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A SURVEY OF WESTERN DEFENSE POLICY IN THE  
MIDDLE EAST WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE  
TO GREAT BRITAIN  
1945 - 1956

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WESTERN DEFENSE POLICY IN THE  
MIDDLE EAST  
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Dedicated

TO MY PARENTS

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## ABSTRACT

To Britain, the Middle East is an area of obvious importance from the viewpoint of geography, strategy and resources. Its defense, therefore, is a matter of grave concern for Britain. Thus, ever since World War II, Britain has been engaged in efforts to organize a comprehensive defense system in the Middle East to stand as a bulwark against a Russian advance into the area. To some extent, the interests of the United States (and to a lesser degree, of France) coincided with these British interests.

Various proposals were made to the Middle Eastern nations offering to organize a defense system for the area. However, the defense problem became involved in the surge of nationalism that was sweeping the Middle East. The young Middle Eastern states were determined to safeguard their independence against Western interference, and to keep out of alliances with the Western Powers which might, they felt, entangle them in wars which were not of their concern.

Whereas security to the Western Powers meant security against Soviet encroachment; to the Arabs it meant security against the alien Israeli state. In most of the Arab countries therefore, real impulse to join Western alliances was lacking,

due to their preoccupation with disputes with the West and with Israel, which led them to neglect the communist danger.

Thus, Britain directed her attention to the states that were interested in joining the Western Powers in defensive alliances against the Soviet threat. States that were not ready to join were left out for the time being. Britain scored an achievement by the conclusion of the Turkish-Iraqi Pact, which formed a defense nucleus for the Middle East, yet this was accomplished at the risk of deepening the cleavage between Britain and the other Arab countries, whose good will and co-operation were urgently needed.

In sum, what was accomplished was not a whole defense system for the Middle East. It was rather a partial defense system based on the northern tier concept which provides a mutual security system among the northern peripheral states of the Middle East.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION	1 - 49
A. The Problem	
1. Importance of the Problem	
2. Definitions of Terms Used	
3. Sources	
B. The World Situation	
1. Ideals and Aims of the West	
2. Ideals and Aims of Communism	
C. What is the Middle East to the West in General and to Britain in Particular	
1. Geography and Strategy	
2. Resources	
a. Natural Resources	
b. Human Resources	
D. History	
1. Background - with Special Reference to the Role of Britain	
CHAPTER II - DEFENSE OF THE MIDDLE EAST	50 - 88
A. What is Defense and Offense	
1. Military Advantages of the Defense of the Middle East	
2. Political Disadvantages of the Defense of the Middle East	
B. Defense Against Whom and For What	
1. How Imminent is the Communist Danger	
2. Is the Communist Danger Felt in the Middle East	

- C. Defense Programs
  - 1. Alternative Plans
  - 2. Results
    - a. The Suez Canal Agreement
    - b. The Turkish-Iraqi Pact

CHAPTER III - REACTIONS IN THE ARAB COUNTRIES	89 - 123
A. The Hashemite Bloc	
B. The Egyptian-Saudi Arabian-Syrian Bloc	
1. Arms From Behind the Iron Curtain	
C. Lebanon	
CONCLUSION	124 - 131
BIBLIOGRAPHY	132 - 138

# C H A P T E R I

## INTRODUCTION

This is a study of Western policy, mainly British policy, in relation to Middle East defense since World War II. The subject is a controversial one. Some claim that Britain has no Middle Eastern policy as such, others hold that British policy was characterized by inconsistency and lack of intelligence. Thus, the argument runs, British policy has reached a state of bankruptcy in its attempt to provide an effective defense system for the Middle East against Russian aggression. Still others contend that there is a fairly clear-cut consistent course which British policy follows in the Middle East. Such general arguments should be examined carefully, and there is a need for survey and analysis of the material, in order to shed further light on a policy whose pattern is often obscure; but whose objectives involve areas and peoples whose future destinies are important in the eyes of the whole world.

The following chapter is an introductory exposition of several points: first, the purposes of the study and its importance are stated, followed by definitions of specific terms and selective sources. Secondly, there is a discussion of the ideals and aims of both the Western Powers and the Soviet Union. Thirdly, the importance of the Middle East to



the West from the view point of geography, strategy, and resources is dealt with. Fourthly, there is a description of the historical development of the principal events that occurred between 1945-1955, with special reference to the role played by Britain in the Middle East. The writer feels that the inclusion of such a survey is worthwhile; since it prepares a background for the material discussed in the succeeding chapters.

During the writing of this thesis, the Egyptian President Gamal Abdul-Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal Company on July 26, 1956. However, this thesis is not concerned with the controversy on the nationalization of the Canal, nor with the events that followed it, although these events serve to point up the importance of the topic. The examination of British defense policy in this study may help to understand the Suez Canal conflict as it is today.

The nationalization of the Suez Canal is a very important event. It may herald a new era for British defense policy, perhaps even signifying its complete bankruptcy. In case of bankruptcy, this event may plunge the world into a third major crisis; or it may lead to a re-orientation of British policy, diverting it into new channels, as a result of the altered situation in the Middle East.

A. The Problem

It is the purpose of this study (1) to determine whether Britain had a particular policy designed for the defense of the Middle East. If so, in what basic convictions was this policy rooted? What were its specific characteristics? Was it consistent, intelligent, and well thought-out? What were the forces and factors in and outside the Middle East which had a palpable effect on shaping the British policy, and on contributing to the gradual diversion of its path, and thus modifying it to the demands of the moment? (2) To seek to analyse the weaknesses and flaws of the British policy which sought as its objective the increasing of the security of the Middle East against aggression from the Soviet Union.

1. Importance of the Study

The Middle East is a sensitive region which commands a remarkable degree of world attention. It is an area where the interests of the major powers meet, overlap and clash, and where events are capable of producing far-reaching repercussions in all the world.

Especially important in relation to the Middle East is the position of Britain. She has long-established interests in the area, but her prestige and control are undergoing a rapid contraction. Nevertheless, she considers the defense

of the Middle East as one of the most essential items of her foreign policy.

2. Definitions of Terms Used:

The Middle East

The term "Middle East" came to be used during World War II. Previous to that, there was a distinction between the "Near East" covering Greece, Bulgaria, Turkey, the Levant and Egypt, and the "Middle East" including Arabia, Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan.<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this study, the term "Middle East" is used to cover Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Cyprus, the Sudan, Libya, Kuwait, Bahrein, Yemen and Aden Protectorate.

The Western Bloc Versus the Communist Bloc

Throughout this investigation, the term "West" or "Western Democracies" or "Western Bloc" shall be interpreted as meaning Britain, the United States, France and in general members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. On the other hand, the term "Communist Bloc" shall be interpreted as denoting the Soviet Union and her satellites.

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<sup>1</sup> Royal Institute of International Affairs, The Middle East, A Political and Economic Survey, Second ed., (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 1.

### 3. Sources

Few primary sources were available and the study has been restricted by this fact. A complete list of sources may be found in the Bibliography. It will suffice to mention here only some examples of sources as illustrations. Consultation of daily Beirut newspapers as Al-Jareeda, Al-Hayat, and Al-Diyar was necessary. English and American periodicals were also consulted. There was consistent reference particularly to the Department of State Bulletin, British Information Services Publications, some reports of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, and of the Brookings Institution. Analytical articles were sought in such journals as the International Affairs of London, and The Middle East Journal of Washington. Regarding documentary materials, the Hansard House of Commons Debates were worthy of use.

One difficulty regarding the sources of data was that they were scattered and fragmented. Another difficulty was the confidential nature of the subject, which made it impossible to have access to sources which were not already available to the public.

It is to be remembered that this study does not pretend to have the last word on this subject. It is rather in the nature of a survey of the material available in Beirut and

the University community, and is limited in time to the period 1945 to the beginning of 1956.

B. The World Situation

With the fading picture of World War II, another phase of world struggle superimposed itself. Hope for world peace was buried as there came to be a steady growth of tension between the two major blocs in the world: Western Democracies spearheaded by the United States, and the Soviet Union and her satellites. The shadow of the conflict between the two blocs fell on almost every part of the globe.

1. Ideals and Aims of the West

The Western Democracies have some ultimate goals in common. It has been stated that they aim at strengthening and reviving the democratic practice, and ideally are interested in protecting the individual against tyranny. They claim a high regard for the value of human personality, and for basic rights, which include freedom of speech, freedom of expression and freedom of religion and worship. Change should come by peaceful evolution; thus avoiding abrupt revolutionary change. A fourth objective is the prevention of aggression by the power which makes a bid for world domination, and which aims at forcing any part of the free world into the Communist Bloc. Fifthly, the Western Democracies aim at resisting armed attack

against themselves, and lastly as a non-military objective, they aim at promoting economic and social progress -- of their peoples and of other peoples of the world -- to which the freedom of a society is a pre-requisite.<sup>2</sup>

There is a rough identity between the above mentioned objectives of the Western Democracies and those of Britain, who is convinced that a peaceful and stable world is a necessary guarantee to British national security.<sup>3</sup>

Behind these broad ideals and aims, there lies the primary motive of protection of security and this is translated into the protection of vital national interests, as in the case of the British need for oil, access to which is considered a vital interest of that nation which must be protected if national security is to be had.

In view of the significance of the geography, strategy, natural and human resources of the Middle East, the West has a number of specific objectives in the area: First, the Western Democracies desire to further peace among the states of the Middle East themselves, and between them and the West.

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<sup>2</sup> Chatham House Study Group, Atlantic Alliance: NATO's Role in the Free World, (London and New York: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1952), pp. 31-33.

<sup>3</sup> The Staff of the Brookings Institution, Major Problems of the United States Foreign Policy, 1954, (Menasha, Wisconsin: George Banta Publishing Company, 1954), p. 84.

Secondly, the West desires to insure government stability and to have order maintained in the Middle East; <sup>4</sup> for a turbulent, politically explosive Middle East would invite Soviet aggression. Synonymous with this is the position of Britain to whom the defense of the Middle East <sup>5</sup> is of vital importance. A stable Middle East enables Britain to secure her two main interests of keeping open the international communication routes across the Middle East, and of insuring access to the oil deposits of the area. <sup>6</sup> The third objective of the West is that it aims at creating conditions which bring about a rise in the economic status of the area. <sup>7</sup> This has also been an objective of Britain in the Middle East -- to defend it from disintegration within. <sup>8</sup> Fourthly, the West seeks to maintain and strengthen the democratic pattern and principles, which it advocates. It is not necessary, however, to adopt the same pattern as it

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<sup>4</sup> Henry A. Byroade, "The Middle East in New Perspective", The Department of State Bulletin, 30:629, April 26, 1954.

<sup>5</sup> British Information Services, London, Reference Division, "Defense of the Middle East", Quote No. R. 2924, September 17, 1954, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> British Information Services, London, Reference Division, "Notes on Britain and the Middle East", I.D. 1146, June, 1952, pp. 2-3.

<sup>7</sup> Byroade, loc.cit.

<sup>8</sup> "New Start in the Middle East", The Economist, 157:115, July 16, 1949.

is in the West. A modified form of Western Democracy may be developed to suit the needs of the Middle Eastern countries.<sup>9</sup> Britain tried to introduce into the Middle East the British type of political institutions. The attempt was not very successful; because whereas the British political structure is deeply rooted in the hundreds of years of evolutionary struggle, the Middle East political structures were not the result of that natural evolution.<sup>10</sup> A fifth aim of the West is the encouragement of regional defense arrangements, as a check to aggression from the Soviet Bloc.<sup>11</sup> Britain is also interested in maintaining the Middle East as a barrier which stands in the face of the Russian thrust towards the Indian Ocean. Again, Middle Eastern bases are essential for offensive action in the event of a war with Russia.<sup>12</sup>

## 2. Ideals and Aims of Communism

In contrast to the Western Democracies, the avowed ideals of the Soviet Union are: First, to achieve peace by keeping the Soviet Union out of war. Secondly, to build up

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<sup>9</sup> Byroade, loc.cit.

