's Geographical Position:

Egypt, as a part of the Near East occupies a peculiar position between the East and the West. It has a central position and is on the sea route between India, Australia and Great Britain. As Great Britain had dominance over and continual contact with India, she found it favorable to secure footholds in that strategic area - Egypt.

The position of Egypt was as tempting to the Italians as it was to the British. The Italian community

in Cairo tried to use every opportunity to gain the friendship of the Egyptians and help them overcome the British for Italian benefits. When the Egyptians had to make a choice of accepting the one or the other foreign states, they accepted the British. The Egyptians did not consider the British as permanent settlers and they were convinced that they would evacuate as soon as the Second World War was over. That was how the problem began to be looked upon with different points of view by the British and the Egyptians.

In general Egypt depended on its cotton plantation for its economic security and industrialization started only recently. Because of this the social hierarchy in Egypt was mainly of the feudal landlords who were usually rich. The majority of the population was made up of peasants who toiled in ignorance, poverty, and disease. The educated were a minority and formed a small middle class. They could not make use of their education in Egypt, for they were not given the adequate training to develop scientifically the agricultural and industrial potentialities of their own lands.

The problem of Egypt besides being a political one had roots in social and educational problems for which geography is partially responsible. The educational training was badly needed but was not adequately offered because of the dominance of the political problem which

was considered by the Egyptians as the most urgent.

The Historical Situation:

Egypt was the first of the Arab countries to enjoy virtual independence, roughly since 1841. Mohammed Ali was the first Wali to bring the independence of Egypt into realization. During his autonomy Egypt was practically in a state equal in its development to the European states. Mohammed Ali depended on Western principles for guidance in almost all practical aspects of life. Egypt was the first state in the Near East to be modernized. Mohammed Ali tried to spread his benefits to other Arab states of the Ottoman Empire but he found no international encouragement in his plan although he would have brought to the international scene a fully developed Middle East. Egypt may be considered as the cradle of Arab nationalism, for Ibrahim Pasha, the son of Mohammed Ali, was the first to think seriously of the advantages of an Arab unity. Great Britain found no harm in the plan except for the fact that it embodied the possibility of obstructing British communications through the Empire.

Thus Mohammed Ali established the regime of autonomy which continued for half a century and was ended by a worsening in Egyptian financial situation and through a British intervention which later changed into a military occupation. The occupation was a shocking event to the Egyptian people

whose nationalism was intensified by the fact that having enjoyed independence for sometime they now experienced the humiliation of being deprived of it.

At the beginning of the First World War the British proclaimed their protectorate over Egypt. The Ottoman Empire joined Germany and Egypt, still a Wellayat of the Ottoman Empire, had to be defended. Although the British meant to satisfy and calm the Egyptian claim for independence, they did not succeed. The Egyptians, seeing their independence exchanged for British interests, rebelled against British authority. The timing was not favorable for the British to grant absolute Egyptian independence and they tried to satisfy them by giving them a reserved independence which did not work successfully.

At that time anti-foreign feeling was stronger in Egypt than in any other Arab country such as Iraq or Syria because of the Egyptian political history. The Egyptian claim for complete independence became more intense at a time when President Wilson's claim of self determination was very popular.

The Egyptian Political Scene in 1939:

The establishment of the monarchy in Egypt was declared with the declaration of Egyptian independence. Political parties in Egypt existed then but their disorganization allowed for the interference of the Palace in

Egyptian politics. This intervention had been increased especially after the promulgation of the constitution in 1923 which legalized the King's active participation under special circumstances. This right was abused by the ambitious and powerful king. His right of appointing 2/5 of the members of the Egyptian Senate without the advice of his prime minister and the right of dissolving Parliament rendered him a political figure of the first rank. Although the King was meant to reign and not to rule, he exercised the latter unchecked and vitiated the whole system of parliamentary constitutional monarchy. In several instances the King tried to use power behind weak prime ministers and when this was not possible, the chief of the Royal Cabinet exercised power to the benefit of the Palace.

Although the King was supposed to be a non-partisan he had his special party which tried to model politics according to his own designs. The Crown was meant to be constitutionally a tool for reconciliation between the powers of the state in time of deadlocks and an element of continuity in the state. The person who filled this office thought in terms of personal leadership and benefits and thus instead of solving deadlocks he created them.

The majority of the Egyptian public was illiterate

and was easily led into paths which played on their emotions whether reasonable or not. It was a great disadvantage and difficulty to hope for a successful parliamentary political system in such a situation.

The Egyptian Wafd was the largest party that commanded the great majority of the Egyptian public. Its date of birth goes back to the end of the First World War when a deputation with Sa'd Zaghlul as chairman asked for Egyptian independence. Ever since then the deputation formed a political party for the cause of Egyptian political affairs. Besides its aim of achieving complete independence the Wafd members were more centered around the person or the leader of the Wafd. In its early stages Zaghlul was the leader and he had rigid uncompromising views concerning Egyptian independence. By the leader's eloquence the membership in the Wafd had increased and included every Egyptian who hoped for complete unreserved independence. The Wafd on several occasions had attempted negotiations with the British but because of the uncompromising attitude of the leader settlement had been hindered till 1936.

The Wafd leader was anxious to act as the Nation's hero and he objected to any attempt by anyone other than himself to settle the Anglo-Egyptian question. The leader noticed the ambition of the King and tried to oppose his attempts of interfering in Egyptian politics. Instead of

cooperation of action between the King and the Prime Minister they were almost in continuous rivalry and only rarely united in their action against British authorities.

The Wafd adopted a compromising attitude when the 1936 Treaty was concluded. Previous to that it succeeded in creating a strong national feeling among the Egyptians and brought some unity among them. The Egyptians of different classes were united in this party but there were no attempts on the part of its leaders to educate the Egyptian public. The absence of action in this field may be attributed to the preoccupation of the Egyptians with the problem of independence.

Besides the Wafd there were other parties that were mainly groupings around personalities instead of groupings for the support of a certain ideology. It is very easy to get the support of illiterate persons around a certain person rather than for the support of a certain principle. The claim of such personalities might have been the achievement of independence as well. Such parties or groupings included the Liberal Constitutional Party, the Unionist Party as the King's Party, the National Party, the Sa'dist Party, and the Sha'b Party. Disunity among the Wafd members led to the creation of some other parties. Later on, the Moslem Brotherhood Party appeared for social religious progress and reform but in the long run had diverted from its original purpose.

The real cause of instability was the illiterate and ignorant Egyptian masses. Had they been educated they might have supported principles instead of mere personalities. They might have organized their political parties better and build more contact between the governors and the governed and might have been able to establish a stable constitutional governmental system.

The British Conception of Egypt's Position in 1939:

In 1936 the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of Friendship and Alliance was signed to define or settle the question of Egyptian defence in case of war. Had there not been obvious international tension produced by Italian expansion the Treaty would not have been signed. The British, moreover, were convinced of the inability of the Egyptians to defend themselves against a foreign attack. The danger of war was near at hand and the British authorities realized the importance of Egypt's strategic position and therefore could not stand with hands folded seeing their interests attacked. With the approach of war Great Britain needed the acquiescence of the Egyptians to station her army in their territory.

It would be natural to expect an anti-British feeling of the Egyptians every time the presence of the British military groups was felt. The British needed Egyptian support but did not know to which alternative to give priority: either accept the anti-British feeling and

get the disfavor of Egyptian groups and maintain their army to defend their interests, or withdraw their military troops for the benefit of the commercial Egyptian group. Distinction should be also made between the attitudes of the British Foreign Office and the British Army in Egypt. The British Foreign Office was more considerate of the Egyptian susceptibilities and wanted to formulate a policy that would not be completely contradictory to the Egyptian view. The army, on the other hand, enjoyed life in Cairo and Alexandria and was reluctant to withdraw to the unpleasant climate in Lower Egypt. The army took the self interest view with less consideration for the interests of the Egyptians. Great Britain was faced with the problem of how to accommodate the Egyptian national aspiration and maintain its interests on secure and safe basis at a time when the Italian expansion appeared to the Egyptians nearer to success than British resistance.

Italian Expansion in 1939:

A grave danger that appeared at that time was Mussolini's ambition and expansion, most dangerous in Ethiopia. Italian aspirations in the Mediterranean were not a new doctrine. Mussolini hoped to build a strong empire equal to any other European Great Power. The European Great Powers saw the increased power of the Third Reich and were afraid that Mussolini throw himself with the Nazis and thus they were under an obligation to

satisfy Mussolini to prevent his alliance with the Nazis, and yet they were not willing to increase his strength considerably so as not to let him act as a source of danger to their own status.

The prestige of the French and the British in the Mediterranean was lowered in 1939 after the Italian annexation of Albania. Just before the war Italy appeared to be superior to the British forces in the Middle East and Africa.

The Italians, moreover, had a plan to control the whole Middle East territories. The policy of the Italians was to make a Moslem population of Libya "complementary to the Italian settlers." During the period that extended from 1931 to 1940 the Italians were very active in their colonization and their population in Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, Eritrea, and Somalia had increased.

Under such conditions, the Italians' increased expansion appeared as a serious danger to the British position in the Middle East and to the Egyptian independence. The Italian success was not favorable to the British plan of action for there was the possibility of Egyptian insistence to throw their lot with the successful group.

The War Period As It Affected

Anglo-Egyptian Relations

Chapter II.

The purpose of this section is to study Anglo-Egyptian relations during the second World War. It will be considered in three periods.

First: From the outbreak of the war until the entry of Italy.

Second: The period of active warfare in the Middle East and its impact on Egypt.

Third : The recession of the war from the Middle East.

The Wafd during the whole period played an important part whether in or out of office. The King was the rival of the Wafd leader and there was continuous desire of each to dominate the scene. The Wafd leader had his own party tactics which were mainly to perpetuate himself in office and to attract public opinion to his support when out of office; this he did by claiming his concern with the Egyptian national interest.

The sources for the material of this section were very scanty. I here greatly depended on Professor Kirk's volume, The Middle East in The War. I could find nothing on this period representing the Arab point of view. The Memoires of Sidki Pasha which touch on this period were not obtainable in Beirut.

(1) From the Outbreak of the War Until the Entry of Italy.

When the 1936 Treaty was signed the Wafd proved accommodating in its policy with the British after a long period of extreme rigidity and inflexibility. After the Treaty the Wafd's popularity began to decline. Not only that but the leaders began disagreeing among themselves. Ahmad Maher and Mahmud Fahmi an-Nuqrashi were against Makram Ubeid, the Coptic Minister of Finance and Secretary General of the Wafd Party. Moreover, the interference of Mrs. Nahas in government appointments for the benefit of her family decreased the Wafdist popularity further. By July of 1937 Nahas dropped Nuqrashi from his government and for the following three months the King-Prime Minister relationship was at its worst. 1 The King, unwilling to tolerate him further, dismissed his Prime Minister and called the Liberal Constitutional leader, Muhamad Mahmud Pasha, to form a new cabinet. At the same time Nuqrashi and Ahmad Maher collaborated in the formation of a new party that was called the Sa'dist Wafd. They decided to oppose Nahas and his policy towards the Palace. Muhamed Mahmud's government remained in power till 1939 and during that period the King and the Prime Minister

1. Royal Institute of International Affairs,
Great Britain and Egypt 1914-1951. (London,
1952) pp. 48-49.

cooperated in their activities. In general there was adherence to the letter and spirit of the Treaty.²

The Italian policy in North Eastern Africa and Anglo-Italian relations were matters of grave concern to the Egyptian. Egypt, as one of the major states of Africa, felt her responsibility in taking part in Anglo-Italian discussions concerning the African questions and the Eastern Mediterranean. From 1937 - 1939 Axis anti-British propaganda continued to flow into Egypt. The approach of the war on the continent had its effects on Egypt because Egypt was a state bound by treaty obligations in times of war. The time was becoming critical because the Germans and the Italians were trying to appeal to the Egyptian interest and continued to emphasize common interests and natural links with the Egyptians.³ All this goes to show the many trends that were moving the Egyptians to and from adding to their instability.

By 1938 a point of understanding was reached between the British and the Italians. A bon voisinage agreement was also signed by the British and the Egyptian Ministers in Rome, and by the Italian Foreign Minister for the furtherance of good relations on the frontiers of Italian East Africa, the Sudan, Kenya, and British Somaliland. Although Great Britain and Italy reached

2. Ibid., pp. 50-51.

3. Ibid., pp. 52-53.

an understanding, this did not check the flow of Axis propaganda into Egypt. The situation was further complicated by the attitude adopted by the Wafd leader in opposition at that time. Nahas accused the Egyptian Prime Minister of having minimized Egyptian sovereignty in his dealings with the British and the Italians. He also claimed that he himself had been dismissed from office against the country's wishes; that the British Ambassador with the Head of the British Military Mission dominated Egypt in a manner similar to that of the Residency and the Inspector-General before the Treaty. ⁴ There was ^a further point of conflict between the Egyptian and the British Governments that also permitted the Wafd to raise opposition. This was the question of building barracks in the Canal Zone as had been agreed in the Treaty. The Egyptian Government was not in favor of letting the British build them nor could it afford the expenses itself. The Annex to Article 8 of the Treaty was finally amended whereby the British agreed to contribute financially to the building of accommodation in the Canal Zone. The Wafd claimed that the amendment was against the military and financial interests of Egypt. ⁵

The Egyptians, as Arabs, were also concerned with the proceedings of the Palestine question. The Moslem

4. Times, 8 July 1938; quoted by the Information Paper No. 19, p. 54.

5. The Manchester Guardian, 6 September 1938; quoted ibid., p. 55.

Brotherhood, under the leadership of Hassan-al-Banna, found the Palestine cause a suitable theme for propoganda. They continued their Anti-British campaign all over Egypt. It was reported that the Mufti of Jerusalem acted as the link between the Party and the Nazis but this was not confirmed. ⁶

During the spring and summer of 1939, with the low cotton prices during the season, there was an increasing economic dissatisfaction. This enhanced the Wafd opposition to the government, and it was becoming difficult for Mohamad Mahmud to maintain himself in office. At his resignation in August 1939 the King invited Ali Maher to replace him. Ali Maher had occupied the office of Prime Minister ~~Cabinet~~ in 1937. He had gained personal influence over the King, the government offices, and over the police. His policy was to achieve absolute independence for Egypt.

Ali Maher, in trying to work out a policy for Palestine, could be considered the first Egyptian Politician to think of the possibility of winning for Egypt political leadership in the Arab world. This possibility was only later realized by other politicians during and after the Second World War. ⁷

The previous section was intended to give an idea of the Egyptian situation preceding the attack of Germany

6. Heyworth - Dunne, Religious and Political Trends in Modern Egypt, pp. 22-23.
(Published by the author, Washington 1950).

7. Royal Institute of International Affairs, Great Britain & Egypt 1914-1951, op.cit., p. 58-59.

on Poland, on September 1939, which precipitated the Second World War. Sir Miles Lampson, the British Ambassador to Egypt, and Ali Maher considered the implementation of Article eight of the 1936 Treaty by which Egypt undertook to become the ally of Great Britain. Although Italy asserted her good will towards Egypt, there was the danger of her joining Germany in the war. With the situation as such general Wavell was appointed General Officer Commanding in Chief in the Middle East.⁸ Indian and other Allied troops started arriving in Egypt; it was noticed that Wafdist opposition to Great Britain was abandoned. Ahmad Hussein, leader of the extremist Young Egypt Party (Misr al Fatah) also declared his support to Great Britain till final victory.⁹

Following the British declaration of war on Germany, the Egyptian Government cut off commercial and diplomatic relations with the Germans and decided to take measures against their infiltration into Egypt. Egypt was in a state of siege and the Prime Minister declared Egypt on the side of Great Britain.