<sup>10</sup> Richard N. Frye, ed. The Near East and the Great Powers, (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1951), pp. 34-35.

<sup>11</sup> Byroade, loc.cit.

<sup>12</sup> Sir Charles Webster, et.al., United Kingdom Policy, Foreign, Strategic, Economic, (Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1950), pp. 52-53.



a strong state able to resist the capitalist countries which aim at destroying it. Thirdly, to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat which is the basis for a socialist economy aiming at promoting the material prosperity of the workers.<sup>13</sup>

The objectives of the Soviet Union are: First, the Soviet Union aims at weakening the non-communist bloc, and at expanding her influence by means of revolutionary movements, as a measure of defense against Western capitalism.<sup>14</sup> The Soviet Union uses international communism as an instrument for strengthening her position.<sup>15</sup> Secondly, the Soviet Union attempts to debar the United States and her allies from establishing positions of strength in the world outside the Iron Curtain. Thirdly, the Soviet Union stirs up trouble when an opportunity presents itself, using the communist tenets to bolster her contentions about the contradictions of the capitalist regime. Fourthly, world revolution would be feasible by the cooperation of the revolutionary movements in various countries with the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union. Thus, the Soviet Union espouses the

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Harold and Margaret Sprout, ed., Foundations of National Power, Second ed., (Toronto, New York, London: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1951), p. 297. For some of the aims of communism in the Arab countries see Nabih Amin Faris, Ghuyum Arabiyah, (Beirut: Daril-Ilm Lil-Malain, 1950), pp. 24-26.

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Chatham House Study Group, op.cit., p. 29

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The Staff of the Brookings Institution, op.cit., p. 89.

cause of national liberation in colonies and countries that are within the sphere of influence of the Western Powers.<sup>16</sup>

There had been hardly a time when Russia was not casting covetous glances towards the Middle East. Russia's intentions were aired in 1940, throughout the conversations for a secret Four-Power Pact including Germany, the Soviet Union, Italy and Japan, when the Middle East was stipulated as the center of Russian aspirations.<sup>17</sup>

Russian policy in the Middle East is motivated by three main objectives: First, Russia seeks to thwart any designs aiming at making the Middle East a major base, from which hostile attacks against her may be launched.<sup>18</sup> Russia thus attempts to weaken and impair the Western influence -- particularly British -- in the Middle East. It also attempts to countenance local communist movements in various countries, hoping that such movements will redound to revolutionary changes, that will throw such countries into the communist lap.<sup>19</sup> The Middle East as a major scene of social change is one of the best targets for such attempts. Secondly, Russia is interested

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<sup>16</sup> Chatham House Study Group, op.cit., pp. 29-30.

<sup>17</sup> Ladislav Farago, "The Sources of Soviet Policy in the Middle East", United Nations World, 2:17-18, August, 1948.

<sup>18</sup> Jon Kimche, "Russia and the Middle East", The Nineteenth Century and After, 143: 199-200, April, 1948.

<sup>19</sup> Frye, op.cit., pp. 39-40.

in denying the oil of the Middle East to the Western Powers. Thirdly, Russia as a land locked country seeks an access to the Indian Ocean and to the Mediterranean Sea.<sup>20</sup>

C. What is the Middle East to the West in General and to Britain in Particular?

To the Western Democracies, the security problem of the Middle East is an inseparable part of world security as a whole.<sup>21</sup> It follows therefore that a threat to the security of the Middle East poses a threat also to the security of the Western Democracies. The Middle East centers in the West's calculations as one of the most strategic (and vulnerable) keypoints in the allied strategy pattern against the Communist Bloc.

1. Geography and Strategy

On October 8, 1951 President Eisenhower (then General) said: "So far as the sheer value of territory is concerned, there is no more strategically important area than the Middle East."<sup>22</sup> The geographical location of the Middle East is looked at by the West in the light of its proximity in relation to Russia, and in the light of the

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<sup>20</sup> Kimche, loc.cit.

<sup>21</sup> The Staff of the International Studies Group of the Brookings Institution, The Security of the Middle East. A Problem Paper, (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1950), p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> British Information Services, Reference Division, "Notes on Britain and the Middle East", op.cit., p. 2.

fact that the Middle East shares in the north a common frontier with Russia. Also, the Middle East is a land bridge linking the three continents of Europe, Asia and Africa, and its focal position is particularly important in the present East-West conflict as a barrier between the two major blocs of the world. Further, it is a central thoroughfare where international land, water and air routes pass.<sup>23</sup>

The significance of the geographical location of the Middle East for Britain has two facets; In the first place, from the viewpoint of defensive strategy, the Middle East is a vital node of communication protecting the route to India, Australia and the Far East. Despite the changed status of India, and despite the fact that the Suez Canal loses much of its value during a major conflict, it is still of considerable importance; since it connects Britain with the Commonwealth, which is scattered all over the globe. Secondly, from the viewpoint of offense, the Middle East, because of its proximity to the industrial centers of Russia, and to her oil fields, may be used as a bastion from which land and air attacks may be launched on Russia, in order to cripple her capacity for waging war.<sup>24</sup>

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Byroade, "U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East", The Department of State Bulletin, 27:931-932, December 15, 1952.

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B.H. Liddell Hart, "The Defense of the Middle East", Harper's Magazine, 206:65, April, 1953.

## 2. Resources

### a. Natural Resources

Of the known mineral resources that exist in the Middle East, only petroleum is of high economic value. It is an asset of great strategic significance in the current struggle that engulfs the world. The great powers who are thirsty for oil are always on the lookout for some new and fresh deposits of petroleum, and the region which is endowed with this vitally important resource becomes the object of international rivalries. The Middle East, therefore, with nearly two thirds of the world's oil reserves<sup>25</sup> bears a considerable weight in the eyes of the great powers.

The major oil-producing countries in the Middle East in 1955 were Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Bahrein and Kuwait. The oil resources of the Middle East are largely controlled by the Western allies, partly because the Middle Eastern states lack the capital and the technical knowledge to exploit their oil fields. The inflow of the royalties into the oil producing countries is bound to have a considerable influence on their economies. In fact, oil royalties constitute a vital artery in the economic life of some Middle Eastern countries, and if used in the proper way, may have a far-reaching effect in

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<sup>25</sup> The Times, (London: March 7, 1956).

raising the living standards of the Middle Eastern peoples,  
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who are beset by poverty.

In 1955, world figure in production of petroleum (crude oil) was calculated to be 786,100 thousand metric tons, while Middle East production was 162,100 thousand metric tons. Middle East production in relation to world production was  
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20.6 percent.

World War II proved to be a drain on the oil resources of the United States. As oil fields were gradually depleted, the United States recognised the necessity for conserving her own oil resources by substituting oil from the Middle East for that from the Western hemisphere. If the native oil deposits of the United States were overworked or used up, the Western Democracies would be placed in a critical position, because in the event of an international emergency, the United States has to shoulder the responsibility of supplying the Western Democracies with petroleum;  
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since it is not ascertained  
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that petroleum from the Middle East would be available. It is even feared that in a major conflict, the oil fields of

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26 Harvey P. Hall, ed., Middle East Resources. Problems and Prospects, (Washington, D.C.: The Middle East Institute, 1954), pp. 17-18.

27 The Times, op.cit. (The figures are preliminary).

28 Halford L. Hoskins, Middle East Oil in United States Foreign Policy, (Washington, D.C.: The Library of Congress, Legislative Reference Service, 1950), pp. 43-44.

29 Ibid., p. 109.

the Western hemisphere would not last long enough to supply the needs of the United States. In that case the Middle East oil becomes also necessary to the United States.<sup>30</sup>

Both the Western Democracies and the Soviet Union are aware of the significance of the Middle East as a great reservoir of petroleum. Both are interested in denying any of it to the other side if they can.<sup>31</sup> As the Middle East oil fields are under the control of Britain and the United States, Russia is interested in promoting in the Middle East conditions that would make the Western Powers relinquish their hold on the oil fields -- the Anglo-Iranian oil dispute is eloquent testimony to this point.

To Western eyes, the rich oil fields of the Middle East are vulnerable and insecure. Situated at long distances from allied military bases, they are greatly exposed to the bombing planes and the ground forces of the Soviet Union.<sup>32</sup> Another fact to be taken into consideration is the political effervescence and instability of most of the countries of the Middle East.<sup>33</sup> The issue of petroleum has often been the

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<sup>30</sup> Halford L. Hoskins, "Needed: A Strategy for Oil", Foreign Affairs, 29:236, January, 1951.

<sup>31</sup> Harvey P. Hall, "The Arab States: Oil and Growing Nationalism", Current History, 21:21-22, July, 1951.

<sup>32</sup> Hoskins, Middle East Oil in United States Foreign Policy, op.cit., pp. 106-107.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., pp. 103-104.

object of vociferous protests of the extreme nationalists, who have an ingrained suspicion of the motives of the great powers.

If the Middle East oil is valuable to the United States, it is vital to Britain and Western Europe. The Middle East supplies a large proportion of the oil needs of Britain and Western Europe, which are considered as the first line of the defense of the United States. Middle East oil is necessary to build up the strength of these countries, whose industries would be reduced to a state of paralysis, if they have no access to the oil of the Middle East.<sup>34</sup> It has been therefore an axiom of British policy to concentrate on the prevention of the Russian thrust towards the oil fields of the Middle East, on which its economy is heavily dependent. More than that, it is a matter of intimate concern to Britain that the oil fields of the Middle East do not fall into Russian hands.

b. Human Resources

The human asset of the Middle East, which is largely potential, plays a very important role in influencing the policies of the Western Powers. The people of the Middle East are of vital concern to the Western Powers who are interested both in their welfare as a guarantee for a

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 46.



better world, and in their views, which greatly affect the Arab-Asian-African bloc as a whole.<sup>35</sup>

The peoples of the Middle East are divided into three groups: First, the grass people who are nomads, moving with their animals in search of pastures. This group constitutes approximately five percent of the people. The second group consists of the sedentary or village people, who comprise nearly eighty percent of the population of the Middle East.<sup>36</sup> They are destitute and they have a low standard of living and health. Modern agricultural technology is still unknown to them, and most of them are illiterate. Some of the peasants who are free holders do not have enough land, and the tenants who work for a landlord are given only a small share of the crop. The income of these peasants is meagre, and usually they are in debt. The Middle Eastern peasant is an important resource which is still undeveloped. The third group is the urban peoples who are city dwellers, and who are an amalgam of Middle Eastern peoples of all kinds, and of foreigners. This group is marked by great diversity in economic status, education, and health standards,<sup>37</sup> and constitutes fifteen percent

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<sup>35</sup> Byroade, "U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East", loc.cit.

<sup>36</sup> Hall, Middle East Resources: Problems and Prospects, op.cit., p. 15.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., pp. 50-52.

of the population of the Middle East.<sup>38</sup> Beneath the calm surface of order among both the urban and the village people unrest and dissatisfaction are fermenting,<sup>39</sup> and the West fears that in their despair, these people will turn to communism.

D. History

1. Background - With Special Reference to the Role of Britain

The relative position of Britain in the post-war world underwent an important change; for as a result of the war effort, Britain was left in a state of economic exhaustion, which necessitated her dependence on aid from the United States and from the Dominions. The armed forces of Britain and her war potential are considerably less than those of the United States. The same is true of Britain's land forces in contrast to the Soviet Union. Yet this position was the same in the past, in relation to major continental powers. The basic difference today is that Germany and Italy were defeated in World War II, and France's power was eclipsed, which greatly altered the balance of power in Europe.<sup>40</sup>

Thus, in the rapidly changing scene of the post-war period, three important developments took place in the Middle East. First, the tide turned against the Western European

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>39</sup> Ellen Deborah Ellis, "Tensions in the Middle East", Current History, New Series, 20:204, May-June, 1951.