The British at this time aimed at developing the Egyptian forces efficiently to enable them to help in defending Egypt. Meanwhile on September 1939 successive

8. Collins, Lord Wavell (1883-1941), p. 197.

9. Kirk, The Middle East in The War, (London, 1952) p.33

German campaigns in Norway and offensives in the West increased the probability of Italy joining Germany in the war. About 60,000 Italian subjects were in Egyptian cities; they did a great deal of harm by their espionage and anti-British propoganda. ¹⁰ The Suez Canal was declared as closed area; with the probability of Italy declaring war and the German success the Egyptian Government maintained its neutrality and the Egyptian Parliament supported Ali Maher in his policy. It was remarked that it was logical on the part of the Egyptians, with the effect of Axis propoganda and signs of its victorious campaigns to avoid conflict with the Axis. ¹¹ Heyworth Dunne similarly discussed the position of Ali Maher and the popularity he encountered in his opposition to the British Ambassador. Most of the Egyptian were nearly certain of the failure of the British campaign after the failure of France. ¹²

If Italy were to declare war against the British, it implied that the latter, responsible for running the base at Lower Egypt, would use Egyptian ports and territory in facing Italian attacks even though Egypt did not declare war against Italy. The Italians argued against that case

10. Arthur Merton in Daily Telegraph, 7 May 1940, quoted by Kirk, op.cit., p. 37.

11. Kirk, Ibid.

12. Heyworth Dunne, op.cit., p. 86, Note 22.

for it produced a situation not defined in the 1936 Treaty. The general conclusion arrived at by Ali Maher was that Egypt should refrain from offensive action until her territory was first attacked and her vital interests threatened. (Even if Egypt should be declared neutral she would be expected to take action with the British according to Article 7 of the Treaty).¹³

(2) The Period of Active War and its Pressure on Egypt:

On 11 June 1940, Italy entered the war. The Italian Minister had officially declared to the Egyptian Council of Ministers that his country had no intention of attacking Egypt. The Egyptian Government declared Egyptian adherence to the terms of the treaty. Ali Maher repeated again what he had already stated that his government would refrain from any offensive actions against Italy. But, violating the official declaration made by its foreign minister, Italy, on 17 June 1940, began air raids on Egyptian soil. That day the Italian Minister was still in Cairo and the French had asked for an armistice. The Egyptian Prime Minister had no intention of committing his country to the implementation of the 1936 Treaty at a time when the Allied victory was uncertain.¹⁴ Responding to British

13. Kirk, op.cit., p. 38.

14. Heyworth Dunne, op.cit., p. 86 No. 22.

representations King Faruq dismissed his Prime Minister on 22 June and invited Hasan Sabri to take his place.

Along with the governmental changes that went on, the Chief of the Royal Cabinet was given to a pro-British, Ahmad Hasanein, and thus Britain was able to obtain the necessary defence measures for the war. The comment on the general situation existing then was as follows; "It was unfortunate for the future of Anglo-Egyptian relations that the moment when the reality of the war appeared on the threshold of the Middle East had also been the moment when the Axis prospects of victory seemed to neutrals virtually certain." 15

On 13 September 1940 the Italians crossed the Egyptian frontier, and on 19 September they reached Sidi Barrani. The Sa'dist party leader, Ahmad Maher, president of the Chamber of Deputies, delivered a speech in Mansura in which he tried to convince the Egyptians of the advantage of Egypt's declaration of war to drive out the enemies. His argument was based on National interests; his view was: if Egyptian non-belligerency was to be maintained the Egyptians would not have good grounds at the end of the

15. Kirk, op.cit., p. 40.

war to convince the British of their ability to defend themselves. Following that Ahmad Maher and Mahmud Fahmi an-Nuqrashi insisted, in a cabinet meeting, on the necessity of Egypt's declaring war on Italy. When their suggestion was refused, four Sa'dist ministers resigned. The Egyptian Prime Minister refused to accept the Sa'dist proposals to save Egypt from war. A political crisis followed and Egyptian policy was determined as one of non-belligerency. ¹⁶

On the whole Hasan Sabri's government cooperated with the British and the latter offered help when Egypt was on the verge of an economic crisis. The markets for Egyptian cotton products were closed and Great Britain seeing the danger offered to buy the cotton. She bought double the quantity needed for her normal commercial requirements; it was expected to store the amount bought in Alexandria. ¹⁷

After declaring Egypt on the defensive the Egyptian Minister died in November 1940 and Hussein Sirri formed a new cabinet very similar to the previous one. The Sa'dists still disagreed with the Wafdists concerning Egypt's attitude towards Great Britain. The Sa'dists wanted to prove the Ability of Egypt to defend itself, while the Wafdists wanted to keep to the terms of the Treaty of Alliance.

16. Kirk, op.cit., pp. 194-195.

17. The times, 29 July and 8 August 1940; "Great Britain and the East," 15 August 1940 p. 133; quoted by Kirk, op.cit., p. 194.

By February 1941, the British had advanced some 500 miles to the frontiers of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania. Later they had to withdraw a large part of their forces for the Greek campaign. By 11 April 1941 the British were driven back to the Egyptian frontier and some alarm spread in Egypt. There followed an economic crisis and a shortage of essential commodities. Control action taken by the government was inadequate and the British military authorities sold flour to Egypt.¹⁸

In the midst of this economic difficulty there arose another political problem. Egypt, after breaking off relations with Rumania, Hungary, Bulgaria and Japan, suspended relations with Vichy France in January 1942. This action took place with British encouragement at a time when the King was not in Cairo. Later the French Government, through its minister in Egypt, asked the King to reconsider the question of reestablishing relations. The King, under the influence of Ali Maher, dismissed his Minister for Foreign Affairs because he considered him to have taken an important diplomatic action in his absence without his advice. This endangered the position of the Prime Minister and Ali Maher, through his relationship in the Palace, wanted to take advantage of this and bring about a government that was not pro-British.¹⁹

18. Kirk, op. cit., pp. 199-202.

19. Ibid., p. 207

Ali Maher wanted to bring to office a government that would not cooperate with the British after having seen the increased possibility of Axis success.

With the possibility of Axis success and the prospect of a German spring offensive on the Russian front, the students in Egypt demonstrated against the Government on the first of February 1942. On 2 February Hussein Sirri resigned; the following day the British Ambassador requested of the King, by the terms of an ultimatum, the formation of a cabinet headed by Nahas, leader of the majority. Against his will the King invited Nahas to the position. The Wafd leader, on accepting, sent the following statement in a communication to the British Ambassador: "It is quite understood that I accept this task on the basis that neither the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty nor the situation of Egypt as a sovereign and independent country permits the Ally to interfere in the internal affairs of the country and particularly in the formation and dismissal of ministers."²⁰

The new Wafd Government immediately began dealing with the supply problem. It abolished requisition on wheat and maize and took other measures to improve the conditions of supply. The government, in trying to suppress the press opinion against it, increased the Sa'dist attack on the Wafd. There was an increasing friction between Makram Ubeid and Nahas, for Makram tried to maintain his ascendancy over

20. Kirk, op. cit., p. 211.

Nahas. The Wafd leader was unwilling to allow him so much influence and dismissed him from his office as Secretary General of the Wafd. Makram was joined by another fifteen deputies and some Senators who organized themselves into the Independent Wafdist Group or Kutla.²¹

Nahas had to overcome opposition directed from different sources and to seek the support of the Nationalist quarters. He declared a desire to revise the Treaty radically, and to achieve economic self-sufficiency and suitable outlets in the Sudan for Egypt's surplus population.²²

A German air offensive against Malta had already started since December 1941. On 26 May 1942 Rommel attacked the British Eighth Army's defensive systems in several places. This raised some rumours of alarm in Egypt. At a later stage on 21 June 1942 the Axis Forces reached as far as Tobruk and compelled the Eighth Army to withdraw towards Al-Alamain which was some 350 miles east of Tobruk and 60 miles west of Alexandria. It was fortunate for the British that at the time of their recent defeat an Anglo-American Conference was being held in Washington, wherein Mr. Churchill, Roosevelt and their staffs were able to study the joint action necessary to meet the emergency. In further battles the British were able to check the Axis advance at Al-'Alamain and to bring about its

21. Ibid., pp. 211-215.

22. Royal Institute of International Affairs, Great Britain and Egypt, 1914-1951, op. cit., p. 73.

final expulsion from Africa in May 1943. The British Ambassador thanked Nahas in July 1942 for his resolute attitude during the recent crisis. Nahas did not let the opportunity slip and asked for British support for Egypt's interests in the post-war settlement. The British Ambassador, in return, was authorized to assure him that the British Government would use her good offices to secure representation of Egypt, as an independent state, in peace negotiations affecting her interests. 23

(3) The Recession of the War From the Middle East:

After the defeat of the Axis Forces in Egypt and their final expulsion from Africa in May 1943, Lower Egypt remained of vital importance as a military base to Great Britain, and the latter's policy was to maintain the Wafd in power to secure public security.

Since the declaration of Egyptian independence the number of students pursuing higher education was increasing, while there was no attempt to reduce the rate of illiteracy. The effect of this was a rush on the white collar employment. To satisfy the intellectual group the people in office employed the former by dismissing foreigners. Moreover the presence of British and Allied Troops in Egyptian towns, regardless of Egyptian susceptibilities, created increased resentment of the already existing occupation. Nahas, in addition, renewed his

23. The Times and Telegraph, 20 November 1942; quoted by RIIA, Great Britain and Egypt 1914-1951, op. cit., p. 79.

demand for revision of the Treaty concerning absolute evacuation and unity with the Sudan. In general, conditions in Egypt after 1942 were not favorable for the British and they had to face the feeling of resentment against them after the war.²⁴

During the period the Wafd was in power there were rumors attributing corruption and nepotism to Mrs. Nahas to further financial interests of her family. Makram Ubeid seized on this undoubted abuse of power and collected his charges against the leading Wafdist members in a 'black book' and sent a copy to the King and distributed many others. The King was already competing for popularity with the Wafd leader and wanted to dismiss him; but the King was advised against this by the British Ambassador at the consent of the Foreign Office in the Spring of 1944. This situation was very similar to what had happened in 1942.²⁵ The King still insisted on dismissing his Prime Minister; and after the Arab Preparatory League Conference was finally realized, for which purpose Nahas was kept in office, he was dismissed on 8 October 1944. Ahmad Maher, the Sa'dist leader, was called to replace him.

The new cabinet expressed its intention to continue cooperation with the British Government until the end of the war with Japan. On the other hand there was a tendency to

24. Kirk, op.cit., p.255.

25. See page (18).

26. Kirk, op. cit., pp. 259-260.

adopt a policy to weaken non-Egyptian influence in commerce and industry. In fact, the British Chamber of Commerce in Egypt presented a report to the Egyptian Government about the British Trade in Egypt after the war and stated: "The British commercial interests were perturbed at the growth of the nationalist tendencies during the war."²⁷

After the Yalta Conference Roosevelt and Churchill met the Kings of Egypt and Saudi Arabia, the Emperor of Ethiopia and the President of Syria, from 16-18 February 1945 Egypt was informed of the decision taken that only the states which declared war on Germany would be permitted to be represented in the San Francisco Conference, and would be considered founders of the United Nations. Meanwhile Ahmad Maher was campaigning to persuade the Chamber of Deputies of the Government's decision to declare war on the Axis. On 16 February, the British Foreign Secretary declared that the states that had declared war on the Axis by 1 March would be entitled to take part in the Peace Conference. Ahmad Maher found support for his policy of belligerency but on his way to persuade the Senate he was assassinated by a young lawyer of the extremist Misr Al Fatah Party.²⁸

Mahmud Fahmi an-Nuqrashi, the Foreign Minister and Vice-President of the Sa'dist party, replaced Ahmad Maher.

27. Ibid., p. 265.

28. Ibid., pp. 265-266; see Spectator, 'Murder in Egypt', No. 6688, March 2, 1945.

The new government's policy of declaring war found support and the King declared a defensive war on Germany and Japan.

After the war the Egyptians again raised a claim for complete independence, evacuation and unity with the Sudan. The extreme nationalists, were impatient for more dramatic action, and the young King with constitutional power over his ministers wanted to get rid of the British who tried to direct some of his actions. He was convinced of the necessity of securing popularity without causing disturbance.

Conclusion:

The war period in the Middle East showed the conflict and competition of the Allied and the Axis Powers to control Egypt. The Italian policy tried to secure the friendship of the Egyptians and when there was no favorable response it resorted to the use of force. When the Wafd was out of office from 1940 to 1942, and especially in 1940, when Ali Maher was against committing Egypt with the losing side, the Italian propoganda found encouragement, while the British found it more difficult to maintain their position in Egypt.

The British policy during the war, like the Egyptian policy, depended on opportunism and self-interest. When the British position in Egypt was seriously endangered the British Foreign Office obliged the reinstatement of the Wafd leader to office. During the first stage of the war the British preferred that Egypt would keep its non-belligerency and they were successful in maintaining it. The British position

after the war was endangered because of the stress of the occupation on Egypt, and the increased anti-foreign feeling in Egypt.

The Egyptian nation was still divided and disunited. There was the Moslem Brotherhood Party that was secretly acting to further its influence and gain popularity. There were other extremist factions that tried to take advantage of the complicated situation. Friction in the Wafd resulted in the creation of two new political groups in Egypt: The Sa'dist Wafd, and the Wafdist United Block. The young king, with the constitutional power on his side wanted to overcome the popularity of the Wafd leader.

Besides the general tendency of demanding the revision of the Treaty, the foundations of the Arab League were laid. The material suffering, except for the malaria epidemic, on the part of the Egyptians during the war was not serious; the country's sterling balance benefited at the time £450 million for goods and services. Yet there were murmurs of dissatisfaction from time to time. Loyalty to the terms of the Treaty were, on the whole, maintained.

Anglo-Egyptian Negotiations For

Treaty Revision 1945-1947

Chapter III

The purpose of this chapter is to study the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations for Treaty revision during the period that extended from 1945-1947. There will be a discussion of Sidki's negotiations with British representative in both Cairo and London, and the presentation of the Egyptian case to the Security Council.

In the preceding chapter we have seen that the Egyptians were insisting on evacuation and the withdrawal of British troops from Egyptian and Sudanese Territory. In contrast to the Egyptian desire to bring about a change, the British policy remained static because there were more urgent problems in other parts of the world that needed attention. Sir Edward Grigg, who had been British Minister Resident in the Middle East until 12 August 1945, advised the new British Labour Government which came into office immediately after the war to announce the withdrawal of British Forces from Cairo and Alexandria, while the British Embassy in Cairo was against this suggestion. The British Embassy felt it necessary to ask the Egyptian Prime Minister in Autumn 1945 not to press for revision of the Treaty at that time. In addition to the constant pressure of the Wafd, which had been in opposition since October 1944, the Egyptian Prime Minister had to face the anti-British extremists and the cabinet groups under Makram Ubeid, Finance Minister in Nuqrashi's cabinet,

who were constantly asking for revision of the Treaty.²⁹

The reason for British refusal to cancel the Treaty was that the British considered the risk of Soviet aggression a real possibility while the Egyptians did not think it so urgent. The establishment of a Communist Government in Azarbaigan and the Soviet pressure on Turkey were considered by the British serious threats to the security of the Middle East. That is why the British wanted to start negotiations on the basis of equality of negotiators and acceptance in principle of the Treaty for the remainder of its full term. It therefore became clear at the end of the war that the British and the Egyptians had different points of view. The Egyptians thought in terms of national prestige while the British were concerned first with the Soviet threat to the Middle East and only secondarily wanted to satisfy and confirm Egyptian national aspirations. Underground work to organize demonstrations in Cairo and Alexandria had already been begun by the Wafd, the extremist members of Ikhwan al-Muslimin and Misr-al-Fatah.³⁰

When Nuqrashi found no solution to this state of affairs he resigned. Ismail Sidki was invited to take his place. The new Prime Minister was a Turk in origin, autocratic in behavior, and a realist in thinking. He had already occupied the office of premier in Egypt in 1930-1933. He was politically

29. Kirk, The Middle East 1945-1950, pp. 116-117.
(Oxford University Press, London, 1954).

30. Ibid., pp. 117-118.

independent and was not associated with the demagogy of the Wafd, for he had given up active politics since 1933 to give himself time to amass a large fortune. Sidki removed the restrictions imposed by Nuqrashi forbidding rioting and demonstrations. It would seem that at the beginning of his term of office demonstrations suited his purpose to illustrate to the British Government the extent of Egyptian nationalism. Although he was an anti-Communist the Communist agencies found in these demonstrations an opportunity to aggravate the disorder in Egypt which they were always attacking.³¹

At this time Ismail Sidki wanted to begin negotiations for revision of the 1936 Treaty. The Egyptian delegation for this purpose did not include any Wafdist since Sidki refused to fulfil the conditions ~~on~~ which they insisted on for participating in the delegation. When eventually the names of the members of the British delegation were announced Sidki objected since they consisted of Embassy officials and senior military experts. He wanted to negotiate with persons of his own category, not with Embassy officials who (he said) were to a large extent responsible for British policy in Egypt during the war.³² When he intimated this the British Foreign Secretary, Mr. Bevin, declared that he would himself be chairman of the

31. Marlowe, Anglo-Egyptian Relations 1800-1953, pp. 337-338. (The Cresset Press, London, 1954)

32. Kirk, The Middle East 1945-1950, p. 120.

delegation. He entrusted the early discussions in Cairo to the Secretary for Air, Lord Stansgate, who 25 years earlier had been an advocate of the Egyptian case, and whose appointment had been welcomed by Sidki, and to Mr. Head of the Middle East Secretariat of the Foreign Office, Sir Kinahan Cornwallis, and the British Ambassador in Cairo, Sir Ronald Campbell.

The British delegation reached Cairo on 15 April 1946. Lord Stansgate reported that the first thing he heard from Sidki was that any agreement between the two parties must be on the basis of British evacuation. At this moment the British delegation tried to focus the attention of the Egyptian delegation on the then existing international tension caused by the Soviet pressure on Turkey, Persia, Greece, and the threat thereby offered to the whole Middle East. The British delegation also emphasized the importance of Lower Egypt as a base for defending the whole of the Middle East and not only the Nile Valley, which Egypt could not do unaided. The delegation, moreover, tried to persuade Egypt to accept in peace time British civilian technical specialists and to maintain a regional headquarters in the Canal Zone.³³

The Egyptian delegation was not sufficiently understanding to grasp what the British attempted to make it understand. Continuing disturbances and demonstrations "were deterrents to any divergence from the basic Egyptian demands."

33. Kirk, The Middle East 1945-1950, p. 120.

The British government, to calm the situation, offered on 7 May 1946 to withdraw all British Forces from Egyptian territory and to negotiate with the Egyptian Government for arranging the stages and dates of withdrawal. In return Great Britain wanted to be permitted to offer mutual assistance in time of war or threat of war, in conformity with the principles of Alliance.³⁴

Debating this proposal in both British Houses of Parliament, the supporters of the Government accepted it, while the opposition criticised it; they indicated that the British tenure of Palestine and Syria was not permanent and could not be relied upon. Cyprus, as another possibility, was considered inadequate. Some British official authorities still feared that Egypt might hesitate to allow British Forces to reoccupy the installations in case of war. These were the bases of British opposition to Mr. Bevin's proposals; the British Prime Minister had stated: "If the whole matter breaks down, there is of course the Treaty."³⁵ This meant that if Egypt rejected the present offer Britain could still use the letter of the Treaty for another ten years (as has indeed happened). Mr. Bevin then declared that a joint Anglo-Egyptian effort in mutual defence was not the interest of Great Britain and her commonwealth only, but was also the aim

34. The British Prime Minister, H. C. Deb., 5th ser., Vol. 422, Cols. 781-2.

35. H. C. Deb., 5th ser., Vol. 423, col. 788.

of the United Nations for achieving international security.³⁶

In general the Egyptians did not favor the British offer and on 21 May the British made another offer which imposed the same military conditions of the 1936 Treaty. The British Foreign Office felt the danger of cold war in the North of the Middle East and tried to avoid depending in the future on the good will of the Egyptians in case of actual war. Although the Egyptians were on the whole loyal to the British terms of the Treaty during the war, except for what Ali Maher sought to do in the dangerous situation of June 1940,³⁷ the British felt that in the absence of a binding treaty³⁸ the Egyptians might very easily forsake them in a future war.

There was in Egypt during this period a temporary coalition between the Wafd, the extreme nationalists and the Communists who opposed any kind of Anglo-Egyptian Alliance and Sidki's Government. These groups took advantage of the existing social unrest caused by shortage of labour demand which became serious after the close of the war-Labourers who were still employed were causing disturbances and strikes. State telegraph workers, engineers, and teachers were also on strike. The government passed a bill on 9 July imposing heavy penalties for strikes by state employees. It was commented at a later stage, that the Wafd was inclined to

36. Ibid.,.

37. See Chapter II

38. Kirk, The Middle East, 1945-1950, p. 122.

flirt with the Communist either to bring pressure on Britain or, when in opposition, to bring pressure on the Government in office.³⁹

During the summer of 1946 there were several exchanges of formal notes between Egypt and Great Britain; Egypt insisted on her demands while Great Britain attempted to compromise between the British awareness of cold war and the Egyptian demands. The Egyptians required evacuation within one year, while the British indicated that this was technically impossible because of their large installations already set up on Egyptian territory. The British proposed a period of five years for evacuation to avoid creating "a defensive vacuum between the departure of the last British forces and the Egyptian assumption of their commitments."⁴⁰

Having reached this stage in the Anglo-Egyptian defence problem there still remained the problem of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. A small politically conscious group of Sudanese was emerging that aimed at achieving self-government for the Sudan with the help of Egypt. This group expressed the desire that in case of an Anglo-Egyptian agreement for a settlement, provisions should be made to settle the future of the Sudan. With this in mind a delegation representing the Sudan left for Cairo to acquaint the Anglo-

39. Ibid., pp. 122-123.

40. The Alexandria Correspondent of the Daily Telegraph and the Scotsman, 5 August 1946; quoted by Kirk, Ibid., p. 123.

Egyptian negotiators with the Sudanese requests. The Sudanese formula "aimed at setting up ---- a free Sudanese democratic government in union with Egypt and in alliance with Great Britain." The Sudanese would define the forms of alliance and union they would choose to have with Great Britain and Egypt respectively. They would also make provisions to transfer the government to Sudanese hands in the shortest possible time.⁴¹

The Sudanese delegation split into two factions when the Egyptian politicians proposed a close union of the Sudan with Egypt under the Egyptian crown. This suggestion was accepted by the "Unity Group" (The National Front) but rejected by the Sudanese Independence Group who returned to Khartoum without continuing negotiations.

At this stage, it would be in place to define briefly the Sudanese political parties which were of importance in connection with the Anglo-Egyptian relations. There was ~~also~~ a group in the Sudan who since 1920 had been advancing in administrative experience and responsibility and who had common interests with Saiyid 'Abdur-Rahman al Mahdi, who favored British tutelage for a limited period. This was the Sudanese Independence Group. There was another group who had an Egyptian-Sudanese racial background and favored the

41. Mekki Abbas, The Sudan Question, pp.110-111.
(Faber and Faber Ltd., London, 1951)

Egyptian Cause. These belonged to the Khatmiya sect under Saiyid 'Ali-al-Mirghani as leader. This group was joined by a number of the educated class especially those who had failed to find official employment or advancement in the Sudanese Public Service. As a result of their disappointment their interest was turned to Cairo thinking that the Egyptians might help them. These constituted the National Front which favored some link with Egypt.⁴²

Upon the withdrawal of the Independence Group representatives from the Sudanese delegation the Egyptian and the British Governments decided to consult the Sudanese before taking a decision in their case. The British, for simplicity and greater understanding in the negotiations, favored the separation of the Sudanese Question from the general question of defence. It was later declared by Lord Stansgate that the Egyptians had considered the whole issue of negotiations hindered by Mr. Bevin's statement in March 1946 that the Sudanese self government would be a first step in the gradual development of an independent Sudan.⁴³

The British proposals of Mid-August were the maximum they could offer.⁴⁴ Sidki and the Egyptian king were ready

42. Kirk, The Middle East, 1945-1950, p. 129.

43. H. C. Deb., 5th ser., vol 421, col 217.

to accept them, while Makram and other members of the Egyptian delegation refused them. Unable to reach an agreement Sidki resigned on 28 September 1946 only to return to office few days later on the failure of Sharif Sabri, the king's uncle, to form a cabinet.⁴⁵

Negotiations In London:

The new cabinet had still to consider the British status in Egypt; to explain fully to Mr. Bevin the reasons for the Egyptian reaction, Sidki himself went to London. Meanwhile Lord Stansgate and the British Ambassador to Egypt were already in London for consultation with the Foreign Secretary. Five meetings took place between Sidki, his Foreign Minister the Sa'dist Ibrahim Abdul-Hadi, and Ernest Bevin between 17-25 October 1946 which resulted in a new draft Treaty.

The new draft stated that Great Britain would evacuate Cairo, Alexandria, and the Delta by 31 March 1947, and the rest of the Egyptian territory by 1 September 1949. In case of aggression to any territory adjacent to Egypt, the latter should promise to take action. A Joint Defence Board would be set up to study all events that would endanger the security of the Middle East and would make recommendations for the necessary action to be taken.⁴⁶

45. Kirk, op. cit., p. 125.

46. Cmd. 7179, p. 3.

To reconcile the Egyptian claim of sovereignty with his pledge to the Sudanese to consult them before changing their status/^{Bevin}found it fit to include in negotiating with Sidki a Protocol on the Sudan a reference to "the existence of a symbolic dynastic union between Egypt and the Sudan, provided always that no change was introduced in the existing system of administration, whereby the Sudan is administered by the Governor-General under the powers conferred to him by the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936.; and provided that no change took place in the arrangements under which the defence of the Sudan is assured." Bevin, moreover, reported Sidki to have admitted that nothing in the protocol could hinder the Sudanese right of independence, and said that this was universal principle not necessary to be included in a draft Treaty.⁴⁷

Sidki taking advantage of Bevin's attempt to compromise in the Protocol declared upon his return to Cairo on 26 October 1946: "I said last month that I should bring the Sudan to Egypt, and I say now that I have succeeded, that it has definitely been decided to achieve unity between Egypt and the Sudan under the Egyptian Crown." Bevin, on 28 October, reported that Sidki had already asserted Sudanese right of independence in their London conversations that year

47. Bevin, 27 January 1947, H.E. Deb., 5th ser., vol. 432, Coll. 617-18.

and the British Prime Minister thought of Sidki's declaration 'partial and misleading'.⁴⁸ Sidki's claim concerning the Sudan caused a strong reaction on the part of the Independence Group in the Sudan; with consequent disorders and demonstrations in Khartum and Omdurman. Following these disturbances the Governor General of the Sudan went to London to explain the situation to the Foreign Secretary.⁴⁹

Seven out of the twelve representatives in the Egyptian delegation were against the three clauses of the Sidki-Bevin draft, those concerning evacuation, joint defence, and the Sudan, mentioned above. King Faruq made it clear that it was in the interest of both countries to bring about an agreement; but seeing that so many previous attempts to conclude the agreement had been obstructed, the delegation was dissolved. Sidki remained in office but there were demonstrations encouraged by the Wafd; the Prime Minister hinted that the Wafdists were receiving material help from the Russians. The Wafd denied this fact but said that they needed the friendship of Russia and other Communist countries to get their support when they presented the Egyptian case to the Security Council.⁵⁰

Ismail Sidki declared to the press that he realized it was impossible to make the British recognize Egyptian sovereignty over the Sudan, which the Egyptians considered

48. Quoted by Kirk, The Middle East 1945-1950, F.126

49. Mekki Abbas, op. cit., pp. 117-118.

50. Kirk, The Middle East 1945-1950, p. 127.

as their right. When Bevin attempted to get Sidki's consent on the existing status of the Sudan the latter refused to do it. Meanwhile the Governor General returned to the Sudan and declared that the British Prime Minister had authorized him to deliver a statement of assurance to the Sudanese that the recent conversations did not alter their status designed to prepare the Sudanese for self-government and for choice of their future status.⁵¹

Sidki denied having admitted in London the Sudanese right to secede from the Egyptian Crown and in early December he resigned. In his autobiography Sidki wrote that the Bevin-Sidki plan satisfied Egypt's requests concerning the withdrawal of British troops from Egypt and the latter's sovereignty over the Sudan. His plan, according to him, did not receive final approval because of the intrigues of Egyptian opponents in the field of party politics. He was also aware of Soviet attempts to prevent any agreement, as well as the opposition to a compromise shown by the British Conservative Party, by some officials of the Foreign Office, and the Sudan Government.⁵²

The Egyptian reason for opposing a self-governing Sudan was their fear that the Sudan might reduce Egypt's

51. Daily Telegraph, 9 December 1946; quoted by Kirk, op. cit. p. 128.

52. Mudhakarati, pp. 126, 131; quoted by Kirk, Ibid., p. 128.

share in the Nile Waters. At this stage the Egyptian Press made no reference to this consideration but greater emphasis was laid on appeals to common history, language, religion, and race.

The Presentation of the Egyptian Case
to the Security Council

On the resignation of Sidki, Fahmi an-Nuqrashi was invited to take his place. The new Prime Minister, an advocate of Egyptian nationalist interest, defined the Egyptian attitude towards the Sudan and asserted to the Egyptian Chamber of deputies on 16 December 1946 an intention of permanent unity of Egypt and the Sudan, saying: "In affirming permanent unity of Egypt and the Sudan under the Egyptian Crown we simply expressed the unanimous will and wishes of the inhabitants of this valley --- when I state that the unity of Egypt and the Sudan under the Egyptian Crown is a permanent unity, I hope that the whole world will understand that I am expressing the opinion of all Egyptians and all Sudanese---- there is therefore no ground to suspect that we wish to colonize the Sudan, as the desire to dominate cannot exist between brothers." 53

A further point of conflict arose between the Egyptian

53. Quoted by Kirk, Ibid., op. cit., 129.

and the Sudan Governments concerning the appointment of the Grand Qadi of the Sudan. The Sudan government wanted to appoint a Sudanese instead of the Egyptian whose term of office was expiring. The Egyptian government wanted the appointment to be made by the King on the recommendation of the 'Ulama of Al-Azhar.' As long as the Egyptians and Sudanese were already in conflict, the British and the Egyptians failed in their negotiations to settle the Sudan question. The Egyptians may have lost a chance in not implementing the Bevin-Sidki protocol, for the British tried to satisfy Egyptian requests in every respect except their demand for permanent unity with the Sudan. Nuqrashi, to try out a final way, decided on 26 January 1947, to take the Egyptian and the Sudanese questions to the United Nations. The following day Mr. Bevin affirmed that the British government still maintained its position in Egypt according to the 1936 Treaty.⁵⁴

In July 1947, the Egyptian Government submitted a note to the Security Council of the United Nations requesting the total and immediate evacuation of all British troops from Egypt and the termination of the existing administration in the Sudan. Since the end of March, the British Headquarters completed their withdrawal from the Delta to

54. Ibid., pp. 129-130.

the Canal Zone.