<sup>40</sup> Webster, op.cit., pp. 10-12.

Powers, and they began to retreat step by step from the area.<sup>41</sup> Britain withdrew from Palestine and from the Suez Canal. India, and recently the Sudan, had moved to independence, while the position of the French in North Africa was constantly challenged. Yet although the strength of the Western European Powers had greatly declined, their interests in the Middle East were still pervasive and paramount.<sup>42</sup> In the light of the development of modern techniques of war and of nuclear weapons, it became improbable that in future, wars would allow enough time for establishing international alignments to stand as a bulwark against aggressors. Hence, the urgent need for organizing defense measures in peace time was embodied in the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Western Europe and in the Atlantic on an international basis. At present, Britain which has vital interests and a traditional position of dominance in the Middle East, is unable to cope with the problem of its defense single-handed.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> The Staff of the Brookings Institution, op.cit., pp. 260-262.

<sup>42</sup> "West in the Middle East", The Spectator, 193:159, August, 1954.

<sup>43</sup> British Information Services, London, Reference Division, "Defense of the Middle East", op.cit., p. 1.

A second major development in the post-war period is the emergence of the United States, as the strongest power in the world, and the steady growth of her interests and influence in the Middle East.<sup>44</sup> In spite of the divergencies in British and American views on certain issues,<sup>45</sup> they are however partners and allies, acting in league to halt or slow down the Russian expansionist drive towards the Middle East. It has therefore been a prime aim of Britain to co-ordinate Anglo-

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44 The Staff of the Brookings Institution, op.cit., p. 262.

45 Britain and the United States disagreed on the question of the Mediterranean Command. The United States was concerned with safeguarding the security of the southern flank of SHAPE and wanted the Mediterranean land, sea and air forces to be controlled by SHAPE. Britain, whose primary concern was to defend the Commonwealth, wished to create two commands to be directed by the Standing Group in Washington. One of the commands was to take the responsibility for Middle East defense, while the other was to be an air and naval command in the Mediterranean under the direction of a naval commander. On December 16, 1952, a compromise agreement was reached whereby the commander-in-chief of the British Fleet in the Mediterranean was to be called Allied Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean, who was to be responsible to SHAPE and to command the Allied naval forces with the exception of the United States Sixth Fleet that was to be under the direction of an American Commander-in-Chief. Henry L. Roberts and Paul A. Wilson, Britain and the United States. Problems in Co-operation, (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1953), pp. 154-155.

Another issue which had a bearing upon Anglo-American relations in the Middle East was the Anglo-Iranian oil dispute which culminated in the nationalization of the

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American policies in the area, and this pressed for the necessity of constant adjustment of British policy, according to the demands of the moment, and in relation to the policies of other states, particularly the United States. The significance of Anglo-American co-operation in the Middle East is augmented by the fact that the area is vulnerable to attacks. To Western minds, there is in the Middle East a vacuum, which the West must fill if Russia is to be prevented from filling it.

A third major development after World War II, is the upsurge of intransigent and intense nationalism, which is sweeping the Middle East. The new states which have recently won their independence are determined to preserve it from any foreign intervention.

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oil company in 1951. The non-partisan attitude which the United States took in relation to the Anglo-Iranian oil dispute was irritating to Britain who felt that it would put her in a weaker position during the negotiations with the Iranian Government. Other sections of the British population felt that the United States exaggerated the danger of communism in Iran. Also to give concessions to the nationalists as was suggested by the United States would make them intransigent. On the other hand, the United States was afraid that the interruption of the oil industry in Iran would pave the way for the Tudeh party to seize power. The United States was also afraid that the use of force would result in a major conflict. Same as above, pp. 172-174.

46 "New Start in the Middle East", op.cit., p. 116.

In the aftermath of World War II, as the tension increased between the Western Democracies and the Soviet Union, there were flashes of danger signals which made Britain -- which is usually sensitive to any pressure on the Middle East -- more suspicious of the intentions of the Soviet Union in the area. In June, 1945, the Soviet demand for the districts of Kars and Ardahan deepened the suspicions of Britain regarding Russian intentions. The Soviet Union also insisted on her right of establishing bases in the Straits area, on account of her position as a Black Sea power. Again, on August 8, a Soviet note was delivered to the Turkish Government, accusing Turkey of violating the Montreaux Convention during World War II. Russia pointed out that the Straits should be controlled by Turkey and other Black Sea powers, and that their defense should be under the joint responsibility of Turkey and Russia, in order to prevent their being used by hostile countries. On August 22, the Turkish Government denied the Russian accusation that the Montreux Convention was violated during World War II. Likewise, the Russian demand for joint responsibility for the defense of the Straits was rejected. A British note was delivered to Russia which asserted that Turkey should be the guardian of the Straits.<sup>47</sup> This shows

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<sup>47</sup> George Kirk, The Middle East, 1945-1950, (London, New York, Toronto: Royal Institute of International Affairs, Oxford University Press, 1954), pp. 21, 31-32.

that Britain is against any moves designed to infringe on Turkish sovereignty.

On February 21, 1947, Britain delivered a note to the United States Department of State, confessing her inability from March 31 on, to continue the economic and financial assistance, which she had been giving Greece and Turkey since the war. ~~Due to economic exhaustion~~ As a result of the war, Britain had accumulated commitments which she could not meet any longer. Thus, the Truman Doctrine was born, when on March 12, President Truman, in an address to the Congress, asked it for authority to extend aid to Greece and Turkey,<sup>48</sup> so that the onus of responsibility for the upkeep of Greece and Turkey fell on the United States.

Turkey is a party to the Tripartite Treaty of Mutual Assistance which was signed by Turkey, Britain and France on October 19, 1939. The treaty provided that if a European power makes aggressive moves which would lead to war in the Mediterranean area, that would involve Turkey; Britain and France would come to the help of the Turks.<sup>49</sup> Yet Turkey did not consider this treaty as an adequate safeguard for her security against Russian aggression. Turkey's long cherished dream of further guarantees to her security,

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., pp. 36-37.

<sup>49</sup> British Information Services, London, Reference Division, "Defense of the Middle East", op.cit., pp. 5-6.

and of her being accepted as a part of Western Europe was fulfilled, when in September 1951, Turkey and Greece were invited to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; and the formalities were concluded in February 1952.<sup>50</sup>

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Russian ambitions in the apparently weak Iran were revealed by the Russian conduct since the end of the War. In the summer of 1941, when the very security of the Middle East was placed in jeopardy, Britain and Russia occupied Iran. The occupation was formalized by the Anglo-Soviet-Persian Treaty of 1942, which allowed for the presence of the Allied occupying troops in Iran, and which pointed out that the withdrawal of these troops should be carried out within six weeks from the end of the war with Japan.<sup>51</sup> In December 1943, at the Tehran Conference, the United States, the Soviet Union and Britain reasserted their respect for the sovereign independence of Iran.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Halford L. Hoskins, "Some Aspects of the Security Problem in the Middle East", The American Political Science Review, 47:191, March, 1953.

<sup>51</sup> Sir Reader Bullard, Britain and the Middle East from the Earliest Times to 1950, (Melbourne, Sydney, Cape Town: Hutchinson's University Library, 1951), p. 141.

<sup>52</sup> British Information Services, London, Reference Division, "Notes on Britain and the Middle East", op.cit., p. 7.



With the recession of the tide of war, the United States withdrew her forces from Iran by January 1, 1946, while the British troops left Iran by March 2, the appointed time for withdrawal as specified by the treaty of 1942. The Russians, however, did not evacuate their forces.<sup>53</sup>

Again, in pursuance of the policy of fanning the fires of disorder, the Soviet Union, in collaboration with the Iranian Tudeh party -- which has a communist nucleus -- staged an open revolt in Azerbaijan against the central authority in Tehran.<sup>54</sup> Time had never been more pertinent for such a move, as the Russian troops were still on the Iranian territory.

An agreement with the Soviet Union was approved by the Iranian cabinet on April 5, 1946, which provided: First, the Soviet forces were to withdraw from Iran six weeks from March 24. Secondly, a promise was secured from the Iranian cabinet that within seven months of the above date, it would introduce into the Parliament a bill for a joint Soviet-Iranian oil company, which would insure fifty-one percent of the shares for the Soviet Union, while Iran was to receive the remaining forty-nine percent. In the third place, the Azerbaijan crisis was to be settled by Soviet recognition of its being an internal problem, with the condition that

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<sup>53</sup> Kirk, op.cit., pp. 66-67.

<sup>54</sup> Bullard, loc.cit.,

the Iranian Government would take into consideration the need for reforms in that section of the country.<sup>55</sup>

The Russian troops finally evacuated Iran in May, 1946,<sup>56</sup> <sup>under pressure from The U.N.,</sup> yet the hope of the Soviet Union for a joint Soviet-Iranian company was defeated, when the Iranian Parliament on October 22, endorsed a resolution which nullified the proposed oil agreement, and provided that Iran was the sole owner of her resources, having alone the right to explore and exploit them. The Iranian Government were not to grant concessions to foreign powers or have joint partnership with them in oil companies.<sup>57</sup>

During the year 1951, Dr. Musaddiq who was opposed to foreign control of Persian oil allied himself with the communist Tudeh party. He was the Chairman of the Oil Committee of the Iranian Parliament, whose recommendations for the nationalization of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company were adopted by the Parliament on March 15, 1951.<sup>58</sup> Britain stood firmly by her contract rights, because she felt that by nationalizing the Company, the Iranian Government "broke a specific pledge."<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Kirk, op.cit., p. 71.

<sup>56</sup> British Information Services, London, Reference Division, "Notes on Britain and the Middle East", loc.cit.

<sup>57</sup> Kirk, op.cit., p. 88.

<sup>58</sup> Peter Calvocoressi, Survey of International Affairs, 1951, Issued under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), p.302.

<sup>59</sup> British Information Services, London, Reference Division, "Notes on Britain and the Middle East", loc.cit.

The fall of Dr. Musaddiq on August 19-20, 1953, ushered a new era of Anglo-Iranian understanding. Diplomatic relations with Britain were resumed in December, 1953.<sup>60</sup> Relations between Iran and the West were further strengthened by Iran's adherence to the Turkish-Iraqi Pact in October, 1955.<sup>61</sup>

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On January 10, 1948, the Iraqi Minister, Mr. Salih Jabr and the British Foreign Minister, Mr. Bevin initialled a draft treaty, which was signed at Portsmouth on January 15, 1948. On January 3, when the Iraqi Foreign Minister stated that negotiations between Iraq and Britain were being conducted, demonstrations broke out, and on January 16, after the text of the treaty was available to the Iraqi newspapers,<sup>62</sup> student and later on popular demonstrations were carried on, pressing for the dismissal of the government, and the repudiation of the treaty. A meeting was called by the Regent

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<sup>60</sup> Halford L. Hoskins, The Middle East, Problem Area in World Politics, (New York: Macmillan, 1954), pp. 186-187.

<sup>61</sup> Keessing's Contemporary Archives, (October 22-29, 1955) p. 14485.

<sup>62</sup> The text of the treaty was unofficial because Salih Jabr did not allow the publication of the Arab version of the treaty before his return from London for he wanted to have the chance to explain it to the nation. George Kirk, op.cit., The Middle East, 1945-1950, pp. 157-158.

on January 21, during which he discussed the situation with ministers, politicians and party representatives. After the meeting, a communiqué was issued which stipulated that the new treaty "does not realize the country's aspirations". On January 27, Prime Minister Salih Jabr resigned and a new cabinet was formed by Muhammad As-Sadr.<sup>63</sup>

There were some factors which converged to create a common front against the treaty of 1948. The Istqlal party which was opposed to association with foreign powers was against the treaty; while the communists who were working underground,<sup>64</sup> seized the opportunity to frustrate British moves in Iraq. It is also asserted that parties which were opposed to the Government, and a section of the population which was anti-British<sup>65</sup> had their due weight in sealing the treaty's fate.

Nuri As-Said came back to power in January 1949. He stayed in office for three years with the exception of the period from December 1949 to February 1950.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Majid Khadduri, Independent Iraq. A Study in Iraqi Politics Since 1932, Issued under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1951), pp. 270-272.

<sup>64</sup> Kirk, op.cit., pp. 155-156.

<sup>65</sup> John Bée, "Background to Iraq's Treaty's Fate", Great Britain and the East - Incorporating the Near East and India, 65:36, April, 1948.

<sup>66</sup> Kirk, op.cit., p. 158.

During May 1951, negotiations started between the Iraqi Government and the Iraq Petroleum Company. On August 13, an agreement was signed in Baghdad. According to the new agreement, Iraq was to receive half the profits of the Iraq Petroleum Company.<sup>67</sup> In 1955-56,<sup>68</sup> the Iraqi share from oil profits amounted to 61.1 million Iraqi Dinars which made up approximately 65% of the total budget receipts.<sup>69</sup>

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On March 22, 1946, Britain concluded a treaty with Jordan, modelled after the Iraqi treaty of 1930. The politically educated in Jordan were dissatisfied with the 1946 Treaty, and they pressed for a revision of the Anglo-Jordanian relations. On March 15, 1948, a new treaty was signed in Amman. Britain preserved the right to use the two air bases at Amman and Mafraq, and an Anglo-Jordanian Joint Defense Board was to be established to provide for the defense of the country.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Keesing's Contemporary Archives, (August 25 - September 1, 1951), p. 11672.

<sup>68</sup> The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, Quarterly Bulletin of Economic Development, No. 13, Government Budgets of Middle East Countries, (Beirut: April 1956), p. 12.

<sup>69</sup> For the Turkish-Iraqi Pact of February 24, 1955, see Chap. II, pp. 87-88. The reactions of the Arab countries to the Pact are discussed in Chap. III.

<sup>70</sup> George Lenczowski, The Middle East in World Affairs, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1952), pp. 305-306.

On December 1, 1948, King Abdullah annexed the Arab section of Palestine, and in April 1949,<sup>71</sup> the name of the country was changed to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.<sup>72</sup>

The formal incorporation, however, was announced on April 24, 1950, by the Jordanian Minister, Said al-Mufti. Jordan was on the verge of being expelled from the Arab League; but Egypt's proposal to that point was not unanimously adopted, because of the abstention of Iraq and Yemen. The British Government formally recognized the incorporation of Arab Palestine in Jordan on April 27, 1950. At the same time a de jure recognition of Israel was announced.<sup>73</sup>

On July 20, 1951, while visiting the Haram al-Sharif, King Abdullah was assassinated by Mustafa Shukri Ashu, who was thought to be an adherent of the ex-Mufti of Jerusalem.<sup>74</sup> In the event, Britain lost an ally and a stabilizing factor in Jordan was removed.

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71 Ibid., p. 306.

72 The name of the country in Arabic was actually changed in 1946. (Verbal information from Professor George Kirk, American University of Beirut, October, 1956).

73 Kirk, op.cit., pp. 311-312.

74 Esmond Wright, "Abdullah's Jordan: 1947-1951", The Middle East Journal, 5:460, Autumn, 1951.

The persecutions of Hitler aggravated the position of the Jews and the Zionist leaders again pushed forward their plan for providing a home for the Jews in Palestine. They bitterly opposed the White Paper of May 1939, because it restricted Jewish immigration to Palestine. The British regarded the White Paper mainly as an attempt to protect their strategic bases in the Middle East.<sup>75</sup> Britain needed a friendly and a co-operative Arab population, in order to be able to use the strategic bases and assets of the Arab world.

On November 29, 1947, the Assembly of the United Nations approved the Partition Plan for Palestine,<sup>76</sup> which was not put into effect. On May 14, 1948 of the following year, with the withdrawal of the British forces from Palestine, the British Mandate came to an end. On May 15, the state of Israel was proclaimed, and was given a de facto recognition by the United States immediately. On May 17, the Soviet Union also recognized Israel;<sup>77</sup> while Britain gave Israel a de facto recognition on January 29 of the following year.<sup>78</sup>

With the birth of Israel, open hostilities between the Arabs and the Israelis broke out. The Arab states coalesced in an effort to fight Israel, but they were unsuccess-

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<sup>75</sup> Kirk, op.cit., p. 188.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 251.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., pp. 268-270.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 294.

ful. Their failure in the Palestine war may be attributed to the fact that Israel surpassed them in determination and desperation. Add to this the fact that morally and financially, Israel was supported by foreign aid, while at the same time, the Arab front suffered from disunity, ill-organization and corruption.<sup>79</sup>

Under the aegis of the United Nations, a one-month truce was accepted by the Arabs and the Jews, and became effective on June 11, 1948.<sup>80</sup> A second truce was imposed by the Security Council, and came into effect on July 18. Israel in accepting the second truce was not a loser, for during the two truces, and as a result of fighting, she established her authority over a considerable amount of territory which she captured from the Arabs.<sup>81</sup> The truces opened the door for separate armistice agreements between Israel and the Arab countries. On February 24, 1949, an armistice agreement was signed between Israel and Egypt, while on March 23, another armistice agreement was signed with Lebanon.<sup>82</sup> Again, Jordan

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<sup>79</sup> Peter Calvocoressi, Survey of International Affairs, 1952, Issued under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 235.

<sup>80</sup> Kirk, op.cit., p. 276.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 282.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., pp. 294-295.



signed an armistice agreement with Israel on April 3, and it was also to bind Iraq who refused to negotiate a separate agreement with Israel.<sup>83</sup> The last Arab country to conclude the armistice agreement with Israel was Syria. The agreement was signed on July 20, 1949. By that time, Israel had already become a member of the United Nations, for her admission became effective on May 11, 1949.<sup>84</sup>

With the creation of Israel in 1948, the tension in the Middle East was symptomatic of the fear and suspicion between Israel and the Arab countries; for each side suspected that the other was plotting war. In order to allay fears on both sides, a Three-Power Declaration was issued on May 25, 1950, by Britain, the United States and France. The three powers pledged themselves to oppose the use of force between the Arab states and Israel. Arms were to be given to these states for the purpose of assuring internal security and legitimate self-defense, recognizing the role which these countries may play in the defense of the Middle East as a whole. The three powers declared "their deep interest and their desire to promote the establishment and maintenance of peace and stability" in the Middle East. Also they declared

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., pp. 297-299.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., pp. 300-302.

their determination to oppose acts of violation which aim at changing the present Arab-Israel frontiers, and further, they emphasized their intention to take action both within and without the United Nations to keep the frontiers as they are.<sup>85</sup>

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Prior to World War II, Syria and Lebanon were under French Mandate. In 1941, the pro-Axis forces in Syria were defeated by Britain and Free France, after which Britain supported France in proclaiming the independence of Syria and Lebanon.<sup>86</sup> When the Lebanese elections were allowed to take place, the Nationalists were victorious. Thus the French, in an effort to consolidate their doubtful position, arrested the Lebanese President and the cabinet; but British pressure on the French was responsible for reinstating them.<sup>87</sup> Again, in December 1945, an agreement was concluded between Britain and France, in which they pledged independence to Syria and Lebanon.<sup>88</sup> France, however, was not willing to grant Syria and Lebanon their independence, without retaining some privileges in the area. Britain's attempts to have the two sides reach

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<sup>85</sup> "Tripartite Declaration Regarding Security in the Middle East", The Department of State Bulletin, 22:886, June 5, 1950.

<sup>86</sup> British Information Services, London, Reference Division, "Notes on Britain and the Middle East", op.cit., p. 9.

<sup>87</sup> Bullard, op.cit., p. 145.

<sup>88</sup> British Information Services, London, Reference Division, "Notes on Britain and the Middle East", loc.cit.

an agreement were to no avail. Finally, by the end of 1946, British and French forces withdrew from Syria and Lebanon,<sup>89</sup> after the two countries appealed to the United Nations.

With the end of the Arab-Israeli hostilities of 1948, the smooth exterior of order in the Arab countries concealed signs of disorder and instability. Syria became the victim of a series of political crises which were ushered in by General Husni Za'im's coup d'état on March 30, 1949.<sup>90</sup> The second coup d'état took place in the same year on August 14, when Colonel Sami Hinnawi and a group of army officers arrested and put to death Marshal Za'im and Prime Minister Muhsin Al-Barazi.<sup>91</sup> The year 1949 witnessed a third coup d'état, when on December 19, Colonel Adib Al-Shishakli seized power and arrested General Sami Hinnawi, whom he accused of plotting against the safety of the army.<sup>92</sup> In February, 1954, President Adib Al-Shishakli was ousted from the Syrian scene,<sup>93</sup> and later on constitutional life was restored to Syria.

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89 Bullard, op.cit., pp. 145-146.

90 "Syria's Coup d'état", The Middle East Journal, 3:316, Summer, 1949.

91 "Syria's Second Coup d'état", The Middle East Journal, 3:442, Autumn, 1949.

92 "Development of the Quarter: Comment and Chronology", The Middle East Journal, 4:218, Spring, 1950.

93 "Development of the Quarter: Comment and Chronology", The Middle East Journal, 8:203, Spring, 1954.

Whereas the internal political changes in Syria and the Egyptian coup d'état of July, 1952, were partly motivated by the resentment over the Arab defeat in Palestine, Lebanon's coup d'état of September, 1952 was not so.<sup>94</sup> It was a peaceful revolution which compelled Bishara Al-Khuri to resign<sup>95</sup> on September 18.

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In 1947, a British military mission was appointed<sup>96</sup> for the purpose of training the Saudi Arabian army. However, a more recent issue of grave concern to both Britain and Saudi Arabia is the Buraimi oasis dispute. The dispute is centered around the ownership of the Buraimi oasis and the adjacent areas in the southeastern part of Arabia on the frontier of the Sheikhdome of Abu Dhabi and the Sultanate of Oman and Muscat.<sup>97</sup>

By virtue of treaties concluded between Britain and the Sheikhdome of Abu Dhabi and the Sultanate of Oman and Muscat, Britain was in control of their foreign relations, and thus<sup>98</sup> found herself involved in the Buraimi oasis dispute. The

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94 George Britt, "Lebanon's Popular Revolution", The Middle East Journal, 7:4, Winter, 1953.

95 Ibid., p. 14.

96 Lenczowski, op.cit., p. 356.

97 Alexander Melamid, "The Buraimi Oasis Dispute", Middle Eastern Affairs, 7:56, February, 1956.

98 Ibid., p. 59.

British Government resistance to the Saudi Arabian claim for the ownership of the oasis was a continuation of the British policy that was followed in the Persian Gulf since the nineteenth century. It was interested in protecting the independence of the Sheikhdoms along the western side of the Persian Gulf from outside aggression.<sup>99</sup>

The Saudi Arabian bid for the ownership of the oasis along with the adjoining areas was supported by the claim that they were occupied by the Wahhabi tribes during periods of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>100</sup>

In 1869, the Wahhabi tribes were driven away from the Buraimi oasis by the Sheikhs of Trucial Oman and since then the oasis came to be considered as part of one of the surrounding Sheikhdoms or as a neutral territory. Thus, Saudi Arabia reasserted her claim to the oasis after it was free of her control for more than eighty years.<sup>101</sup>

According to agreements concluded between the Sheikhs of Abu Dhabi and the Albu Falah tribe whose grazing ground is to the north of Buraimi, Abu Dhabi came to claim six villages in the Buraimi oasis,<sup>102</sup> whose inhabitants are of the Albu Falah tribe.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> J.B. Kelly, "The Buraimi Oasis Dispute", International Affairs, 32:319-320, July, 1956.