The Egyptian complaint reached the Security Council on 11 July 1947. It stated that the British occupation offended the Egyptian dignity since it was not by Egypt's consent. It hindered their normal development and infringed the principles of sovereignty and equality, and contradicted the United Nations Charter which had been unanimously adopted by the General Assembly. The Egyptians, moreover complained of British administrative policy in the Sudan which endangered the unity of the Nile Valley.⁵⁵

Nuqrashi presented the Egyptian case to the Security Council on 6 August. He used the historic argument to persuade his audience of the Nile Valley unity. He also discussed the history of Anglo-Egyptian relations since 1882. The British representative criticized some historical inaccuracies in his report. Nuqrashi then discussed the 1936 Treaty and the Egyptian objection to it. He explained: ~~that~~ "No one can seriously claim the restrictions on Egyptian sovereignty embodied in the 1936 Treaty were intended to continue after the war. The war was the implicit term to these restrictions, and the 1936 Treaty has now outlived its purpose----. Today, Egypt's relationship with the United Kingdom can no longer be chartered by the provisions of the 1936 Treaty. It must be governed by International law and

55. Security Council Official Records, 2nd year, No. 59, pp. 1343-1345.

by the Charter of the United Nations." The Egyptian delegate discussed the Egyptian-Sudanese relations before and after the British intervention; he also complained of British propoganda in the Sudan that had pictured the Egyptian claim of unity with the Sudan to be a policy of imperialism and ended by stressing the historical and natural links between Egypt and the Sudan.⁵⁶

In answer to the Egyptian claim the British representative, Sir Alexander Cadogan, repeated the readiness of the British to revise the Treaty before its term of expiring in 1956, if both parties agreed. He showed the weakness the Egyptian argument ~~had~~ since they had taken as basis for argument 'the rebus sic stantibus'⁵⁷ principle which had found no support in any international tribunal, since the Treaty had been signed for a period of twenty years. He justified British military occupation because it had been accepted by the Egyptians in a negotiated agreement and thus consistent with the United Nations Charter; this justified stationing foreign troops in a country by latter's consent. He declared that the British Government was sympathetic with the Egyptian's request to revise the Treaty under the conditions agreed upon by Sidki and Bevin which failed to be enforced previously because of Egypt's refusal to grant the Sudanese right of self determination which had been given to

56. Security Council Official Records, 2nd Year, No. 70, pp. 1745-1767.

57. The 'rebus sic stantibus' is a principle in International law which states that the treaty is valid only under the circumstance it was signed; and 'pacta sunt servanda' is a principle which means that treaties are binding for the term they were signed.

other minor states.⁵⁸

The presentation of the case to the Security Council was continued on 11 August; Nuqrashi described Cadogan's speech on the 5th of August as "an unrestrained apology for Ninteenth Century Imperialism," and asked for a termination of their imperialistic policy.⁵⁹ In answer to this the British Delegate defended the British Government's intervention in 1882 and described its prolongation as constructive imperialism to save Egypt from disorder and misrule. He emphasized the historical significance of Mohamad Ali's invasion of the Sudan and described the oppressive nature of Turqo-Egyptian rule which had resulted in the Mahdist revolt; he said that the revolt was caused by the Sudanese hatred of Egyptian misrule and by the financial and administrative disorganization that had prevailed in Egypt also. Cadogan likewise attacked the union of the Nile Valley and described it as a myth, for the Nile basin comprised not only Egypt and the Sudan but extended to Ethiopia, Uganda, and the Belgian Congo. If the question of water supply should oblige a political union of Egypt and the Sudan it should, likewise, apply to unity with Ethiopia, Uganda, and the Belgian Congo.

When the Egyptian Question was thrown open to general

58. Security Council Official Records, 2nd Year, No. 70, pp. 1767-1784.

59. Security Council Official Records, 2nd Year, No. 73, pp. 1857-1875.

discussion, the representatives of Communist Poland declared that the United Nations, besides considering the legal aspect of the question, should consider the fact that the Treaty had fulfilled all its purposes and objectives and that Egyptian National aspirations should now be taken into account. Poland declared its support for the Egyptian demand for the immediate, complete, and unconditional evacuation of British troops from Egypt and the Sudan. As for the problem of self government and free political institutions in the Sudan, it had no suggestion since this was supposed to be a United Nations concern.⁶⁰

The Brazilian delegate suggested the resumption of negotiations between the two parties and should these negotiations fail a solution was to be sought by other peaceful means. The Chinese Nationalist representative added that Great Britain had already partially withdrawn her troops from Egypt and wanted to resume negotiations to complete evacuation; he supported the Sudanese claim for self determination.

The Brazilian proposal found support from the United States, the French, and the Belgian delegates, but Nuqrashi did not consent to this proposal. Egypt, likewise, rejected an Australian amendment that provided for consulting the Sudanese in matters affecting their future. Egypt proposed cooperating with the Sudanese without British

60. R.I.I.A. Information Paper No. 19,
op. cit., p. 105

intervention.

For political reasons related to Franco-Egyptian relations, the French delegate did not [on the whole] approve of the Egyptian position.⁶¹

When the Brazilian suggestion was put to the vote, it fell one short of the necessary two-thirds majority. Although there were other proposals for a settlement⁶² no agreement was reached and on 11 September the sessions were adjourned and the Egyptian question remained unsettled. The Brazilian suggestion did not receive a favorable response from the Egyptians. An Egyptian Terrorist Society sent the Brazilian Legation in Cairo a threatening letter with specific demands. Terrorist actions were taken against Chinese and Belgian residents in Egypt.

The Egyptian government had felt the weakness of its legal position and had tried to arouse international sympathy. She had tried to win her case by reliance on the moral and not the legal aspect of the matter. It was not easy for the British to justify the presence of foreign troops in a territory against the wish of the country although their presence might have been previously agreed upon in a treaty.

61. Ibid., pp. 105-106.

62. Columbia proposed direct negotiations to complete the British military, naval, and air force evacuation of Egyptian territory and to make provisions for mutual assistance in time of war or imminent threat of war, to safeguard free negotiations of the Suez Canal, to end joint administration of the Sudan, and to consider the Sudanese right of self determination and self government. There was an

Occupying troops against the wish of a country may be justified in case of an outstanding specified cause that obliged their retention. The British considered in 1947 the Soviet Pressure on the Middle East which had developed since World War II, at least as serious a threat as the Italian expansion which had been the immediate occasion of the 1936 Treaty. The Egyptians, on the other hand, were unwilling to pay much heed to this Soviet pressure which was still being checked at a distance of 1000 miles from Egyptian territory.

The members of the Council clearly felt that the Egyptian claim in the Sudan was based on weak foundations, except for the historical evidence which was not wholly persuading. An observer may also find many loopholes in this evidence. In contrast to this there was evidence that Sudan was progressing towards self-determination under the then existing conditions, rather than under Egyptian rule.

Some considered that Nuqrashi did not manage the Egyptian Complaint skillfully. Marlowe, writing seven years later about Anglo-Egyptian relations, stated that Nuqrashi in presenting his case to the Security Council did not distinguish

62. (cont'd) Australian amendment that assured evacuation at the end of negotiations, and a Chinese resolution which gave priority to evacuation.

between the Egyptian acceptance of a Treaty with Great Britain and Egyptian rejection of certain parts of the existing Treaty. It appeared as though Egypt was trying to neglect an obligation rather than seek a remedy to her problem. Furthermore, Nuqrashi, in the case of the Sudan did not recognize the fact that the Sudan was profiting from efficient British rule. Egypt would have best concentrated on the evacuation of British Troops and delayed the question of the Sudan to a later period; this would have provided a strong argument for Egypt. The British and the Egyptians agreed on evacuation, but the Sudan problem hindered final implementation. Nuqrashi could not stress evacuation only and delay the Sudan Question for later negotiations because the Egyptians as a whole would have pictured him as a traitor who neglected unity with the Sudan. On the whole Nuqrashi failed to take advantage of the world public opinion and returned to Egypt without being able to convey internationally the justification for the Egyptian Case.⁶⁴

Conclusion:

This chapter has discussed the Egyptian and the British attempts to revise the 1936 Treaty. The Egyptian claim was that the war had ended and there was no need to perpetuate the British occupation. The British Government, on the other hand asserted the existence of danger comparable

64. Marlowe, op. cit., pp. 347-349.

to that which existed in 1936 when the Treaty was signed. The Treaty had provided that it could be revised after a period of ten years if both parties agreed. Thus the British and the Egyptians agreed to revise it but there was disagreement on the terms of revision and the question was taken to the Security Council.

The Egyptians considered that it was Egyptian territory and Egyptian interest which were involved within their own boundaries. This, they thought, should give more weight to their claim than the British claim that was trying to maintain British interest outside British Territory behind the pretext of defending the 'Free World'.

There was little hope for a solution of the Egyptian problem from the United Nations. In my view it only provided for an airing of the Egyptian case on the international scene.

The Period of the Palestine Question

Chapter IV.

Following the unsuccessful attempt of Ismail Sidki to bring about an acceptable revision of the 1936 Treaty, and following the presentation of the Egyptian and the Sudanese questions to the Security Council of the United Nations, there ensued an interruption in Anglo-Egyptian negotiations that was caused to some extent by the termination of the British mandate over Palestine and the Israel-Arab conflict. The Palestine Question temporarily diverted Egyptian political feeling from their national aspirations. But in the meantime there was some progress in the course of negotiations on the Suez Canal and the Nile Waters. The Sudan question was still unsettled, yet some measures were started to encourage self-government.

The Effect of the Palestine War on Anglo-Egyptian Relations:

When the Security Council was hearing the Egyptian view concerning the Anglo-Egyptian question, the Special Committee on Palestine published its recommendations for the partition of Palestine between the Jews and the Arabs. This is to show that further complications were already involved between the British who withdrew from Palestine, and the Arabs,

particularly the Egyptians. Egyptian demands from the British did not change much and was still clear: a British policy in Palestine that would suit Egyptian interest, complete evacuation of British troops from the Canal Zone, and fulfillment of Egyptian unity with the Sudan.

From the military and psychological point of views, Egypt was ill-equipped to face the Palestine War, and lacked a spontaneous enthusiasm for Palestine. They had tepid feelings towards Arabism and they did not completely consider themselves as Arabs. Racial, cultural, and historical ties between Egypt and Palestine were non-existent. The Arabic language was the only apparent tie between the Arabs of Palestine and the Egyptians.⁶⁵

Following the enforced abdication of King Faruq in July 1952, it was alleged["] that the King had compelled Egypt to take part in the war against Israel despite the misgivings of the Government led by Nuqrashi and the Egyptian army.⁶⁶

During the period of breakdown in Anglo-Egyptian relations the Arab League was the focus of attention in the Arab World. The meetings of the Arab League were inaugurated in Cairo and the Secretary General was Abdur-Rahman Azzam, an Egyptian notable. Egypt alone paid about 42 percent of the

65. Marlowe, op. cit., pp. 327-328.

66. Kirk, The Middle East 1945-1950, p. 144.

funds of its secretariat; through this means Egypt used the Arab League as an instrument of anti-British policy after the Second World War. ⁶⁷

Nationalist sentiments in Egypt at this stage were very strong and Nuqrashi's weak coalition government of Sa'dists and Liberals found it advisable not to get involved in negotiations with Great Britain, which were expected to result in failure, so as not to arouse the objection of the Nationalists. The British, as well, were not anxious to negotiate with a minority government. During the period of the Palestine War Great Britain had to face many complications in Egypt; the Arab League, the weak coalition government, the strong nationalist opposition, and the Sudan question, which will be discussed in greater detail below. Egyptian public opinion was unprepared to accept any change and unwilling to subordinate one interest for the other.

This paper is not the place for a discussion of the causes of the Arab defeat in Palestine. For our purpose it is enough to remark that the Israelis crossed the Egyptian frontier at the turn of 1948/9 and the British government took action to check them. A week earlier the Egyptian Prime Minister, Nuqrashi, had been murdered by an extremist; this had left a vacuum in Egypt and the Egyptians were in a state of uncertainty as to what policy to follow in the course of the Israeli conflict.⁶⁸ At such an instant the Egyptian

67. Ibid.

68. See: "This Man Was Killed in Egypt," Akher Sa'ah, No. 844, 27 Dec. 1950, pp. 10-11.

Government, headed by Ibrahim Abdul-Hadi, preferred to negotiate an armistice with Israel rather than invoke the support of the British garrison in the Canal Zone under the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936. The Egyptian government reasoned that an Egyptian armistice was justified on the ground of the turn of her allies, while to invoke the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of Alliance and the British garrison in the Canal Zone would be a manifestation of the incompleteness of Egyptian independence.⁶⁹ From an Egyptian point of view the Egyptian defeat and the Israeli success attracted the attention of the Egyptians to give more care to the army. It was clearly necessary that, if they have to insist on a complete British evacuation of Egyptian territory, they should make themselves able to defend their territory from any attack.

The Nile Waters Agreement:

It is very difficult to determine who should have priority in controlling the Nile River: Egypt, the Sudan, or a foreign state. The Nile is of great importance to both Egypt and the Sudan because it provides their main water supply. It is the life line of Egypt, and if any state, besides Egypt, should control it, it meant controlling almost the whole water supply of Egypt. For this reason the question of water supply

69. Kirk, op. cit., pp. 144-145.

created the slogan of the unity of Egypt and the Sudan and was one of the sources of dispute between the Egyptians and the Sudanese.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century the volume of water during the low season was insufficient for expanding Egyptian agriculture and it was necessary to increase the water supply during the summers. One way was to store some of the flood waters to be used in low seasons and this led to the construction of the Aswan Dam. The water needed in Egypt was increasing and new sources to supply it were to be sought.⁷⁰

The Sudan government began in 1913 to construct a new dam across the Blue Nile in the Sudan "for irrigating a part of the two million feddans of the Sudan Gezira which are capable of development." This action endangered future economic prosperity of Egypt. The Egyptian statesmen thought that developing the Sudan Gezira would endanger Egyptian water supply if the Sudan should need some of the Blue Nile discharge in the low season. To safeguard their rights in controlling the water supply the Egyptians requested the Sudan government to exploit all the possibilities of rain-fed agriculture before embarking upon artificial irrigation. They also feared that the Gezira plan for cotton growing might compete with Egyptian

70. Mekki Abbas, op.cit., pp. 74-77.

cotton in world markets. For these reasons Egypt opposed the Sudan Gezira scheme and insisted on controlling the Nile from Cairo.⁷¹

In 1925 a commission, made up of an Egyptian government representative, a British government representative, and an independent chairman, was appointed to propose the basis for irrigation plans with consideration of Egypt's interests without offending her natural and historic rights. Its recommendations formed the Nile Water Agreement signed on 7 May, 1929. This agreement satisfied the Egyptians concerning the water supply, but did not satisfy the Sudan with her increasing population and expanding agriculture. Egypt, seeing the expansion of Sudanese agriculture, insisted on controlling the Nile from Cairo and she needed her sovereignty over the Sudan to protect herself against water shortage.⁷²

Besides the economic aspect of controlling the Nile Waters there was the political aspect. Egypt feared that the hand which controlled the Nile in the Upper basin would in time of crisis keep a thumb over her. In this way if the British were to evacuate Egypt they could maintain their effectiveness if they could control the Nile in the Sudan. Remembering the British High Commissioner's threat in 1924⁷³ to extend the area

71. Ibid., pp. 77-79.

72. Ibid., pp. 83-84.

73. Following the murder of the Sirdar, Sir Lee Stack, by an Egyptian in November 1924, The British High

irrigated in the Sudan Gezira, the Egyptians felt that as long as Great Britain remained in the Sudan there was the danger of Egypt's staying at the mercy of the British.⁷⁴

The administrative government of the Sudan in 1930 embarked on new agricultural schemes with artificial irrigation from the Nile Waters. This opened the possibility of reducing the water supply of Egypt and placing her at the mercy of the Sudan.

To solve the problem of water supply Egypt decided in 1946 to start a project of a great hydro-electric power station to be completed in 1951. This project was delayed because of the political troubles during that period.⁷⁵

Another attempt to solve the water supply problem was made in 1948 when British and Egyptian scientists collaborated with the Egyptian Ministry of Public Works and completed a survey of the entire Nile Basin. It recommended for irrigation "the construction of a dam and hydroelectric works at Owen Falls in Uganda, a few miles below which the infant Nile leaves Lake Victoria." In May 1949 experts estimated the project to cost Egypt £. 4½ million and Uganda £ 7½ million. The British and the Egyptians agreed to begin the work; the estimated

73. Commissioner in Egypt then had presented to the Egyptian government his demands which included the above mentioned threat.

74. Ibid., pp. 84-87.

75. Kirk, op. cit., p. 145.

required time for completion was 25 years. The purpose of this work was to provide equal distribution of water in years of abundance and of deficiency.⁷⁶

The Suez Canal Agreement:

In 1947 a new Egyptian Company Law was promulgated which required that companies established in Egypt, or companies with agencies in Egypt, should within three years reserve to the Egyptians 40 per cent of their directorship, allow 70 per cent for Egyptian technical and clerical employees and 20 per cent for Egyptian labourers. The Suez Canal Company claimed to be an international company and refused to apply this law. Later, it reached an agreement with the Egyptian Government whereby Egypt would be allowed an annual royalty of a seven per cent share of the gross profits with a minimum of £E 350,000; and she would be given a total of fifteen places on the Board of Directors. The Company would increase the number of Egyptian employees gradually so as not to disturb the efficiency of the Canal workings.⁷⁷

The Sudan Question:

Since the British occupation of Egypt, the Sudan question had been a source of conflict between Egypt and Great Britain. Not only had the British and the Egyptians disagreed

76. Kirk, op. cit., p. 145. See also: Hurst, The Nile, pp. 281-322.

77. Hefnaoui, Les Problèmes Contemporains Posés par le Canal de Suez, pp. 364-384, for the text of the agreement.

on the status of the Sudan, but also the Sudanese were divided among themselves concerning the determination of their future. There were different parties in the Sudan and its geography divided it into two regions: The North and South. This again provided another source of conflict in deciding the future of the Sudan.