<sup>100</sup> Melamid, op.cit., p. 58.

<sup>101</sup> Kelly, op.cit., pp. 323-324.

<sup>102</sup> The villages are Muwaigih, Mataradh, Al Ain, Jimi, Qattara and Hilli.

<sup>103</sup> Melamid, loc.cit.

The Naim tribe whose grazing ground is to the east of the Buraimi oasis, and is adjacent to the Sultanate of Oman and Muscat, allied itself with the Sultan of Oman and Muscat who came to control the village of Buraimi. The village of Hamasa is also claimed by Oman and Muscat.<sup>104</sup>

On August 31, 1952, Saudi Arabia occupied the village of Hamasa. A standstill agreement was signed at Riyadh on October 26. However, as Hamasa was situated among other villages of the oasis, Saudi Arabian supplies sent to Hamasa would have to pass through areas controlled by Trucial Oman or by its allies which would often result in fighting. It was also alleged that Turki Ben Utaishan, a Saudi Arabian officer, who was stationed at Hamasa had promised food to the neighboring tribes if they would support the Saudi Arabian claim for the oasis.<sup>105</sup>

The arbitration agreement was finally concluded in June, 1954. It required that both the Saudi Arabians and the Trucial Oman troops were to withdraw from the Buraimi oasis. A police force consisting of fifteen men from each side was to be stationed in the oasis during arbitration. The arbitration tribunal was to consist of five members. One member, Sir Reader Bullard, was nominated by Britain in the name of the Sultan of

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., pp. 58-59.

Oman and Muscat, and the Sheikh of Abu Dhabi. Another member, Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Yusuf Yasin, was nominated by Saudi Arabia. These two representatives were to elect two neutral members. They elected Judge Mahmud Hassan of Pakistan and Judge Ernesto de Dihaigo of Cuba, while Dr. Charles de Visscher of Belgium was appointed as the chairman of the tribunal.<sup>106</sup>

Finally, on September 11, 1955, the Buraimi oasis dispute entered arbitration which soon met with failure. Sir Hartley Shawcross, the Counsel for the British Government, accused Saudi Arabia of bribing the tribes of the Buraimi oasis, and he supported his charges by witnesses. The Saudi Arabian Counsel also brought witnesses and one of them was Abdullah Al Quraishi, a Saudi Arabian officer against whom Sir Hartley had earlier submitted a complaint.<sup>107</sup>

On September 16, 1955, Sir Reader Bullard, the British representative on the tribunal, offered his resignation. He held that his resignation was due to the partiality that was displayed on the part of Sheikh Yusuf Yasin.<sup>108</sup>

In October 1955, a British officer asked an exploration party of the Arabian American Oil Company that was escorted by

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106 Ibid., pp. 60-61.

107 Ibid., p. 61.

108 Ibid.

a Saudi Arabian military force to leave the Buraimi oasis. After the exploration party left, the Saudi Arabian force came back to the area. On October 26, Trucial Oman levies who were headed by the British, expelled the military force from the oasis. On the same day, Sir Anthony Eden announced in the House of Commons that as arbitration had failed to provide a compromise for the Buraimi oasis dispute, the British Government, the Sheikh of Abu Dhabi and the Sultan of Oman and Muscat felt that legally a fair frontier between Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi would be the 1952 line, but that they had decided on the 1937 line which was more in favor of Saudi Arabia.

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The Anglo-Egyptian controversy was rooted in the inconsistency of the opposing outlooks of the British and the Egyptians, for the problem was regarded from different angles by each party. In the surge of Egyptian national aspirations, they demanded first of all the evacuation of the British troops from the Canal base, and strove to secure their sovereign independence at any cost. The British on their part, thought primarily of the defense of the Middle East against Soviet aggression,<sup>110</sup> for to them the Middle East is an important key in the British security system and a vital region in British defense strategy.

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109 Ibid., p. 62.

110 Kirk, op.cit., p. 117.



On December 20, 1945, Egypt submitted a note to Britain maintaining that the 1936 Treaty was an infringement on Egyptian sovereignty. The international emergency which necessitated the treaty had already passed. To Britain, the Azerbaijan crisis of 1945-46, and the Soviet pressing demands on Turkey meant that the danger of aggression was still existing. In a note to the Egyptian Government on January 27, 1946, Britain expressed her readiness to negotiate with Egypt, stressing that the principle of mutual assistance, on which the 1936 Treaty was based should be maintained.<sup>111</sup>

The Egyptian Prime Minister Ismail Sidqi went to London and between 17 and 25 October 1946, had five meetings with Foreign Secretary, Bevin, which resulted in a new draft treaty. British forces were to evacuate Cairo, Alexandria and the Nile Delta by March 31, 1947, and the rest of Egypt by September 1, 1949. A Joint Defense Board was envisaged to make recommendations to the two Governments, in the event of a danger to the security of the Middle East.<sup>112</sup> The chances of the new treaty were destroyed, when negotiations broke off because of the question of the future of the Sudanese and their right to self-determination. On December 9, Sidqi resigned, and a Sa'dist

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Ibid.

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Ibid., p. 125.

and Liberal Government headed by Nuqrashi was formed. Conversations on the Sudan question were pursued in January 1947, between Nuqrashi and the British Ambassador; but they were fruitless. On March 3, 1947, the Egyptian Government announced that they had decided to appeal to the Security Council.<sup>113</sup>

The Egyptian complaint which was presented to the Security Council on July 11, claimed that the presence of British troops on Egyptian territory without the consent of Egypt was not only an infringement on Egypt's sovereignty, but also a contradiction to the United Nations Charter. The complaint also declared that since 1899 Britain had pursued a policy which aimed at separating the Sudan from Egypt and thus impairing the unity of the Nile Valley.<sup>114</sup>

On August 5, Nuqrashi spoke to the Security Council asserting that there was no necessity for the 1936 Treaty, and that Anglo-Egyptian relations should be based on the United Nations Charter. He then reviewed the historical situation in the Sudan since 1821 when it was conquered by Muhammad Ali, and later stressed the point that it was not an imperialistic policy on the part of Egypt to desire the unity of the Nile Valley for both Egypt and the Sudan were one unit.<sup>115</sup>

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113 Ibid., pp. 129-130.

114 Ibid., pp. 131-132.

115 Ibid., pp. 132-133.

Sir Alexander Cadogan who spoke on behalf of Britain said that from the legal viewpoint, the revision of the 1936 Treaty before its expiry required the consent of both Britain and Egypt. As the British Government sympathized with the Egyptian demand for the revision of the 1936 Treaty, they were ready to withdraw the British troops from Egypt, provided that the conditions for doing so were reasonable. He also pointed out that the failure of the Bevin-Sidqi agreement was due to Egypt's refusal to agree to the right of the Sudanese to self determination.<sup>116</sup>

On August 11, the Egyptian question was discussed by the Security Council. Poland's representative supported Egypt's request for the evacuation of the British forces from Egypt and the Sudan. However, he felt that no solution could be offered for the question of the self-government of the Sudan which was to be left to the United Nations. The same attitude was taken by the Russian delegate, Gromyko.<sup>117</sup>

On August 20, a draft resolution was submitted by the Brazilian delegate which recommended the resumption of direct negotiations between Egypt and Britain. It suggested that if the negotiations proved to be a failure, the dispute could be solved by peaceful means. This resolution which was supported by the United States, France and Belgium was rejected by Egypt.<sup>118</sup>

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Ibid., p. 133

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Ibid., pp. 133-134.

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Ibid., p. 134.

An Australian amendment which provided for consulting the Sudanese on their own future was also rejected by Nuqrashi, for he held that the future of the Sudanese was to be decided by the Sudan and Egypt alone. His words had an unpleasant effect on the Council for they meant that Egypt was not ready to admit the right of the Sudanese to self-determination.<sup>119</sup>

When voted upon, both the Brazilian resolution and the Australian amendment failed to obtain the seven votes that were required to make them adopted by the Council. Thus, with the adjournment of the Security Council on September 10, the Egyptian problem was still without a solution.<sup>120</sup>

In June 1950, when the Wafd was in power, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Field Marshal Sir William Slim visited Cairo, and in his talks with the Egyptian Government, he stressed the necessity of co-operation in peace time, between Britain and Egypt without prejudicing Egypt's sovereignty. He argued that Egypt could not be neutral in the cold war between the Western and the Communist Blocs on account of her strategic location. Also, if the British forces were withdrawn, and Egypt was attacked, Britain could not then ask the Commonwealth countries to send forces to Egypt. Nahhas Pasha pointed out in reply that as long as British troops remain in the country,

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Ibid., p. 135.

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Ibid.

there would be a limitation on Egypt's sovereignty. Egypt would co-operate in defending her territory against aggression; but there is no need for maintaining British troops in Egypt in peace time. Thus, any proposals which allow British troops to remain in Egypt were unacceptable.<sup>121</sup> Again, in conversations held during July, the Egyptian Foreign Minister Salah Ud-Din Bey insisted on complete evacuation, and on the unity of Egypt and the Sudan under the Egyptian Crown.<sup>122</sup>

On October 8, 1951, the Egyptian Government unilaterally announced the abrogation of the 1936 Treaty. Five days later, Britain joined with the United States, France and Turkey in inviting Egypt to participate in a Middle East Command Organization,<sup>123</sup> which aimed at the development of a defense system for the Middle East.<sup>124</sup> However, as the proposals for a Middle East Command were unacceptable to Egypt, they were rejected.<sup>125</sup>

On November 10, 1951, Britain, the United States, France and Turkey issued a statement enunciating the principles of the proposed Middle East Command. They declared that the Command

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121

Calvocoressi, Survey of International Affairs, 1951, op.cit., pp. 263-264.

122

Ibid., p. 265.

123

Ibid., pp. 258-259.

124

A fuller account of the Middle East Command proposals is found on pp. 69-71.

125

British Information Services, London, Reference Division, "Defense of the Middle East", op.cit., p. 2.

would not interfere with disputes arising within the area, nor would it affect existing arrangements such as the Tripartite Declaration of May 25, 1950, or the armistice frontier lines between Israel and the Arab countries. Again movements of troops within the state members would be made with the consent of the state concerned.

As the Four-Power proposals of October 1951 failed to be accepted by the Arabs, Britain and the United States offered proposals in late 1952 for the establishment of a Middle East Defense Organization, which was to be less rigid than the Middle East Command. However, it did not meet with success as it was rejected by the Arabs.

As an alternative to Middle East defense arrangements that were sponsored by the West, the Inter-Arab Joint Defense Alliance was signed in 1950 by Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen. Iraq signed the alliance in February 1951, while Jordan signed it in February 1952. The signatories pledged

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126 Calvocoressi, Survey of International Affairs, 1951, op.cit., p. 260.

127 Harry N. Howard, "The Development of United States Policy in the Near East, South Asia and Africa", The Department of State Bulletin, 27:938, December 15, 1952.

128 The Staff of the Brookings Institution, op.cit., p. 270.

themselves to help one another if anyone of them was attacked. The Joint Defense Alliance was also based on joining the military efforts of all the signatories in order to repel aggression.<sup>129</sup>

On the night of July 22-23, 1952, a group of army officers led by General Muhammad Neguib assumed power in Egypt.<sup>130</sup>

At the request of the new regime, the questions of the Sudan and defense were to be discussed separately.<sup>131</sup> This resulted in

an agreement between Egypt and Britain signed on February 12, 1953, which provided for the Self-Government and Self-Determination of the Sudan.<sup>132</sup>

On July 27, 1954, the Heads of Agreement on the Suez Canal base were initialled in Cairo,<sup>133</sup> which paved the way for the signature of the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement on October 19.<sup>134</sup>

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129

Calvocoressi, Survey of International Affairs, 1951, op.cit., pp. 256-257.

130

Calvocoressi, Survey of International Affairs, 1952, op.cit., p. 210.

131

British Information Services, London, Reference Division, "Defense of the Middle East", op.cit., p. 9.

132

British Information Services, London, Reference Division, "The Background of Anglo-Egyptian Relations", I.D. 735 (revised) November, 1954, p. 9.

133

British Information Services, London, Reference Division, "Defense of the Middle East", loc.cit.

134

British Information Services, London, Reference Division, "The Background of Anglo-Egyptian Relations", op.cit., p. 11.

This chapter has stated the purposes of the study and its importance. It has also presented a picture of the world situation, with the conflict of interest between the Western Democracies on one hand, and the Soviet Union and her satellites on the other. Further, the importance of the Middle East to the West has been discussed, followed by an outline of the major events that took place in the Middle East since World War II.



C H A P T E R II  
DEFENSE OF THE MIDDLE EAST

The following chapter is divided into three sections: the first is concerned with brief definitions of the terms Defense and Offense, and with the military advantages and political disadvantages of the defense of the Middle East, from the viewpoint of the Western Democracies. The second section determines the power against whom the West is interested in defending the area, and the principles that underlie its interest in doing so. Also the imminence of the communist danger, and the extent to which it is felt in the Middle East, is dealt with. The third part takes up first, the defense programs that were advanced by various quarters which aimed at defending the security of the Middle East against aggression, secondly, the Suez Canal Agreement and the Turkish-Iraqi Pact, considered by the West as important steps in constructing an effective defense organization for the Middle East.

A. What is Defense and Offense

Defense is the resistance of a country to attacks on its territory by an aggressive power. It is also the support of one country by another in resisting aggression. Offense

is an act of attacking the territory of one country by an aggressor.

Britain, the United States and the Western Democracies are interested in protecting themselves against aggression. They feel that a system of collective security is essential for the survival of freedom in the world. At present, as defense cannot be the responsibility of any one power -- since the individual strength of a single state cannot stand in the face of aggression -- several states together may build sufficient strength to act as a deterrent to a would-be aggressor. In order that each state may have the chance to pursue peaceful national existence, the Western Democracies are interested in encouraging regional defense alliances, and thus they are meeting the communist danger defensively and not offensively, because in building situations of strength in various parts of the world, the Russian expansionist drive may be halted.

On February 25, 1954, after President Eisenhower declared that Pakistan's request for American military assistance had been complied with, he said that the United States Government "has been gravely concerned over the weakness of the defensive capabilities in the Middle East", and that "regional grouping to insure security against aggression constitutes the most effective means to insure survival and progress."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Statement by the President", The Department of State Bulletin, 30:401, March 15, 1954.

1. Military Advantages of the Defense of the Middle East

Article 4 of the Suez Canal base Agreement which was signed on October 19, 1954, states: "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 Defense 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."<sup>2</sup> If, therefore, Turkey or any other Arab League country was attacked from outside, Britain has the right to return to Egypt, and to reactivate the base. Again, Article 6 of the Agreement provides that Britain and Egypt would consult immediately if there was a threat of an armed attack from outside.<sup>3</sup> The Agreement also provides that parts of the base are to be kept ready for immediate action, and were to be operated by the British Government through commercial firms with whom contracts have been concluded to this effect. The

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<sup>2</sup> "U.K. - Egyptian Agreement Regarding Suez Canal Base - Text of Main Agreement", The Department of State Bulletin, 31:734, November 15, 1954. Egypt abrogated the Suez Canal Agreement in January, 1957. See pp. 86-87.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

remainder of the base is to be under the control of Egypt.<sup>4</sup>  
Further, Article 7 provides that overflying, landing and ser-  
vicing facilities would be afforded to the Royal Air Force.<sup>5</sup>

On the other hand, Article 1 of the Turkish-Iraqi Treaty of Alliance - which was signed in Baghdad on February 24, 1955 - states: "Consistent with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, the High Contracting Parties will co-operate for their security and defense. Such measures as they agree to take to give effect to this co-operation may form the sub-  
ject of special agreements with each other."<sup>6</sup> On April 5, 1955,  
Britain formally adhered to the Turkish-Iraqi Treaty of Alliance.<sup>7</sup>

The Western Democracies are alert to the fact that the Middle East is no tower of strength. The area has no sufficient defensive strength to safeguard its security. Of crucial importance is the position of the Mediterranean to the Western

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<sup>4</sup> British Information Services, London, Reference Division, "Defense of the Middle East," Quote No. R. 2924, September 17, 1954, p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> "U.K. - Egyptian Agreement Regarding Suez Canal Base - Text of Main Agreement", op.cit., pp. 734-735.

<sup>6</sup> "Pact of Mutual Co-operation Between Iraq and Turkey", The Middle East Journal, 9:177, Spring, 1955.

<sup>7</sup> Keessing's Contemporary Archives, (February 19-26, 1955), p. 14137.

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strategic thinking. There are in the Mediterranean British and American forces consisting of the United States Sixth Fleet, and the British Mediterranean Fleet, with its headquarters in Malta. Units of the Royal Air Force (Middle East)<sup>9</sup> are scattered over an area ranging from Malta to Aden, and from Cyprus to Nairobi. There are several airfields that are accessible to British air forces in the Middle East. Article 7 of the Suez Canal base Agreement provides for "over-flying, landing and servicing facilities for notified flights of aircrafts under Royal Air Force control." Again, Britain as a member of the Turkish-Iraqi Mutual Defense Pact is afforded facilities,<sup>10</sup> for using the two Iraqi airfields of recently evacuated Habbaniyah and Shuaiba. Also by virtue of treaty arrangements, Britain is in control of the airfield of Mafraq in Jordan.

The British security system in the Middle East is based on a chain of some strategic outposts. First, there is Gibraltar, which was taken from Spain in 1704, and which is now considered among the strongest fortresses in the world. Then, there is Malta, which was seized by the French from the Knights of

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8 Gordon East, "The Mediterranean: Pivot of Peace and War", Foreign Affairs, 31:619-620, July, 1953.

9 George Fielding Eliot, "Strategic Problems of the Middle East", Middle Eastern Affairs, 4:321, October, 1953.

10 Keesing's Contemporary Archives, loc.cit.

St. John in 1798, to be taken later by Britain. The significance of Malta lies in its being a stop and a naval station. Also, it may be used as a base for military operations. Another important strategic base is the island of Cyprus, which was under Turkish control; but was occupied by Britain in 1878, and in 1925, became a Crown colony. The importance of Cyprus has been augmented by the abandoning of the naval bases of Alexandria and Haifa, and by the evacuation of the Suez Canal base. Again, Aden which became a Crown colony in 1938, is considerably important as a fueling station and a port. Also, it has potentialities as an air base.<sup>11</sup>

The treaties with Egypt and Jordan, the Turkish-Iraqi Pact, and the chain of strategic bases in the Middle East were designed to give Britain advantageous starting points, to render the Middle East accessible in the event of an international emergency.

Considering the local forces of the Middle Eastern countries, the Turkish army stands out as a reliable force with the willingness to resist communist designs against Turkey. In the post-war period, Turkey had to spend heavily in order to strengthen her army and defense. More than a thousand million dollars and quantities of material were received from the United

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Halford L. Hoskins, The Middle East, Problem Area in World Politics, (New York: Macmillan, 1954), pp. 258-259.

States which contributed to the creation of a modern Turkish  
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army.

Ever since the adherence of Iran and Iraq to the Pact of Mutual Co-operation with Turkey, the process of re-organizing and re-equipping the two armies has been going on.

The Iraqi army numbers around 50,000 men. It comprises two desert divisions and one mountain unit. There is also a  
13  
small armored force with British and American equipment.

The Egyptian army which is 100,000 strong is the largest among Arab armies. It is organized in three divisions, and  
14  
there is an armored formation. Since September, 1955, the equipment of Egypt has considerably increased as a result of  
15  
the arms deal with the Soviets.

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12 Sir Knox Helm, "Turkey and Her Defense Problems", International Affairs, 30:436-437, October, 1954.

13 The New York Times, (New York: January 3, 1957).

14 The Times, (London: October 30, 1956).

15 According to the U.S. News and World Report, the amount of Russian equipment that Egypt received is estimated as follows: 420 million dollars' worth of equipment:

50 Ilyushin jet bombers

100 MIG fighters

300 medium and heavy tanks

100 armored personnel carriers

500 field, anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns

Quantities of bazookas, other rocket launchers, mines, radar, radio equipment.

2 destroyers, 20 torpedo boats

1,000 instructors and technicians (British Source).

U.S. News and World Report, (Ohio: November 23, 1956), p. 35.

The Syrian army numbers around 65,000 men.<sup>16</sup> It is organized into eight brigades. There are also armored units.<sup>17</sup>

Jordan has a well-equipped infantry division along with an armored formation. The National Guard of Jordan numbers around 30,000.<sup>18</sup>

Both the Lebanese and the Saudi Arabia armies are small, the first being 8,300,<sup>19</sup> and the second 7,500.<sup>20</sup>

The regular army of Israel is 50,000 strong. However, Israel can mobilize about 250,000 people into 16 brigades including parachute formations.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> The New York Times, loc.cit.

<sup>17</sup> The same American source quotes the amount of equipment that Syria received from Russia as follows:  
56 million dollars' worth of equipment:  
100 medium tanks  
100 armored weapon carriers  
100 self-propelled guns  
Large quantities of other war materials  
Some aircraft.  
U.S. News and World Report, loc.cit.

<sup>18</sup> The Times, loc.cit.

<sup>19</sup> The New York Times, loc.cit.

<sup>20</sup> The New York Times, (New York: January 6, 1957).

<sup>21</sup> The Times, loc.cit.



2. Political Disadvantages of the Defense of the Middle East

At present, the prime force in the Middle East is an intensive upsurgent nationalism,<sup>22</sup> which bars any Western attempts to build a constructive defense edifice in the area. To the nationalists, defense schemes of the West are viewed as imperialistic designs, engineered to draw Middle Eastern states to the imperialistic orbit. Al-Goumhuriyah, (the semi-official organ of the Egyptian Government) wrote on April 20, 1956: "Egypt attacked the Turkish-Iraqi Pact, because it ties the Arabs to the imperialistic bloc, making them serve interests of others, by placing their natural and human assets under the direction of others, and by involving them in wars which are none of their concern."<sup>23</sup>

As time is of essence to the demands of the present defensive strategy, preparation for future wars should be embarked upon in peace time; yet politically speaking, the West cannot bring its troops to the Middle East, so that they will be already there when the first attack is launched. On the other hand, local armies could not be raised if the Middle Eastern

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<sup>22</sup> Sir Brian Horrocks, "Middle East Defense - British View", Middle Eastern Affairs, 6:38-39, February, 1955.

<sup>23</sup> Al-Goumhuriyah, (Cairo), Quoted by Al-Jareeda, (Beirut: April 21, 1956).

countries are not wholeheartedly behind the West. In fact, the Middle Eastern states who were for years under the colonial yoke, are impatient to get rid of the last vestige of Western hegemony and are at the same time determined to preserve their new acquired independence.<sup>24</sup>

The Arab-Israeli conflict disrupts the stability of the Middle East as a whole. Most of the Arab states see no point in protecting themselves against the communist danger, when the very basis of their security is jeopardized by the presence of alien Israel<sup>25</sup> in their body politic. The Arabs fear that Israel will embark on a war of expansion, while on the other hand, Israel fears that the Arabs are preparing for a "second round", aiming at driving Israel into the sea. This fear on the part of both the Arabs and the Israelites creates an atmosphere heavy with suspicion and mistrust.