The Sudan had undergone a peculiar constitutional development ever since the Condominium was declared in 1899. Since that date the Governor General was the -de-facto supreme authority of the state. He was responsible to Great Britain and Egypt, but in practice when the latter two states disagreed his decision stood final. The administrative system underwent a change when in 1910 a Council was established to assist the Governor General in his executive and legislative activities.⁷⁸ Since then Sudanization of the local government had started.

The Treaty of 1936 provided a return to the 1899 Agreements and article 11 of the Treaty of 1936 stated: "The High Contracting Parties agree that the primary aim of their administration in the Sudan must be the welfare of the Sudanese ." In 1943 an Advisory Council was established for the Northern Sudan to advise the Governor General in the discharge of his functions. This Council was inaugurated on 16 May 1944. Al Musawar, which expressed the views of some

78. R.I.I.A. Great Britain and Egypt 1914-1951,
op. cit., p. 2.

Egyptian politicians noted before the opening of the Council, that the Council was formed without the knowledge of Egypt and that it would have been appropriate if the Sudanese Government had sent an invitation to Egypt to attend the inauguration.⁷⁹ The Sudanese reaction to the establishment of the Advisory Council was that some of the pro-Egyptians, Al-Ashiqqa, boycotted it. On the other hand it was supported by the Independence Front led by Sayid Abdur-Rahman al Mahdi.

In May 1947 an Anglo-Egyptian Committee was set with the leadership of Ahmad Muhammad Khashaba, the Egyptian Foreign Minister, and the British Ambassador to study the question of constitutional reform in the Sudan. Three weeks later they reached an agreement and when the Egyptian Foreign Minister submitted it to the Foreign Affairs Commission in the Senate of Egypt, the Commission rejected it. Towards the middle of June the British Government announced that the constitutional reform in the Sudan should not be the victim of Egyptian opposition and gave the Governor General the authority to do what he thought fit to promote self-government.⁸⁰

With this respect the Governor General enacted in 1948 an ordinance to create an Executive Council and a Legislative Assembly. These institutions were meant to further the Sudanese experience in self government and were established without the

79. Quoted by Kirk, The Middle East in the War, pp. 260-261.

80. Kirk, The Middle East 1945-1950, pp. 140-141.

Egyptian consent. The Executive Council consisted of the leader of the Assembly, which the Assembly elected, Ministers, and under secretaries whom the Governor General appointed after consultation with the leader of the Assembly. The ordinance also provided that the Sudanese would form not less than half of the Council.⁸¹

These steps taken to promote self government in the Sudan created different reactions among the Sudanese, the Egyptians, and the British; the Sudanese National Unity group was of the opinion of establishing close association with Egypt first and then to get British evacuation. The Umma party of the Independence Front wanted to achieve independence first and then would determine their relations with Egypt. Egypt wanted to grant self government to the Sudanese within the limits of unity with Egypt and that matters of defence, currency, and foreign affairs would be exercised by one authority in both Egypt and the Sudan. She claimed that Egypt and the Sudan constituted one nation and raised the following charges against the British policy in the Sudan; it attempted to eliminate Egyptian influence, to separate the Sudan from Egypt and to suppress all pro-Egyptian activities.⁸² The British view was to train the Sudanese for self government and then the latter

81. Ibid., pp. 141-142.

82. Egypt: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Records of Conversations, Notes and Papers exchanged between the Royal Egyptian Government and the United Kingdom Government, March 1950, to November 1951 (hereafter referred to as Egyptian Green Book), pp. 113-114.

would decide their relations with Egypt and Great Britain.

The Sterling Balances of Egypt:

This section will handle one of the financial problems created by the Second World War and the agreements that provided the solution.

Up till 1936, the sterling link between Egypt and Great Britain was generally beneficial to the former and there were no particular problems except after the Second World War. In peace time Great Britain bought cotton with sterling from Egypt and Egypt used the sterling to buy manufactured goods from Britain. The war, however enormously increased British expenditure in Egypt and British civilian exports to Egypt decreased to a vanishing point. The balance of payments was thus completely upset; Egypt was unable to exchange the sterling she received for goods from Great Britain and thus sterling accumulated and resulted in the "sterling balances."⁸³

Thus at the end of the war Egypt was left rich in Sterling but poor in supplies. The result was an increase in the cost of living, high prices, and a general discontent which the Egyptians authorities attributed to the British Government who, failing to provide supplies, caused high prices. The Ministry of Finance in Egypt estimated sterling assets in the hands of banks, insurance companies, private institutions, and individuals to be £E 450 million. The

83. R.I.I.A., Great Britain and Egypt 1914-1951,
op.cit., p. 157.

exact figure of these balances as obtained from the London Head Office or Agents of banks operating in Egypt was £E 356 million by 12 July 1947.⁸⁴

Negotiations to settle the balances started in 1947, and in June of that year the British government intended to allow part of the balances "to be made freely convertible into any currency (No. 1 sterling) but to freeze the rest (No. 2 Sterling) so that it could not be drawn upon at all."⁸⁵ The Egyptian Government sent a delegation to London to negotiate on these bases and a financial agreement was signed on 18 June 1947 which permitted of converting the unfrozen sterling into any currency and it was no longer necessary for Egypt to belong to the Sterling Area.⁸⁶

Six weeks later the British Government was obliged to take a different stand; she was obliged to discontinue the free convertibility of No. 1 sterling and to limit its use to the sterling area (including the transferable sterling area).⁸⁷ Great Britain had lost heavily in gold and dollars to creditor countries and that had forced her to change her agreement with Egypt and other countries that were under the same conditions as Egypt. The British change in policy aroused criticism in

84. Ibid., pp. 139-160.

85. Ibid., p. 160.

86. Cmd., 7163 of 1947.

87. Ibid.,

the Egyptian press especially since Egypt had not yet converted a large amount of her sterling while this was still convertible.

At the expiring of the first agreement a new agreement was signed on 5 January 1948. This agreement maintained the provisions of the first with further modifications. In general both agreements functioned well and during the period of the first agreement (15 July-31 December 1947) the total sterling assets of Egypt were reduced by £E 6 million and in 1948 by £E 8 million. A change in the Egyptian control procedures allowed this change.

When Egypt left the sterling area in 1947 imports from Great Britain were subject to license and in 1948 when the sterling balances were increasing an open general license was imposed on all imports from the sterling area. At this stage a point of conflict arose between Egypt and Great Britain: the agreement provided freedom for Egypt to pay in sterling to countries that accepted transferable sterling in settling their current transactions. In conformity with this principle Egypt had bought grain from Canada and, through certain intermediaries, paid in sterling at a discount. The British government objected to this procedure and accused the Egyptian Government of having contravened the agreement. The Egyptians claimed that the agreement did not prevent such transactions. The British therefore wanted to tighten the terms of the agreement which they did by signing a third agreement on 31 March 1949. This agreement did not differ from the previous ones except that it

limited the transferable sterling to 'direct transactions.'⁸⁸

The sterling balances were reduced by an additional £26 million and the 1949 agreement was renewed for the year 1950 with little variations introduced. The Egyptians still wanted to continue negotiations to conclude a long term treaty. Egypt wanted such a settlement after experiencing the effect of the devaluation of sterling in September 1949 which resulted in a 40 per cent reduction of the value of the frozen sterling balances in terms of hard currency. The Egyptian government announced a devaluation of the Egyptian pound; this showed that even though Egypt was no longer in the sterling area she was still affected by it.⁸⁹

In November 1950 negotiations for a new agreement started and one was signed in two parts:

1. The Sterling Release Agreement⁹⁰.
2. The Sterling Payment Agreement.⁹¹

On 12 July 1947 the net sterling balances of Egypt were £ 356 million and by 31 December 1950 the amount had been reduced to £ 285 million at an average of £ 20 million a year since the first agreement in 30 June 1947. These were then distributed as follows:

£	45 million	No. 1 account.
	150 "	to be released gradually in ten or more years
	90 "	to be frozen for ten years.
	<u>285</u> "	Total

88. R.I.I.A. Great Britain and Egypt, 1914-1951, p.162.

89. Ibid., pp. 162-163.

90. Cmd. 8336.

91. Cmd. 8337.

The Wafd in Power, 1950-1952

Chapter V.

Following a discussion on the period of the Palestine War and the progress achieved in settling some of the Egyptian problems there will be a discussion on the period that extended from 1950-1952 during which the Wafd was in power. The problems to be settled were concerning the Sudan and the British evacuation of Egypt which became a question of regional defence. Negotiations for these purposes were conducted in Cairo and London.

Negotiations in Cairo:

With the Wafd returning to office as a result of the 1950 elections some British optimists hoped for greater realism in Anglo-Egyptian relations. The Wafd had already accepted a compromise in the 1936 Negotiations; when it had come to power in 1942 it had collaborated with the Allies during a critical war year in measures for the defence of Egypt. That was why British optimists expected the Wafd in 1950 to prove accommodating since it had already done so in 1936 and 1942. The Egyptian Foreign Minister in the 1950 Wafd Ministry was Mohamad Salah Ud-Din, an under secretary in the Wafdist Government of 1942-44. He has been described as an "obstinate and an inexperienced lawyer, with no great position in the country or in the party, and therefore, all the more anxious to win the plaudits of the populace."⁹²

92. "The Egyptian Imbroglia", Round Table, March 1952, p. 117; quoted in Convoressi; Survey of International Affairs 1951, (London 1954), p.262; the section on the Middle East was written by George Kirk.

On 27 January 1950 Mr. Ernest Bevin the British foreign Secretary for State visited Cairo on his way back from attending the Commonwealth Conference at Colombo. On that occasion Nahas, as Prime Minister of Egypt, refused Bevin's request to raise the Egyptian embargo on ships passing through the Suez Canal en route to Israel and to allow oil tankers to proceed to the British-owned refinery at Haifa.⁹³

The Wafd in office was tempted by the Russian propaganda inspired by the "Partisans of Peace". The government newspaper advocated a neutral policy and described the Western and Eastern blocs as tyrant colonizers. Mr. Fathi Ridwan, leader of the extreme nationalists in Egypt, advocated a non-aggression pact with the Russian government. These were the tendencies in Egypt when on 5 and 6 June 1950, the Chief of the British Imperial General Staff, Field Marshal Sir William Slim, visited Cairo to conduct negotiations. Sir William Slim had a series of talks with the Egyptian Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. He wanted to impress on the Egyptians that the presence of military troops in Egypt was not the same as military occupation. He recommended to the Egyptians cooperation in defence in peace time to face the danger of war.⁹⁴

Nahas, in answer to Sir William Slim, said that the presence of British soldiers in Egypt for the last seventy years

93. Survey of International Affairs for 1951, Ibid.,

94. Egyptian Green Book, p. 4.

could not be interpreted except as an occupation invoking serious encroachment on Egyptian sovereignty. The Egyptians stressed that it might be an object of aggression not on its own account but because of being a base for British troops. The Egyptians moreover, were ready to accept British aid in developing their defence power to enable them to repel aggression without the necessity for the presence of British troops in peace time.⁹⁵

Although these conversations represented a candid exchange of views no agreement was possible. The Korean War revealed misunderstandings and complications which disturbed the confidence between Egypt and the West in General. The Egyptian delegate at the United Nations abstained from taking part in the vote that condemned the North Korean aggression. His country's argument on the subject was that other cases of aggression had been committed against the territorial integrity of states members of the United Nations. The Egyptian delegate had in mind the Egyptian appeal to the Security Council in the summer of 1947 and the Palestine Question. Although they had been submitted to the United Nations, no action was taken concerning them comparable to that done in the Korean case.⁹⁶

On 8 July 1950 Sir Ralph Stevenson, the British Ambassador in Egypt, began negotiations with the Egyptian Foreign Ministers. The Egyptian requirements from the British were still

95. Ibid., pp. 10-16.

96. Security Council, Fifth Year, 30 June 1950, No.17,p.2.

the same: they required the British to evacuate completely and immediately, to supply the Egyptians with the requisite equipment, and to recognize in practice the unity of Egypt and the Sudan. Salah-ud-Din asserted that adequate equipment and training of the Egyptians by the British technical specialists for one year would enable them to maintain the Suez Canal base properly. He continued that the British land forces in Jordan or Gaza, and air forces in Cyprus, Malta, Cyrenaica, and Jordan would be able to reach Egypt in a few hours if she were attacked by an enemy. The Egyptian Minister for Foreign affairs wanted to keep the British forces outside Egypt in peace time, and in event of war they would be permitted reentry.⁹⁷ Although the Egyptians thought that their demands sounded realistic, the British calculated that once they had evacuated the Suez Canal base it would be too late before they would reenter to repel aggression effectively.

Further conversations between the British and the Egyptians took place and on 24 August 1950 Salah-ud-Din warned the British Ambassador that if they failed to reach a settlement by negotiations the Egyptians would lose hope in the effectiveness of this means of arriving at a solution; the problem of mutual confidence would be further complicated and this would bring them to an impasse. Such a situation would be to the disadvantage of the British and the Egyptians

97. Egyptian Green Book, p. 43.

and the Communists would probably make use of the case for their own advantage.⁹⁸

Leaving the problem of defence unsettled Salah Ud-Din asked the British to evacuate the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. His aim was to persuade the British to leave the Egyptians and the Sudanese to settle their own problem without interference. He accused the British of having inspired the Sudanese demand for independence after the Egyptians had already begun to assert their claims in the Nile Valley. He argued that the British had occupied the Sudan in 1898 as a trust for the Egyptians; since the British had acted for the Egyptians in the Sudan and now Egyptian independence had been recognized, it was logical that the British should evacuate the Sudan too. Besides this argument the Egyptians claimed geographic, historic, and racial relations with the Sudanese to realize the unity of Egypt with the Sudan.⁹⁹

No agreement was possible concerning the Sudan and on 12 September 1950 the British Ambassador made it known to the Egyptian government that, owing to the Korean War, there was a heavy demand for British armaments, and this supply to Egypt must cease for a time to give priority to the North Atlantic Powers and the British Commonwealth. It was said that Egyptian diplomatic sources interpreted this fact as a "plot against Anglo-Egyptian good relations and the negotiations in progress for a treaty." It was also reported that

98. Ibid., p. 65.

99. Ibid., p. 73.

the Egyptian Foreign Minister appealed to the American Secretary of State to restore arms supply to Egypt under the Mutual Defence Assistance Program. When the Egyptian Foreign Minister was at Lake Success he expressed Egypt's readiness to contribute an army of one to two million men to an international force if the United Nations would equip them. Following that the British government allowed the Egyptians sixteen Centurion tanks 80 per cent of the cost of which had already been paid.¹⁰⁰

After this incident the speech from the throne at the assembled Egyptian Parliament on 16 November 1950 declared that the 1936 Treaty had lost ~~its~~ validity and should be abrogated. An editorial article in the New York Times commented on this incident saying that outsiders would find it difficult to believe that this was ^{not} a political tactic to divert popular Egyptian feeling from domestic abuses.¹⁰¹ Meanwhile the British Labour Government, having only precarious majority in the House of Commons had come under pressure from the Opposition and of 20 Zionists among its own supporters. As a result, the shipping of the Centurion tanks to Egypt was delayed until after the negotiations which were expected to be conducted during the visit of the Egyptian Foreign Minister to London.