Another source of tension which is to be taken into consideration is found in the disruptive rivalries between the Hashemite Bloc on one hand, and the Egyptian-Saudi-Arabian-Syrian Bloc on the other. Though such rivalries are held in check by the common fear of Israel, they are nevertheless partly responsible for the instability of the area.

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<sup>24</sup> Henry A. Byroade, "The Middle East in New Perspective", The Department of State Bulletin, 30:629, April 26, 1954.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

Apart from the fact that most of the Middle Eastern peoples consider their governments selfish and uninterested in their own good, there is in the Middle East an atmosphere of economic discontent, which is magnified by the wide gulf between classes.<sup>26</sup>

B. Defense Against Whom And For What

The Governments of the United States, Britain and the Western Democracies in general, are rooted in the concepts of equality, freedom and self-government. Britain and the United States (also the Western Democracies in general) are interested in strengthening the United Nations, which is concerned with the maintenance of international peace and security, and which provides for collective collaboration of states to block any aggressive acts aiming at disturbing world peace and security.<sup>27</sup>

The weakness of the free world will jeopardize its freedom and way of life, because it will encourage aggression by powers that aim at dominating the world.

In the pursuance of their objectives of protecting their interests in the Middle East, the Western Democracies feel they are also defending the freedom and the sovereignty of the Middle Eastern states against Soviet encroachment.

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26 Ibid.

27 Address by the President, "The Defense of Freedom", The Department of State Bulletin, 25:83-84, July 16, 1951.

1. How Imminent is the Communist Danger

Some Muslim writers assert that Islam in the Middle East is a barrier to the spread of communism, especially in its rejection of the materialistic philosophy.<sup>28</sup>

There are other writers who hold that the similarities in Islam and communism prepare the Muslims to yield to communism once the temporal aspect of Islam is stressed at the expense of the spiritual. For example, Faris has pointed out that Islam and communism have many similarities. First, they are both authoritarian in nature.<sup>29</sup> Also both consider themselves as universal communities, which aim at encouraging others to embrace their faith. Further, both Islam and communism do not believe in the original sin as Christianity. To them man goes wrong by the influence of a set of external factors. When those factors are changed, and a Muslim state is established, a sort of a utopia comes into existence. Likewise, communism asserts that once the external factors give place to certain others, a utopia would be possible and the state will wither away.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Sayed Kotb, Social Justice In Islam, Translated from the Arabic by John B. Hardie, (Washington, D.C.: American Council of Learned Societies, 1953), pp. 278-280.

<sup>29</sup> Nabih Amin Faris, "The Islamic Community and Communism", A manuscript to be published in the Islamic Review, 74: 28-29, (Beirut: March 31, 1956), pp. 2-4. June, 1956.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., pp. 29-30.

Further, whereas the resistance of the West to communism is based on its respect for the freedom of the individual, modern Muslim writings do not reflect this philosophy. Also, the average Muslim does not trust Western Democracy on account of the many grievances which he harbors against the West. These factors will weaken his resistance to communism.<sup>31</sup> Thus, "unless Muslims place their emphasis on the spiritual mission of Islam, unless they bear in mind that the raison d'etre of their faith is belief in the worship of God, the danger of sliding into communism is real and imminent."<sup>32</sup>

In most of the Middle Eastern countries, the communist parties are weak. Strong government action was taken to repress their activities.<sup>33</sup> Communism holds little appeal in Turkey and Israel, because of the Soviet policy that was followed towards those two countries.<sup>34</sup>

In the Arab countries, communism attempts to win over the support of the religious and ethnic minorities, the intelligencia, the labor class and the students. Most of these are

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Manfred Helpert, "The Implication of Communism for Islam", The Moslem World, 43:36, January, 1953.

<sup>34</sup> Mark Alexander, "Middle Eastern Battleground", The Twentieth Century, 153:206, March, 1953.

dissatisfied, either with the existing regimes,<sup>35</sup> which are not capable of introducing progressive reform programs, or with the lack of opportunity. Communism exploits the dissatisfaction of the people, who in their despondency will be attracted by the bait of the communist program which is usually characterized by clarity.<sup>36</sup>

In 1946, the Soviet Official News Agency Tass began publishing an Arabic bulletin in Beirut. Moscow and Baku broadcasting stations gave foreign languages services in Persian, Turkish (and Arabic since 1946).<sup>37</sup> These broadcasts<sup>38</sup> are devoted to attack Britain as an imperialistic power; while Russia lays stress on her role as the friend of the Middle Eastern people, espousing their national cause against the exploiting West. Further, the Soviet Union attacks the Western Democracies for their collaboration with the existing ruling classes, which aim at turning the Middle East into a base for

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<sup>35</sup> Richard N. Frye, ed., The Near East and the Great Powers, (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1951), pp. 39-40.

<sup>36</sup> Manfred Helpert, op.cit., pp. 34-35.

<sup>37</sup> Moshe Leshem, "Soviet Propaganda to the Middle East", Middle Eastern Affairs, 4:4, January, 1953.

<sup>38</sup> Sir Reader Bullard, Changes in the Middle East in the Twentieth Century, Montague Burton Lecture, (University of Nottingham, 1953-54), p. 18.

the West against Russia. Also the West attempts to tie the Middle East to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, in order to control it and to use that control to exploit the Middle East economically.<sup>39</sup>

2. Is the Communist Danger Felt in the Middle East

In the spring of 1953, Secretary John Foster Dulles made a tour in the Middle East. On his return, he issued a statement in which he said: "Many of the Arab League countries are so engrossed with their quarrels with Israel or with Great Britain or France that they pay little heed to the menace of Soviet communism."<sup>40</sup>

In the Middle East, resentment of the West is kept alive by the presence of Israel in the midst of the Arab states, and by the problem of the refugees. Prospects for a more vigorous Middle East defense are negated by a wave of anti-Western feeling throughout the Middle East. To the Arabs the West is to blame for their misfortunes, for it is Britain who promised "a national home for the Jews", and the United States who had the upper hand in the creation of Israel, and who is still nurturing her at the expense of the Arabs. Again, France's attitude

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<sup>39</sup> Leshem, op.cit., pp. 8-9.

<sup>40</sup> John Foster Dulles, "Report on the Near East", The Department of State Bulletin, 28:835, June 15, 1953.

in Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria adds to the injustices which have been committed by the West to the Arabs. On the other hand, Israel also accuses Britain of making a bid for Arab friendship at her own expense. Thus, on the whole, little attention is paid to the menace that comes from the north when each side is preoccupied with its problems. To both the Arab states and Israel, the threat to their security comes from inside the area itself. The West fears Middle East instability, because the Middle East is considered as an infectious area, which may provide the spark of a major world conflict.

There is in the Arab world a strong inclination for neutrality. Preferring to stay out of the East-West strife, the Arab states try to keep to themselves. This attitude is rooted first, in the Arab's distrust of the West, and secondly, in their fear of expansionist Israel, both of which overshadow their fear of the communist threat.

In his report on the Near East, Secretary Dulles also noted: "There is more concern where the Soviet Union is near. In general, the northern tier of nations shows awareness of the danger."<sup>41</sup>

The so-called northern tier guards the Middle East in the north, and forms a strategic arc on the eastern flank of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. This arc consists

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Ibid.



of Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Pakistan. All these countries, which form the northern tier of the Middle East, and which show more awareness of the communist danger, on account of their proximity to the Soviet Union, are linked by a well-knit mutual defense pact.

C. Defense Programs

As a sequel of the World War II, Britain encountered increasing economic hardship which resulted in a lack of leadership among the Western Democracies. This paved the way for the United States to shoulder the commitments that Britain could no longer cope with in the Middle East. In his address to Congress on January 17, 1952, Mr. Churchill noted: "Britain's power to influence the fortunes of the Middle East and guard it from aggression is far less today, now that we have laid 42  
aside our imperial responsibility for India and its armies."

Thus, the two allies Britain and the United States, who were linked by similar objectives in the Middle East strove with all their energies to dam the rushing flood of Russian influence in an area which is of crucial importance to the security of Britain, the United States and the Western Democracies in general. This situation called for the necessity

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<sup>42</sup> "Close Anglo-American Unity Urged for Defense of Global Freedom", The Department of State Bulletin, 26:118-119, January 28, 1952.

of co-ordinating Anglo-American policy in the Middle East, which was by no means an easy task, since each power had its own method of implementing its own policy. It follows then, that American policy was an important factor which had a bearing on the threads of the British policy in the Middle East. Yet the basic purpose of British policy in the Middle East did not change, although it was made to divert its path in another direction.

1. Alternative Plans

In attempting to retain a foothold in the Middle East, and to prevent other powers from extending their influence there, Britain has considered the Suez Canal zone as the nerve center of British strategy in the Middle East. British strategists felt that the strategic value of the Suez Canal base was immense, as a cornerstone in the defense edifice, since it was tried and proven in two world wars. The area is fit not only as a supply base; but also it enjoys a strategic location suitable as a military base, from which the whole Middle East could be defended.<sup>43</sup>

The advantages of the Suez Canal base site may be enumerated as follows: First there is the advantage of communications. The Canal zone is situated in such a way that it has

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<sup>43</sup> British Information Services, London, Reference Division, "The Suez Canal Base and Middle East Defense", I.D. 1174, May, 1953, pp. 2-3.

two approaches, one from the Mediterranean, and the other from the Red Sea. In addition, there are also rail and road routes radiating from the Canal zone to Libya and Tunisia in the West, to the Sudan and East Africa in the south, to Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Iraq and Iran in the east. Of considerable importance also, is the air route which connects the Suez Canal base with North West Africa. A second advantage is that of facilities and siting. It is necessary for a central base for military, naval and air installations as the Suez Canal base to have within reach labor resources, food and services. All these may be acquired from Cairo and the Nile Valley. Further, the desert area in which the Canal Zone base is situated, is not fit for cultivation, and there are some desert areas which are fit for training purposes. Also, there are suitable areas for military, naval and air installations. In the third place, there is the strategic position of the Suez Canal to be taken into consideration. The Canal Zone is the linchpin of an area which is the center of land routes between Africa, Asia and Europe. Added to this is its nearness to the international air-routes between East and West. One of these international routes passes at Cairo. The Canal is also a bridge through which naval forces from the Mediterranean may be easily transferred to the Persian Gulf, and the Indian Ocean, so that the Suez Canal provides an access from one naval tract of the Middle East to the other. Again, in the light of the extensive speed

and range of modern aerial warfare, the Suez Canal base is adequately distant from areas, which might be the first targets of aggressive attacks. Thus, the advantages of the Suez Canal zone are not found in any other area.<sup>44</sup>

Before the evacuation of the Suez Canal base, there were about 80,000 British troops stationed in the area. During World War II, the base supported 41 divisions and 65 naval and air squadrons. Support could be drawn also from army and air installations in Cyprus. Troop forces were also stationed in Cyrenaica, and naval forces in the Persian Gulf. Again, there were army, air and naval bases on Malta and at Aden, from which support could be drawn. The value of the plant was estimated at \$1 to \$2 billion.<sup>45</sup>

The importance which Britain attached to the Suez Canal base as a keystone to Middle East defense, may be illustrated by the proposals made for a Middle East Command on October 13, 1951. In order to resolve the Anglo-Egyptian dispute, and to reconcile the demands of the Egyptian national aspirations with the necessity of the Suez Canal base for the security of the

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> James W. Spain, "Middle East Defense: A New Approach", The Middle East Journal, 8:259, Summer, 1954.