Mohamad Salah-ud-Din's Negotiations with Bevin In
London:

On 28 November 1950 the Egyptian Foreign Minister

100. Survey of International Affairs 1951, pp.268-269.

101. New York Times, 17 November 1950; quoted in Ibid.

arrived in London; meanwhile 2000 students were demonstrating in Cairo against the British attitude to the Egyptian national aspirations. It was reported that the Russians had offered the Egyptian Government assurances of aid if she would adopt neutralism as her foreign policy.¹⁰² Salah Ud-Din met Bevin four times in London during which his arguments repeated what he and Nahas had already stated to the chief of the Imperial General Staff and the British Ambassador during the summer of that year. No agreement was reached concerning the transfer of responsibility from the British to the Egyptian Government for the maintenance of the Canal Zone. Mr. Bevin, moreover, sought from Mr. Salah Ud-Din assurances that the Egyptian Government had no intentions of denouncing the 1936 Treaty but Salah Ud-Din could not give the assurances.¹⁰³

Following this disagreement the Sudan question was discussed. In answer to the Egyptian Foreign Minister's stress on the importance of the unity of Egypt and the Sudan Bevin replied that it would be tragic to change the economic and political administration in the Sudan. He also expressed the intention to safeguard Egyptian interest in the Nile Waters, to help the Sudanese realise self-determination in the future,

102. "Dialogue Avec Le Peuple, "Moyen Orient, January 1951, p. 7; quoted by Ibid., p.270.

103. Egyptian Green Book, p. 88

and asked the Egyptian Government to encourage its supporters in the Sudan to join in the next elections for the Legislative Assembly instead of boycotting them as they had done in previous elections to the Legislative Assembly.

The preceding pages have described in general terms the attitude of the Egyptians and the British to their unsettled question of defence and evacuation. Following that the British government informed the Egyptian Government of its intention to have experts study the defence question, and after their conclusions had been considered, the Egyptian Government would be informed of the British decision by the Middle of January 1951. This promise was delayed till April of that year because of Bevin's resignation due to ill health and the time it had taken his successor, Mr. Herbert Morrison, to call the British Ambassador to London for consultation. During this period of delay financial agreements were concluded between Egypt and Great Britain.¹⁰⁴ On the British side the conservative opposition attacked the Labour government policy. The Labour Government, with a precarious majority, was in a weak position to proceed with negotiations. It was attacked on the ground that it proposed to facilitate supplying oil products to Egypt against payment in sterling, while Egypt in return restricted "the sterling area oil program" by keeping the embargo on tankers passing through the Suez Canal to the Haifa refinery. Pro-Israel

104. Ibid., pp. 106-107.

sympathisers on the Labour back benches supported the argument of the opposition and wanted to reshape the Middle East policy under the new Foreign Minister.¹⁰⁵

On 11 April 1951 British proposals were communicated to the Egyptian Government. The proposals did not lead to any progress in the course of Anglo-Egyptian relations and seemed to imply that the British Government was still intent on maintaining a hold in Egypt since they proposed among other things that in any revision of the Treaty of 1936, Article 16 of the Treaty should remain and this meant an indefinite perpetuation of Anglo-Egyptian Alliance. The British government considered its proposals to be generous concessions especially since one should think of British commitments to her Allies in the North Atlantic and the Middle East which could not permit any further concession. She declared that the Sudan question would be given special consideration after settling the defence question.¹⁰⁶

The Egyptian Government rejected the proposals wholly and in detail and repeated its requests with very little modification. These requests the British government considered impractical and impossible. Unable to reach an agreement Salah Ud-Din hinted that in case of an unsatisfactory British

105. Survey of International Affairs 1951, pp.277-278.

106. Egyptian Green Book, pp. 108-109.

answer the government would denounce the 1936 Treaty.¹⁰⁷ The Egyptian Foreign Minister, moreover, declared that he was obliged to conclude the talks before the end of the Parliamentary session at the beginning of October 1951. In a further meeting with the British Ambassador he protested against the deliberations which the Sudan government had now begun for setting up a commission to amend the constitution of the Sudanese Executive Council and the Legislative Assembly without informing Egypt.¹⁰⁸

On 30 July 1951 a debate in the British Parliament took place on this question of the Middle East: the British Foreign Secretary stated that his country had faced an unrealistic Egyptian attitude during the negotiations. He referred to the British international responsibilities which should not be disturbed by the Egyptian refusal to participate with the British to make the World Safe.¹⁰⁹

This discussion led the Egyptian government to declare its intention of abrogating the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty before the next speech from the Throne in November.

During the time that the British government was trying to allay the adverse effect of the parliamentary debate upon Egyptian opinion, the Security Council was considering Israel's request to order the immediate ending of Egypt's embargo on

107. *Ibid.*, pp. 122-125.

108. *Ibid.*, p. 125-126.

109. H. C. Deb. 5th ser., vol. 491, Col. 972-976.

shipping passing through the Suez Canal to Israel. The American Ambassador in Cairo, Mr. Caffery tried to persuade the Egyptian Government to modify its attitude towards the embargo problem but his attempt was not successful. Despite the effort of the Russian delegate to prevent the adoption of a resolution of the Security Council concerning Egyptian embargo on shipping bound to Israel; it was adopted in September 1951.¹¹⁰

The Resumption of Negotiations and the Abrogation of the Treaty

In a conversation with Salah Ud-Din on 4 December 1950 Bevin had already asked the Egyptian Foreign Minister whether he had thought of the possibility of "an integrated force under a supreme commander for the defence of Egypt." Salah ud-Din had replied that he would consider such a proposal if it were suggested. This reflected the British idea of widening the Anglo-Egyptian defence question into a comprehensive Middle East Defence Organization. In partial fulfillment of this plan the British Foreign Secretary suggested in a message on 17 August 1951 that the defence of the Canal Zone should come under the care of other Western states concerned in the defence of the Middle East.¹¹¹ The states he meant were U.S.A., France, and Turkey.

110. Survey of International Affairs 1951, pp.277-278.

111. Egyptian Green Book, pp. 79-80.

One difficulty in the way of the British plan of a Middle East Defence Organization was that the Turkish Government had declared that as a prerequisite for an international defence for the Eastern Mediterranean she and Greece should be admitted to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The admission of Greece and Turkey to the Organization was delayed from October 1950 to 20 September 1951 and this delay had hindered the British plan during the period involved. On 18 September 1951 it was reported but officially denied in Egypt that the Russian Government had warned the Egyptian government that in case Egypt should participate in a Middle East Defence Organization the former would consider it as an unfriendly act towards her.¹¹²

While Great Britain was thinking of the possibility of cooperation between the East and the West to solve the problem of defence, the member states of the Arab League on the insistence of Egypt, had already started discussions for this purpose on a small scale. On 13 April 1950 the majority of the Council of the Arab League had adopted a text of a treaty called an Inter Arab Joint Defence Alliance and an Economic Pact. This was intended to operate according to a collective security plan; an aggression against any one of the signatory states would be considered an aggression against all. It aimed at uniting their defence focus to resist any

112. The Manchester Guardian, 20 September 1951; Bourse Egyptienne 21 September 1951; quoted in Survey of International Affairs 1951, p.279.

attack or threat of attack on the territorial integrity, independence or security of the member states. Four ratifications were needed to bring this treaty into force and by the end of 1951 it was ratified by three states only namely: Egypt, Sa'udi Arabia and Syria, and was later signed by Iraq.

The Anglo-Egyptian discussions were resumed when in September 1951 Mr. Morrison declared that he had not yet set the date for presenting the common defence proposals to Egypt since his country wanted to consult the other countries concerned. In answer, Nahas repeated the request of Mohammad Salah Ud-Din which was as already stated, to conclude the talks before the beginning of October since the Egyptian Government had to present its policy before that date.¹¹³

The political situation in Great Britain at that time did not inspire confidence. The Labour Government was increasingly losing its majority support and was facing another post-war financial crisis. In October 1951 the British government announced the withdrawal of the remaining staff of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company from Abadan refinery. This had marked another challenge to British authority, and indicated the weak position of the British government for conducting negotiations. The Abadan question suggested an

113. Ibid., pp. 279-281.

example to the Egyptian struggle against the British.

The Wafd's hold on office, on the other hand was being affected by internal difficulties "which disposed it to be intransigent" in its foreign relations to divert public attention from Egyptian internal problems. It was alleged that when the Wafd had returned to power in 1950 a pact had been concluded between the Government and the Palace "on the basis of mutual support in jobbery and corruption." When persons in the Palace entourage were accused of responsibility for the corruption and inefficiency which had been apparent in the supply services during the Palestine War in 1948, the Wafd government had obstructed the holding of an inquiry, and the attorney general, who had been zealous in wishing to conduct one, had been removed from office.¹¹⁴

Prominent Wafd members and their relatives had taken material advantage of a cotton boom which had arisen as a result of the Korean War, and shaped it skillfully for their own benefit. Zaki 'Abdul Mut'al, the Minister of Finance and a conscientious man of principle had already resigned from office in November 1950 on account of his disagreement over cotton policy. While the Egyptian cotton manipulators had gained high prices for themselves when world prices had begun to fall they pegged prices for too long and this caused a

114. Ibid., pp. 280-281..

disastrous decline in Egyptian cotton exports. The rising cost of living in Egypt widened the spread of popular discontent. The Wafdist leader had received a further shock when the opposition had asked for the passage of a law to question the origin of recently acquired fortunes. King Faruq was showing signs of being about to use the excessive concern for their own enrichment displayed by persons close to the Prime Minister as an excuse for invoking his constitutional powers against the government. Seeing this danger, Nahas tried to appeal to patriotic sentiments, and his cabinet was already preparing draft legislation to abrogate the 1936 Treaty, disregarding Morrison's expressed hope that his new proposals would arrive Cairo before 10 October 1951.¹¹⁵

The Wafd Government submitted to the King the bill declaring the abrogation of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty and the Sudan Condominium Agreements and on 15 October the bills were enacted. Two days earlier a British document embodying their proposals for a Middle East Defence Organization and for an international Commission to watch the constitutional development of the Sudan had been delivered to Egypt.¹¹⁶

Fighting in the Canal Zone:

Egyptian students, claiming to celebrate the abrogation of the Treaty, attacked the NAAFI stores and flats

115. Ibid., p.281; and the Egyptian Green Book, p.166.

116. Survey of International Affairs 1951, p.282.

occupied by British families in Ismailiya. Likewise the British camp at Port Said was attacked by a large mob. The General Officer commanding British Troops in Egypt, Lieutenant General Sir Erskine took the necessary measures to control traffic leaving and entering the Canal Zone by road or rail. Attacks and counter attacks took place between the Egyptian civilians and the British and the latter took control of the al Firdan railway across the Canal. The Egyptian army which was largely concerned with manning the frontier with Israel was threatened by the British traffic control and did not participate in the war of nerves at any time in the next four months.¹¹⁷

Despite the British efforts to encourage the workers serving the British in the Canal Zone to stay, the proportion of the workers was seriously decreasing, largely as a result of pressure by the Egyptian police. Although it was alleged that Great Britain violated the international convention on forced labour the International Labour Office report on an Inquiry by the Representative of the Director-General into conditions in the Suez Canal Area concluded that the Egyptian Government charges that the British had had recourse to forced labour had not been substantiated. The Egyptian Foreign Ministry, moreover, complained to the World Health Organization against the British restrictions on movement in the Canal Zone which interfered with Egyptian health services. The

117. Ibid., pp. 282-283.

British Ministry of Defence denied the alleged interference and the charge was not pressed.¹¹⁸ The Egyptians maintained a hostile policy with the British, ordered to do so by the Egyptian Minister of Interior, Sirag ud-Din who instigated the whole thing. The tension between the British and the Egyptians became so acute that the Egyptian Government recalled its Ambassador to London, Abdul Fatah 'Amr, who had tried on several occasions to reconcile the Egyptian and British attitudes.¹¹⁹

British subjects in the Egyptian service were dismissed and the law was amended to allow greater liberty in arms carrying, thus causing further disorder. A National Liberation Army' had been organized, in part from local criminal elements who had gained their livelihood by raiding British stores. It also included communists, extremists and some university students. As a result of sabotage and greater liberty in arms carrying, General Erskine issued on 20 December 1951 a declaration that any Egyptian civilian found carrying arms or explosives within the Canal Zone Area would be considered as hostile and detained by the British.¹²⁰

On 21 December, General Erskine ordered a dusk-to-dawn curfew in parts of Ismailiya because a British officer had been

118. Quoted in the Survey of International Affairs 1951, p. 284.

119. Ibid., pp. 284-285.

120. Ibid., p. 285.

killed. When the British officers were advocating the use of force to restore order, the Iraqi Prime Minister, general Nuri as-Said offered to mediate between Egypt and the West to reconcile the Egyptian desire for independence and the Western desire for adequate defence of the Middle East. Meanwhile the disorder continued with the instigation of the National Liberation Army. On 4 January 1952 British tanks used their 20 powder guns against houses in Suez from which shots were fired. Between 12 and 15 January the National Liberation Army carried out large scale action and on 21 January the British troops were ordered to search a cemetery at Ismailiya in which they found hidden ammunition and explosives stored for the use of the National Liberation Army.¹²¹ Two days later the Egyptian government warned the British Ambassador that forcible resistance might be offered if the searching did not cease.¹²² Following that General Erskine demanded the disarmament of the Egyptian auxiliary police at Ismailiya who were about 1000 in number, and who, the British complained, had fired on British troops while searching the cemetery. On 24 January British troops moved into Ismailiya and the following day an ultimatum was handed to the sub-governor of the town requesting that the auxiliary police should surrender their arms. In the meantime the Minister of Interior, Fuad Sirag

121. Ibid., p. 285-287.

122. The Times, 23 and 24 January 1952, quoted by Ibid., p. 288.

Ud-Din had ordered the auxiliary police to resist the British orders. After inconclusive parleys between the British brigadier in charge of the operation and the Senior Egyptian Police Officer, the Egyptians fired on the British troops and the latter answered by heavy fire. That day, the outcome in deaths in Ismailiya was 41 Egyptians and 3 British soldiers.¹²³

The Cairo press commented with fury upon the Ismailiya events; what complicated matters further was that Fuad Sirag Ud-Din in a press interview on 23 January had spoken of alleged brutal British treatment of the Egyptians. Moreover, he issued the news of the battle on 25 January with details of the casualties. As was to be expected the reaction in Egypt to the situation in the Canal Zone was mutiny, disorder, and violent demonstrations. On Saturday, 26 January, some 500 auxiliary police mutinied and were joined by the Egyptian mob which demonstrated in Cairo demanding reprisals for the fate of their fellow countrymen in Ismailiya. The Demonstrations of that day became uncontrollable and the Minister of the Interior went to his office about 11 a.m. where the Director of Public Security informed him that the police were not obeying orders to control the crowds. By 12:30 the demonstrating crowds moved to the European and Tourist quarters where fire was set to a cabaret, without any intervention by

123. Ibid., p. 288.

the police on duty at the spot. Other public places were also set on fire and these actions appear to have decided the Minister of the Interior to ask the Commander in Chief to order out the Army. In the meantime the senior police officers were attending a banquet at the Abdin Palace. The Commander in Chief (General Muhammad Haidar) was aware of the subversive movement among the officers and had feared that if the army were called out, it might turn on the Palace instead of on the mob. Thus there was long delay before the troops had been called out ~~to~~ and by that time hundreds of incendiary incidents and heavy material losses had taken place.¹²⁴

Following this so-called 'Black Saturday' the King appointed Nahas as the Military Governor of Egypt and martial law was declared. Nahas did not last long in office for the new appointments since December 1951 of the moderate and non-partisan Hafiz 'Afifi as Chief of the Royal Cabinet and Abdul Fatah Amr as his Advisor on Foreign Affairs marked a signal of divergence between the King and the Wafd; on 27 January 1952 the King used his constitutional powers to dismiss him. It was ironical that Ali Maher, a man whom the British had excluded from office in 1942 in favor of the Wafd, should now be brought in to clear up the confusion resulting from a conflict between the Wafd and the British.¹²⁵

124. Ibid., p. 289.

125. Ibid., pp. 290-292.

Conclusion:

The period that extended from 1950-1952 presented the Anglo-Egyptian problem in a serious stage that foreshadowed the events of the following summer. The problem of the defence of Egypt had ceased to be a matter for Egypt and Britain alone, and had been projected on to the international plane. While the British had sought to impress on the Arabs in general and the Egyptians in particular, the existence of an international crisis created by Russian expansionism, the Russians had encouraged Egyptian neutralism and supported the Egyptian claim for realizing the Egyptian national aspirations.

The domestic policy of Egypt was passing through an acutely serious stage. The Egyptians were mainly concerned with their national aspirations and this allowed the corrupt elements in the state to escape public criticism. Whenever critics raised objections against the people in office, the latter used national sentiment to divert public attention from being directed upon domestic problems. The Palace, which had apparently connived at the Wafd's conduct of affairs, had intervened only when the country had been brought to the brink of anarchy; but the Palace's own tenure of power was to last only a brief period before it too was swept aside.

The Revolution in Egypt And The Anglo-
Egyptian Negotiations

Chapter VI

The purpose of this chapter is to study Neguib Al-Hilali's negotiations with the British Government and the attitude to Great Britain and the Sudan of the military group that had seized power recently. This will be followed by a discussion on the Sudan Agreement of 1953 and will end with the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations on evacuation and defence in July 1954.

Hilali's Negotiations With The British Government:

The unilateral Egyptian abrogation of the 1936 Treaty and the repudiation of the Sudan agreements were cheered by the world Communist press. As has already been noted in the previous chapter, Nahas was dismissed from the office of Prime Minister, was replaced by 'Ali Maher, and Martial law was declared. The government changes ended the guerilla in Suez and British military control on civilians was removed. As the tension between the Egyptians and the British seemed to have decreased, the Egyptian Ambassador recalled from London, as previously stated, returned to his post. With his return he started conversations with the British Foreign Secretary and meanwhile the British Ambassador in Cairo had parallel

conversations with the Egyptian Prime Minister.¹²⁶

In the meantime there was a struggle within Egypt between King Faruq and his palace entourage on one hand, and the Prime Minister and other Ministers on the other hand. The former group wanted to imitate an inquiry into the 'Black Saturday' to curb the Wafd Party influence while the latter wanted to overlook it so as not to hurt the Wafd at a time when an agreement with Great Britain seemed to them possible. At a later stage the King's determination to prorogue Parliament, where the Wafd had a majority since the 1950 elections, led to the resignation of 'Ali Maher on 1 March 1952. There-upon the King invited to office Neguib Al-Hilali who was "known for his probity and his strong condemnation of all corrupt methods and practices." The Palace, hoped that this appointment would bring to its side the discontented elements in the Wafd, since Al-Hilali had recently resigned from the Wafd.¹²⁷

Following the appointment of the new Prime Minister, Parliament was suspended for 30 days and was later dissolved without settling the date for future elections. Hilali's cabinet began a campaign against inefficiency and corruption. The national program of Hilali's cabinet repeated what previous prime ministers had already said but some Egyptians expected that his Foreign Minister Abdul Khalek Hassouna "might prove more flexible in dealing with the British than had Maher."¹²⁸

126. Calvocoressi, Survey of International Affairs, 1952 (London, 1954) pp.203-204. (Section on Egypt is by George Kirk, to whom it will be attributed hereafter).

127. El-Barawy, The Military Coup in Egypt, (Cairo 1952) pp. 180-181.

128.

In the scope of foreign relations there were some conversations between the British Ambassador, Sir Ralph Stevenson, and Hilali, but the situation was not yet favorable for an agreement since Hilali's tenure of office had lasted for four months only. In the meantime the British released the Egyptian Auxiliary police detained after the Ismailiya incident and evacuated that part of the town which had been placed under British military occupation. In contrast to previous Egyptian statesmen Hilali was ready to admit, in principle, joint Anglo-Egyptian defence measures to face an international emergency that might threaten the security of Egypt, an Anglo-Egyptian cooperation in Air defence, and the employment of British technicians in the Canal Zone.¹²⁹

In the Sudan the Governor General, Sir Robert Howe, was in practise master of himself. In the winter of 1951-52, the Sudan government had entrusted to a constitutional commission the preparation of a draft statute based on self government; but the commission was dissolved as a result of the Wafd's repudiation of the 1899 Sudan Convention that had established the condominium. The Sudan government presented the Sudanese Legislative Assembly on 2 April 1952 with a draft

128. Hanna, Paul, "Anglo-Egyptian Negotiations 1950-1952" Middle Eastern Affairs, Vol. III, No.8-9 August-September 1952, p. 230.

129. The Times, March 1952, quoted by Kirk op.cit., p. 205.

which provided for the 'immediate election of legislature and the formation of an all-Sudanese Government'¹³⁰ but reserved for the Governor General his discretionary powers with respect to foreign policy, defence, finance, public services, and the well being of the Non-Muslim Southern tribes, during a transitional period at the end of which the Sudanese would determine their future relations with Egypt and Great Britain.

These procedures in the Sudan were not welcomed in Egypt; when the Sudan was thinking in terms of progress towards self-government and determination the Egyptians were thinking in terms of unity of the Nile Valley. Following the abrogation of the Sudan Convention, the King had assumed the title of King of Egypt and the Sudan. The Wafd government had expected the British Foreign office upon consultation with Sir Fobert Howe, ~~was prepared~~, towards the middle of May 1952, to accept that King Faruq should have the nominal title of "King of Egypt and the Sudan" on condition that the proposal first be made the object of immediate consultation with the Sudanese.¹³¹

Previous Egyptian statesmen had not considered the Umma Party - that is the Independence Front - in thinking of the Sudan question. The Egyptians counted on the approval of the National Unity Block without giving due importance to the independence inclinations in the Sudan. Hilali had a novel approach to the Sudan question and he handled it with vision and understanding; he knew that to end the British Administration

130. Kirk, op. cit., p. 206.

131. Cmd. 8767; and Kirk, Ibid.

over the Sudan an understanding into the Independence Front was first necessary. He thus invited Saiyid Abdur-Rahman Al Mahdi to send a delegation to Cairo for conversation.¹³²

A Sudanese delegation visited Egypt and on negotiating with the Egyptians, Saiyid Abdur-Rahman concerning the question of sovereignty over the Sudan, proposed the formation of a commission of Egyptian, Sudanese, and British members to supervise the elections and the Sudan's progress towards self determination. The trained Sudanese administrators in the delegation declared that the discretionary powers reserved for the Governor General by the Draft Statute of 2 April 1952 should be transferred to the proposed all-Sudanese cabinet.¹³³

Hilali not only improved the relations between Egypt and the Sudan but he had also silenced the Wafd and already obtained the Royal consent on 12 April to postpone the general elections which should have followed two months after the dissolution of Parliament. However he could not retain his office for long, for on 28 June 1952 the King dismissed him in sequence of a disagreement on financial policy that was to the personal benefit of the Palace entourage on the one hand and the Prime Minister and his Finance Minister who opposed inordinate financial speculation on the other hand. Hilali was replaced by Hussein Sirri the independent elder statesman under whom the January 1950 elections were held.¹³⁴

132. Kirk, Ibid., pp. 206-207.

133. Kirk, Ibid., p. 207.

134. Hanna, op. cit., p. 231; and Kirk, op. cit., p. 208.

Since 1947 there had been preparations by a group of army officers to make an end of the widespread corruption of which the King was the center. The defeat in Palestine¹³⁵ had shocked the officers of the fighting forces and the story of defective arms, delays in the supply of arms, and the Wafd's refusal to carry out an inquiry of defective supply services, confirmed the officers' conviction of the necessity of a purge to save the country. On 31 December 1951, as a result of the vote of dissatisfied army officers, General Mohamad Naguib was elected Chairman of the executive board of the Army officers' Club despite the efforts of the King to secure the election of one of his favourites.¹³⁶

Meanwhile, the King's growing interference in the conduct of government on behalf of his corrupt associates, and his apparent preparations to crush the free officers, prompted the latter to speed up their counter preparation and thus on 22-23 July 1953 they occupied Cairo. On the following day Hilali resigned¹³⁷ after consulting the free officers, who requested the King to appoint 'Ali Maher as Prime Minister. At the same time the free officers requested the British authorities not to interfere and on 26 July they forced the King to abdicate in favor of his infant son, Ahmad Fuad II. On 7 September 'Ali Maher resigned and General Neguib formed

135. See: M. Khadduri, "The Role of the Military in Middle East Politics," American Political Science Review, Vol. XIVII, No. 2, June 1953, p. 519.

136. Barawy, op.cit., pp. 194-195; and Neguib, op.cit., p. 11-13.

137. Sirri had advised the King to satisfy the Officers'

a civilian cabinet.¹³⁸

The Attitude of the Military Group to Britain
and the Sudan, and the Sudan Agreement
of 1953

The governmental changes in Egypt restrained gradually the corruption and inefficiency which had been centered around the Palace and the Wafd. The Revolutionary Council considered ending the problem with Great Britain as very essential and since 23 July has been consistent in its demand for a settlement of the national question. In Great Britain the conservative Party replaced in October 1951 the Labour Party and some ultra conservative sections resisted agreement with Egypt and this resistance increased at the appearance of the instability in the Egyptian Government. In contrast with this, the Imperial General Staff and the British Foreign Office recommended to the British Government to reach an agreement with Egypt.¹³⁹

General Neguib had established good relations with the American Ambassador, Mr. Jefferson Caffery, and some American commentators considered the Egyptian revolution a unique opportunity for removing the obstacles which prevented the cooperation of the Middle East with the West in a defence scheme to face the Communist expansion. American authorities and British advocates of dynamic social change urged the British

137. requests. Upon the King's refusal, Sirri had resigned and had been replaced by Neguib Al-Hilali who had been the Prime Minister when the coup took place.

138. Barawy, *op.cit.*, 218-221; and Neguib, *op.cit.*, pp.106-141.

139. "Britain, Egypt, and the Canal Zone Since July 1952,

Conservative Government to win the good will of the Egyptian revolution by generous concessions.¹⁴⁰ It was reported that those who criticized the tendency of the British government to 'wait and see' how the new regime would turn out were probably not aware of the uncompromising attitude towards the Middle East defence and the Canal Zone which the Free officers had made clear in secret in distributed circulars before they had seized power. The Free officers "had denounced conspiracies by Anglo-American imperialism" with the same vigour as the Wafflists or the Communists. Some ten days before they made their coup, they had announced that they would never agree to conduct further negotiations, conclude alliance or defence pacts with "imperialistic blocks" but demanded "liberty, full independence, complete neutrality and armed struggle for the liberation of the Father land."¹⁴¹

After the coup in Egypt, Neguib asked the British Government to resume the supply of such armaments as jet aircraft and Centurion tanks including a consignment of the latter for which Egypt had already paid part of the price but which had not been delivered since the Labour Government had come under the pressure of the House of Commons in September 1950.¹⁴² The new British Government offered training aircraft and it declared that its supplying of heavy armaments

139. "World Today, Vol. 10, May 1954, p. 186.

140. Kirk, op. cit., p. 220.

141. Barawi, op. cit., pp. 199, 204.

142. See: Survey of International Affairs 1951, pp.268-269.

was conditional on Egypt's assurances concerning the Middle East defence pact. Great Britain, moreover, raised the question of compensation for the victims of "Black Saturday" and for the hundred British subjects who had been dismissed by the Wafd without compensation at the end of 1951.¹⁴³

The British Foreign Secretary, Mr. Eden, stated in the British House of Commons on 6 November 1952 that General Neguib had given the British Ambassador to Cairo written assurances that the Egyptian Government would give financial aid to those who had suffered injury in the Cairo riots of 26 January and to the relatives of those who had lost their lives. At a later stage suspicion arose in Egyptian circles when the British Secretary of State for War, Mr. Anthony Head, who had visited Fayed to inspect British Forces in the Suez Canal, declared the importance of the Canal Zone in the defence of the Middle East and said: "If Britain were without it, it would be a loss but not an irretrievable one ----- I do not say it would be impossible to have a base somewhere else, but Egypt is the logical place to have it." General Neguib attacked this statement and in a speech on 28 September 1952 he was reported to have said: "We shall have to show him that we can make the United Kingdom evacuate its forces willy-nilly from the Canal Zone." In London, moreover, Mr. Head was also attacked and his

143. International Survey for 1952, p. 221.

statement denounced for contemplating the surrender of the base.¹⁴⁴ On 9 October 1952, in conformity with the request of General Neguib, British troops were withdrawn from El-Ferdan railway bridge over the Suez Canal and Egyptian army units replaced them.

The external trade of Egypt had been seriously unbalanced as a result of the decreased amount of cotton exports. The high prices of cotton demanded by the Alexandria merchants for 1950-1951, that had been the result of greater demand for cotton, and the high export duties to insure for the Exchequer a good part of the profits, had been maintained when the demand for cotton had declined and world prices decreased. This crisis had been aggravated because since 1951 the Wafdist guerilla had prevented the shipment of cotton to Great Britian. The effect of these events was to depress the Alexandria cotton market, and by the end of the 1951-1952 season, about 42 per cent of the crop in Egypt remained unsold and the prospect for the 1952-1953 season was an increase in yield of 18 per cent over the previous season.¹⁴⁵

Foreign buyers held back even though General Neguib had reduced the cotton prices to New York prices plus a surcharge for the supposedly superior quality of the Egyptian product. The over-all result was that the British purchases of

144. Survey for International Affairs 1952, p.222.

145. Kirk, op.cit., p. 218. (Survey for International Affairs 1952)

Egyptian cotton dropped from £ 35 million in 1951 to £ 5.7 million in the first ten months of 1952. Uncontrolled cotton speculation had cost Egypt £ 30 million and obliged her to request London for permission to anticipate the payment of £ 5 million of the "Sterling balances" due to be released in the following year.¹⁴⁶ At such a time of financial depression the Egyptian press and authorities accused Great Britain of intransigent imperialism intended to humiliate Egypt by imposing an economic blockade, and *Le Figaro* reported General Neguib as having said that Great Britain was seeking to ruin Egypt.¹⁴⁷

The Sudan Government proposals of 2 April 1952, referred to earlier in this chapter had been presented to the Condominium Governments for study during a limit of six months period ending on 8 November 1952. General Neguib met the British Ambassador in early October 1952 to discuss the Sudan question and their meeting ended by a joint declaration to start negotiations. Egypt then invited the Sudanese leaders for negotiations on the basis that the Sudanese should understand that Egypt had interests in the Sudan as much the Sudanese had in Egypt. Later the Egyptian Government declared that the Egyptian revolution of 1952 was based on freedom and liberty and it was not possible to see the Free Officers

146. *Ibid.*, pp. 218-219.

147. General Neguib, interviewed by James de Coquet, *Le Figaro*, 2 January 1953; quoted by Kirk, *op.cit.* p. 219.

deprive a nation of its liberty.¹⁴⁸ General Neguib continued Hilali's policy in the Sudan and was willing to leave the question of future Egyptian-Sudanese relations for negotiations and concentrated on realizing British evacuation of the Sudan. General Neguib, being half Sudanese spoke of the independence of the Nile Valley and not of its complete unity.¹⁴⁹

On 22 October 1952 Mr. Eden stated in the House of Commons that he had authorized the Governor General of the Sudan to enforce the draft statute for self government on which Great Britain and Egypt had already approved separately. On considering Sudanese views Eden advised the Governor General to increase the number of seats in the Legislative Assembly filled by direct election.¹⁵⁰ General Neguib had offered the Sudanese National Front generous terms. The government of the Sudan proposed entrusting power to a cabinet, all the ministers of which would be Sudanese responsible to a legislature whose members were also Sudanese. This plan was to retain for the Governor General discretionary powers in matters of defence, finance, public services and the question of interests of the non-Muslim South. While Egypt wanted to abolish the post of the Governor General and replace him by a commission of two Sudanese, one Egyptian, one British and one Indian or Pakistani members, the Independence Sudan Front

148. "Egyptian and Sudanese Tendencies," Akher Sa'ah, No. 937, 8 October 1952, p. 6.

149. Survey of International Affairs 1952, p. 223.

150. H.C.Deb. 5th Ser.Vol. 505, Col. 1014-15.

favoured retaining the Governor General during the transition period, but wanted to reduce his powers. Egypt later on stated that the Governor General should be helped by a commission and subject his discretionary powers to the approval of the Commission.¹⁵¹

The Egyptians and the Sudanese further agreed to set up a Sudanization Committee of one Egyptian, one British, and three Sudanese members to transfer the administration, police and defence force to the Sudanese within a three year period. The British and the Egyptian forces would evacuate the Sudan one year earlier and the Constitutional Assembly would then draw up a constitution for the Sudan and would determine the future independence or the union of the Sudan with Egypt. Such an agreement was reached by the Egyptian Government and the Northern Sudan delegation on 29 October 1952 and on 2 November the text was sent to the British Ambassador.¹⁵²

The British Government approved of the proposed text concerning the Sudan, and thus an agreement, approved by Egypt, Great Britain, and the Sudan was signed on 12 February 1953. The Agreement maintained for the Sudanese, at the end of a transitional period of three years during which they would exercise self-government in a free and neutral atmosphere,

151. Survey of International Affairs 1952, p. 224.

152. The Text in the Times, 30 October 1952, quoted by Ibid.

the right to determine their future status. They could choose independence and they would determine the form of relations they prefer with Egypt and Great Britain.¹⁵³

Anglo-Egyptian Negotiations for Evacuation and Defence:

Having agreed on a settlement for the Sudan, the British and the Egyptians centered their attention on the question of evacuation and defence.

In view of the Western powers, it was impossible to insure Egyptian neutrality in a World War on account of Egypt's geographic situation; thus Egypt had to adopt a policy that would realize its national aspirations without exposing itself undefended to Russian expansion. The attitude of the Revolutionary Council to defence pacts was clear as it was once expressed in the words of General Neguib; he said: "I must therefore say to our British and American friends: give us freedom before you invite us to negotiate an alliance with the West. And please don't expect us to sign an alliance until we can do so as free and equal partners."¹⁵⁴

It was also reported that at a dinner in the Officers' Club in honor of the Syrian Dictator Colonel Adib Shishakly, General Neguib had said: "In these difficult times, when two great blocks are waging one of the greatest struggles that

153. Text of the Treaty

154. Neguib, op. cit., p. 251.

history has even known, we wish to prove to the world that this part of the globe belongs to its citizens and no longer accepts the tutelage of any one."¹⁵⁵ Lieutenant General Abdu-Nasser, the driving force among the Free Officers, had uttered threatening words and had expressed an intention to return to the guerilla if the British did not evacuate the Canal Zone.

Following the Sudan Agreement in February 1953 Anglo-Egyptian negotiations lacked cordiality: the British authorities were not anxious to conduct negotiations with a military regime whose stability was not yet assured and uttering from time to time threats of its intention to resort to force if its national aspirations were not satisfied. The Egyptians, for their part, were not anxious to take part in negotiations that depended on their acceptance of a Middle East defence pact and that were not wholly satisfying to their national aims. It was reported that Colonel Nasser had stated the Egyptian requests as "evacuation and complete independence." He also declared his desire to see a Canal Zone base functioning efficiently as an Egyptian base. In opposing the Middle East Defence Pact, the Egyptians were not opposing the West but had the intention of developing their capacity to defend themselves.

Egyptian requests were not modified and in April 1953

155. Bourse Egyptienne, 15 December 1952, quoted in Survey of International Affairs 1952, p. 225.

the Egyptians and the British agreed to begin negotiations.¹⁵⁶ Very soon these negotiations broke down because the Egyptians insisted on complete independence and evacuation and once these were satisfied they would discuss the conditions under which the British would be allowed to reenter. It was impossible to Great Britain to allow complete control of the Suez Canal Zone by the Egyptians.¹⁵⁷ When they failed to agree, tension between the British and the Egyptians increased; and when Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, the British Minister of State, announced that Egypt's requests were unrealistic, General Neguib declared that he had no intention of resuming the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations, moreover, delivered encouragements to the Egyptians to prepare for a war of independence. Since the British occupation of Egypt, the Egyptians had used words of threat to achieve their national aspirations. Recently, as we have seen above, Lieutenant General Abdu-Nasser and General Naguib did the same. This Egyptian tendency to resort to words instead of constructive activity revealed their psychological weakness.

On 10 May 1953 Mr. Foster Dulles, the American Secretary for State, started on a tour of the Middle East. Since 1951 the American Ambassador had adopted the role of mediator between the British and the Egyptians. He had

156. Survey of International Affairs 1952, pp. 228-229.

157. Ivison, Macadam, (ed) Annual Register for 1953
p. 259.

friendships on both sides and hoped to adjust differences in the Anglo-Egyptian problem. He showed American sympathy to the Egyptians and he conveyed the possibility of persuading Great Britain to accept Egyptian requests. His mediation was useful since it increased the Young Officers' self confidence.¹⁵⁸

Meanwhile the negotiations which had began in April 1953 and been broken off in May of that year were resumed on 30 July 1953 in Cairo. Egypt had insisted that the British technicians in charge of the base installations for some time should not be allowed to wear uniform. Egypt, moreover, considered that reopening of the base to Western Powers would only be if any of the states members of the Arab League were attacked. During the period that lapsed from July 1953 to July 1954 disorder in the Canal Zone had delayed the resumption of negotiations; and during the last four months of 1953 the Egyptians were busy with domestic problems of reform. This also had delayed negotiations until 15 July 1954 when a conference of the British and the Egyptian representatives opened in Cairo and eventually the British agreed to evacuate in a period of 20 months; maintain installations and equipment by British civilian contractors, and in case of an attack on any member state of the Arab League defence pact signed in

158. "Egypt, Great Britain, and the Suez Canal since July 1952," op. cit., p. 194.

1950 or on Turkey within the coming seven years following the ratification of the agreement, Great Britain would be granted such facilities as might be necessary to place the base "on a war footing to operate effectively." (Art. 4 of the Agreement).

Although the Agreement was welcomed by the British and the Egyptian Governments, there were on both sides some groups that were not reconciled to the Agreement. The extreme nationalists in Egypt such as the Moslem Brotherhood and the extreme conservatives in Great Britain were not pleased by the Agreement.

Conclusion:

This chapter has presented a study of Egypt in one of the most critical periods of its modern history. Egypt, during that period, was faced by internal and external problems that needed settlement without further delay. From the internal point of view, Egypt was suffering corruption in the administration. The external problem of Egypt was concerned with its relations to the Sudan and Great Britain. Hilali's realistic approach to the Sudan question was continued by General Neguib and made possible the Agreement of 1953.

It is difficult to indicate what made the agreement on evacuation and defence possible after the rigidity on the Egyptian and the British sides as discussed in the preceding pages. The United States Government had played a significant

part in acting as mediator and persuading the British and the Egyptians that no better terms could be reached and the sooner an agreement was signed the better.

Conclusions

The 1939-54 Anglo-Egyptian relations may be interpreted in terms of conflict between the Egyptians and the British on the problem of defence of Egypt as a part of the Middle East. Because of this, the problem needed careful study and understanding by the British and the Egyptians. Small countries are always faced with the problem of defending their territory. They either join the Great Powers to ensure their safety, or else, they join other small powers of their own calibre in forming a collective regional security plan.

Egyptians and British offered different proposals to meet the Egyptian problem of defence. This difference was mainly due to the difference in Egyptian and British attitudes and understanding in terms of sovereignty vs. collective security, nationalism vs. internationalism, peace vs. war, and realism vs. idealism.

Sovereignty vs. Collective Security:

In comparing the diplomatic history of Great Britain and Egypt, one would notice that Great Britain has tasted and enjoyed sovereignty and complete independence. Egypt on the other hand, was a small developing power which was struggling to cross the threshold that would lead to complete sovereignty. The historical precedents of each state therefore,

affected the Egyptian and British minds in different ways. An Egyptian viewing international politics from Cairo, would consider the assertion of Egyptian sovereign rights more important than being concerned with a hypothetical danger to Egyptian sovereignty. In contrast to this attitude, the British in viewing international politics from London, promised to uphold Egyptian national sovereignty if Egypt would give up part of it to contribute to international peace and security.

An observer of Anglo-Egyptian relations would also notice that Egypt a newly developing independent state wanted either to enjoy the exercise of all her responsibilities unaided, or to determine herself the nature of that aid. The British, in contrast, noticing Egypt's capacity, offered the help they considered appropriate in facing Russian aggression and expansion. The Egyptians recognizing the shortcomings of their defence capacity, preferred the formation of a common defence pact among the member states of the Arab League rather than cooperating directly with the West. If the Egyptians were to give up part of their sovereignty, they preferred to do so not to increase the international authority of a strong state but rather to pool their sovereignty with a state roughly their own equal in rank.

Nationalism vs. Internationalism:

Egypt was not yet ready to accept internationalism before tasting the fruit of nationalism. Seeing the British encouragement for the establishment of an independent Sudan and

thus hindering realisation of its concept of the 'Unity of the Nile Valley', Egypt maintained a xenophobic attitude towards the international movements for defence purposes started by the West. A wholly unselfish international attitude was not to be on the British side, but in Great Britain there was a greater readiness for it ^{now} than there was in Egypt. When Great Britain was encouraging the formation of defence pacts between the Middle East and the West, Egypt resisted acceptance fearing an outcome which would limit her national rights and which would increase the influence of the greater Powers in this region.

Peace vs. War:

London was internationally known for since the last two hundred and fifty years it was one of the Great Powers and this had helped the British to think in terms of international affairs and politics. In contrast, the approach of Egyptian statesmen tended to be confined within the limits of the Nile Valley and viewed politics as related to their valley rather than thinking of its importance in world affairs.

While in general a policy of peace is to be expected from an internationally inclined state and a policy of war from a nationally tended state trying to promote self interest, self subsistence, and sovereignty, in this particular case, the outcome was that the British most often thought in terms of war and threat of war, while the Egyptians did not give this danger the consideration which the British thought desirable.

In answer to the British Ambassador's warning of the disadvantage involved in facing the danger of war without joint defence, Mohamad Salah Ud-Din the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Wafd Ministry of 1950 had remarked: "this was the language of war, force, and invasion while as members of the United Nations Organization we should talk the language of peace, security, recognition of right and justice and respect of the sovereignty of nations and the integrity of their territories."¹⁵⁹

The Egyptians associated the British military occupation with the concept of war, and thus being conditioned against the former were conditioned to ignore the danger of the latter. If the British wanted to maintain their position in the Suez Canal base, it was to face the danger of war. Thus the wish to continue their occupation was due to their conception of an apprehended danger of war. In contrast to the British tendency, the Egyptians hoped for the possibility of complete evacuation in the absence of war and thus they consciously or unconsciously were not well disposed to admit the danger of war.

The dominance of the strategy of fear and doubt on both sides, the British and the Egyptian, prevented a definite understanding on the prospect of peace or the actual threat of war. The British considered that the Egyptians were trying to ignore the danger of war so as to counter the British insistence on preparing a military stiffening of the region. The Egyptians

159. Egyptian Green Book, p. 124.

on the other hand, assumed that the British claim of the reality of a threat of war was a cloak for actual occupation.

Realism vs. Idealism.

It is not possible to attribute idealism exclusively to the Egyptian policy and attitude, and realism exclusively to the British policy and attitude, throughout the period under study. These two principles were intermixed and exchanged yet not in such a way to allow agreement between the British and the Egyptians. Egyptian idealism, we have seen, characterized the Egyptian national aspirations. They were not prepared to accept any compromise that would infringe complete and unconditional national sovereignty. The Egyptians held fast to their national principles although they were not wholly attainable in the international situation as viewed by the British. The British on the other hand, advocated a policy that was conditioned by the real risk of war and the strategic position of Egypt.

The British in facing the danger of war propounded what should be done irrespective of the Egyptian readiness to admit or refuse the policy. The British technically speaking faced the danger of war and realistically calculated what should be done. Once they had to implement their policy, however, they did not realistically analyze the Egyptian desposition and readiness to accept their principles. The Egyptians likewise, propounded their self centered aspirations with little consideration for the British realism; yet their realism was manifested

in their attitude to accept the danger of war when it would actually take place for then they would agree to give up part of their national sovereignty to the British to help them face the danger of war effectively.

Although there were several attempts on the Egyptian and the British sides to understand one another, the general world situation sharpened the opposition in their attitudes. Each tended to press their own interests, and to pay too little attention to the aims of the other party. This accentuated and emphasized the difference in policy followed by each in Pursuing their interests. The Egyptians were stressing national independence and sovereignty first, and international peace and security second. In contrast, the British were stressing the importance of sacrificing some degree of national independence in order to preserve international peace and security.

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year, volume and page.

Appendix

Text of Main Agreement Concluded Between The
Gouvernement of The United Kingdom of Great Britain and
Northern Ireland and The Government of The Republic of
Egypt Regarding The Suez Canal Base.

The Government of The United Kingdom of Great
Britain and Northern Ireland and The Government of the
Republic of Egypt. Desiring to establish Anglo Egyptian
relations on a new basis of mutual understanding and
firm friendship. Have agreed as follows:

Article I.

Her Majesty's Forces shall be completely with-
drawn from Egyptian territory in accordance with the
schedule set forth in part A of annex I, within a period
of twenty months from the date of signature of the pre-
sent agreement.

Article 2.

The Government of the United Kingdom declare
that the Treaty of Alliance signed in London on the 26th
of August, 1936, with the agreed minutes, exchanged notes
convention concerning the immunities and privileges en-
joyed by the British Forces in Egypt and all other sub-
sidiary agreements is terminated.

Article 3.

Parts of the present Suez Canal Base are listed
in appendix A annex II, shall be kept in efficient work-
ing order and capable of immediate use in accordance
with the provisions of Article 4 of the present Agree-

ment. To this end they, shall be organized in accordance with the provisions of Annex II.

Article 4.

In the event of an armed attack by an outside power on any country which at the date of signature of the present Agreement is a party to the Treaty of Joint Defence between Arab League States, signed in Cairo on the 13th of April, 1950, or on Turkey, Egypt shall afford to the United Kingdom such facilities as may be necessary in order to place the base on a war footing and to operate it effectively. These facilities shall include the use of Egyptian Ports within the limits of what is strictly indispensable for the above-mentioned purposes.

Article 5.

In the event of a threat of an armed attack by an outside power on any country which at the date of signature of the present Agreement is a party to the treaty of Joint Defence between Arab League States or on Turkey, there shall be immediate consultation between Egypt and the United Kingdom.

Article 7.

The Government of the Republic of Egypt shall afford over-flying, landing and servicing facilities for notified flights of aircraft under Royal Air Force control. For the clearance of any flights of such aircraft the Government of the Republic of Egypt shall accord to the aircraft of any other foreign country with the exception of states parties to the Treaty of Joint Defense between Arab League States. The landing and

servicing facilities mentioned above shall be afforded at Egyptian airfields in the Suez Canal Base area.

Article 8.

The two contracting Governments recognize That the Suez Maritime Canal which is an integral part of Egypt, is a waterway economically, commercially and strategically of international importance, and express the determination to uphold the convention guaranteeing the freedom of navigation of the Canal signed at Constantinople on the 29th of October, 1888.

Article 9.

- (A) The United Kingdom is accorded the right to move any British equipment into or out of the Base at its discretion.
- (B) There shall be no increase above the level of supplies as agreed upon in part C of Annex II without the consent of the government of the Republic of Egypt.

Article 10.

The present Agreement does not affect and shall not be interpreted as affecting in any way the rights and obligations of the parties under the charter of the United Nations.

Article 11.

The Annexes and Appendices to the present Agreement shall be considered as an integral part of it.

Article 12.

- (A) The present Agreement shall remain in force for the period of seven years from

the date of its signature.

- (B) During the last twelve months of that period the two contracting Governments shall consult together to decide on such arrangements as may be necessary upon the termination of the agreement.
- (C) Unless both the contracting Governments agree upon any extension of the Agreement it shall terminate seven years after the date of signature and the Government of the United Kingdom shall take away or dispose of their property then remaining in the Base.

Article 13.

The present Agreement shall have effect as though it had come into force on the date of Signature. Instruments of ratification shall be exchanged in Cairo as soon as possible.

In witness whereof the undersigned, being duly authorized thereto, have signed the present Agreement and have affixed thereto their seals.

Done at Cairo, this Nineteenth Day of October, 1954, in duplicate, in the English and Arabic languages both texts being equally authentic.