Middle East, Britain, France, the United States and Turkey<sup>46</sup> proposed the formation of a Middle East Command, in which Egypt was invited to participate as a founder member on a basis of equality with the other four powers. If Egypt joined the Middle East Command, Britain would agree to the supersession of the 1936 Treaty, and would evacuate her forces from the Suez Canal base, with the exception of forces that are under the Middle East Command for the defense of the Middle East.<sup>47</sup> However, Egypt rejected the proposals for a Middle East Command. The time that was chosen for making the proposals was not favorable, for the Anglo-Egyptian controversy was at a critical stage, since the Egyptian Government had abrogated the 1936 Treaty on October 8, five days before the proposals for the establishment of a Middle East Command were made.<sup>48</sup> There were other reasons which might have had a hand in the refusal of Egypt. First, the four powers did not invite

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<sup>46</sup> British Information Services, London, Reference Division, "Defense of the Middle East", op.cit., p. 8.

<sup>47</sup> Peter Calvocoressi, Survey of International Affairs, 1951, Issued under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), pp. 258-259.

<sup>48</sup> British Information Services, London, Reference Division, "Defense of the Middle East", op.cit., pp. 8-9.

Egypt to participate in the preliminary discussions for the establishment of the Middle East Command. Secondly, at the time that the proposals were made, Israel was given assurances that her interests were taken into consideration. Also, the British Governor General of the Sudan declared that he was determined to resist any unilateral attempts to change the working of the Sudanese Condominium.<sup>49</sup>

Another plan for the defense of the Middle East was proposed in 1952, when the West sought to create a Middle East Defense Organization. However, this was also met with failure, since the co-operation of Arab states was lacking.<sup>50</sup>

The Arab states refused to join in the Western defensive arrangements because in the first place, they harbored many grievances against the West, which were symbolized by Israel in their midst, feeding their antipathy against the Western Powers who created her. Apart from the Arab-Israeli conflict, which sometimes reaches an alarming stage, the Arab states were also engrossed in disputes with the West.<sup>51</sup> Arab

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<sup>49</sup> Halford L. Hoskins, "Some Aspects of the Security Problem in the Middle East", The American Political Science Review, 47:194, March, 1953.

<sup>50</sup> John D. Jernegan, "The Middle East and South Asia - The Problem of Security", The Department of State Bulletin, 30:445, March 22, 1954.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

eyes were fixed not on the communist danger, but on the more immediate and serious danger, which might come from Israel or from the Western Powers themselves.

A very important factor inside the Middle East which had a far-reaching effect on the shaping of British policy was the awakening of national consciousness of the Middle Eastern peoples. Many of the Middle Eastern states resented Britain's subjective interest in the security of the Middle East, as a part of the security of the world as a whole. They did not want to be thrown into the tension of the East-West struggle, since they have an identity of their own which should not be sacrificed to any of the two predatory world blocs.

However, British policy was rooted in the basic conviction that security is indivisible. Thus British security as a part of world security demands that Britain should retain a foothold in the Middle East, to be able to take measures for the effective defense of the area against the communist danger, which threatens to erupt from the north. In this way, Britain claims she would be able to safeguard her own interests, as well as the interests of the Western Democracies as a whole.

The resurgent and often intransigent nationalism of the Middle Eastern peoples clashed with the international interest (with which British interest is identified) which

aimed at insuring the security of the Middle East against the Russian offensive. The outcome was the lack of vigorous and constructive schemes for the Middle East.

The stumbling block of the Arab-Israeli conflict, not only disturbs the stability of the area; but stands against any fruitful and constructive plans for the defense of the Middle East. In fact, the very existence of Israel in the Middle East is greatly responsible for the refusal of the Arabs to participate in the defense schemes of the West. Optimists may hope that time will be a healer; but under the present state of affairs, it is unlikely that the Arabs would agree to participate in any defense organization, if it includes Israel. Even if Israel were not included, communications between the Arab states would become indirect and difficult.

The West looks at Israel as an important factor in the defense of the Middle East. First, to the West apart from being a state which will introduce the leaven of Democracy in the Middle East, Israel is obviously more inclined to join the Western Powers and to contribute to the defense of the area. Secondly, there are the Israeli forces to be taken into consideration. <sup>52</sup> The Israeli army is small, but is

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<sup>52</sup> John D. Jernegan, "Middle East Defense", The Department of State Bulletin, 32:568, April 4, 1955.



a good fighting force, which has a remarkable sense of unity, and is able to defend the country against outside aggression. The airforce is also small, yet it is also highly efficient. So is the Israeli reserve training. Israel can also offer the use of Haifa and Elath at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba, to be used as bases for the West.<sup>53</sup>

In the present critical international situation, Britain is reaping the consequences of her Palestine policy in the whole Arab world.<sup>54</sup> There is a wave of anti-British feeling that is sweeping the Middle East. The West attributes this to two factors: First, it is attributed to the rampant xenophobia in the Middle East, and secondly, the West thinks that it is rooted in the inequalities of the social and economic system, which deepen the cleavage between the few rich and many poor. It follows, that the poor people will in their despondency endanger the interests of the powerful class, who will use their xenophobia against the West.<sup>55</sup>

The present state of affairs, however, may be attributed to certain disagreeable features of the British policy which was pursued in the Middle East.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Sir Brian Horrocks, op.cit., p. 39.

<sup>54</sup> Albert Hourani, "The Decline of the West in the Middle East: I", Reprinted from International Affairs, 29:40, January, 1953.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., pp. 22-23.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

The importation of the Zionists into Palestine proved to be a source of additional discord and friction, since it incurred Arab resentment which had its due weight in influencing Britain's position in the Arab world as a whole.

British policy was not resolute or consistent, in that it was not based on long-term planning, which took into consideration the consequences and effects of the implementation of particular policy measures in the Middle East. One characteristic of British policy in the Middle East was its attempt to avoid to commit intself to one party, so that the other party, whose support may one day be needed, would not be antagonized. Yet a time will come when choice becomes inevitable, and it is wise to make it in favor of the party, whose good will is more desired.<sup>57</sup>

Britain is interested in securing and maintaining the friendship of the majority of the Middle Eastern population, in order to have easy access to Middle Eastern bases, and to use the Arab assets among friendly populations. Britain cannot afford to be distrusted by the majority of the population of the Middle East. Also, Britain had been at pains to prevent the possibility of Russia's turning against her the Arabs of

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<sup>57</sup> Albert Hourani, "The Decline of the West in the Middle East: II", Reprinted from International Affairs, 29:157, April, 1953.

the Middle East, yet her policy of supporting both the Arabs and the Jews in Palestine was not intelligent, for Israel was considered as important as all the rest of the Arab countries, whose support and good will were more needed in the long run.<sup>58</sup>

Again, under a facade of independence in the Middle Eastern states, Britain's policy was equivocal. At one time, it interfered and at other times it did not, and this made the policies of the Middle Eastern states themselves unstable. Also, Britain followed a policy of "wait and see", so that decision was left to the last moment possible, which made British policy lack consistency in objectives. It was also not wise, since there were many social and economic problems waiting to be solved. Further, British policy tended to support both parties, and when choice became inevitable, it favored the stronger side. The interest of the other party could not be laid aside for the sake of any commodious course that was suitable for the moment. This policy also, paved the way for intransigence on both sides, since the victor believed that Britain supported his enemy, while the loser believed that Britain could have helped but refrained.<sup>59</sup>

As British policy was not able to establish a Middle East defense system based on the Suez Canal, the balance rose

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., pp. 157-158.

in favor of Cyprus as a substitute, particularly after the abandonment by the British of the naval bases of Alexandria and Haifa, and after the evacuation of the Suez Canal base.

The island guards the southern flank of Turkey, which is 40 miles away to the north. It also protects the naval approaches to Syria which is 60 miles distant to the east. Further, Cyprus is a center for the defense of the Suez Canal which is 260 miles to the south.<sup>60</sup> Again, Cyprus is fit to be used as a central military base, while the port of Famagusta may become a substitute for Alexandria and Haifa. In addition to this, the geographical situation of Cyprus is useful in war, for Moscow is 1500 air miles away and the oil center of Baku is 1000 miles distant. Also, the industrial center of Rostov is 900 miles away, while the oil fields of Rumania can be reached at a distance of 800 miles.<sup>61</sup>

After the evacuation of the Suez Canal base, and the withdrawal of the British troops from Iraq, according to the recent Anglo-Iraqi Agreement, Cyprus became the key center for air and land forces in peace time, which are kept as a reserve to be used in sudden emergencies.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Halford L. Hoskins, The Middle East: Problem Area in World Politics, op.cit., p. 259.

<sup>61</sup> Halford L. Hoskins, "Some Aspects of the Security Problem of the Middle East", op.cit., p. 196.

<sup>62</sup> Al-Jareeda, (September 31, 1955).

However, one of the shortcomings of Cyprus is that in time of war, it may become difficult of access by the sea.<sup>63</sup> Also, it is a dubious matter that Cyprus would effectively defend and control the Suez Canal.<sup>64</sup> Still a further weakness of Cyprus as a base stems from its current instability, as a result of the controversy on the future status of the island, between Britain and Turkey on one hand, and Greece on the other.<sup>65</sup>

There is also the naval base of Iskanderun to be considered. It is situated to the south east of Turkey, and may be covered by Cyprus from the sea. Also, it is the gate which may open the way for the invasion of Syria.<sup>66</sup> The significance of Iskanderun has also increased after the evacuation of the Suez Canal base. Apart from its being a naval base, it is also a center of a network of communications. Further, it may be used as a base from which attacks on Russia could be launched. It is also necessary for the retreating forces in times of emergency.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Cyril Falls, "Egypt, the Sudan and the Middle East", The Illustrated London News, 222:310, February, 1953.

<sup>64</sup> Halford L. Hoskins, "Some Aspects of the Security Problem in the Middle East", op.cit., pp. 196-197.

<sup>65</sup> Anthony Eden, "Cyprus: An International Situation", Vital Speeches of the Day, 22:355, April 1, 1956.

<sup>66</sup> Gordon East, op.cit., p. 633.

<sup>67</sup> Yusuf Ibish, "Adhaf Al-Siyasah Al-Kharijiyah Al-Amerikiyah", Published by the Permanent Alumni Conference for the Problems of the Arab World, (Beirut), p. 18.

Apart from the defense plan that was based on the Suez Canal, there is another plan which is indigenous in nature. It is embodied in the Inter-Arab Joint Defense Alliance, which was signed in 1950 by Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen. Iraq and Jordan, who were first reluctant, finally signed the pact, Iraq in February 1951, and Jordan in February 1952, after King Abdullah was assassinated.<sup>68</sup> The Inter-Arab Joint Defense Alliance had been considered as an indigenous reaction to the Middle East Command, and the Middle East Defense Organization, that were proposed by the West. By 1953, the Arab League Security Pact was ratified by all the members of the Arab League, with the exception of Libya. Its purpose was two-fold: In the first place, it aimed at the co-ordination of Arab military planning, in case there will be a "second round" with Israel. Thus, its first target was Israel and not the Soviet Union. Secondly, it aimed at organizing a security front, with which the West will have to come to agreement. A principal objective was the creation of an army of 150,000 recruited from all the Arab countries.<sup>69</sup>

After Secretary of State John Foster Dulles toured the Middle East, he stated in his report about the trip: "A Middle East defense organization is a future rather than

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<sup>68</sup> Peter Calvocoressi, Survey of International Affairs, 1951, op.cit., pp. 256-257.

<sup>69</sup> James W. Spain, op.cit., pp. 252-253.

immediate possibility." He also noted that many of the Arab League countries were little concerned with the communist danger, yet "there is more concern where the Soviet Union is near. In general, the northern tier of nations shows awareness of the danger." He then concluded that a collective security system "should grow from within, out of common destiny and common danger." Thus, if some of the Middle Eastern states were willing to build up their strength, in order to defend themselves against the communist danger, the United States would be willing to assist them.

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In view of all the difficulties which encountered the Western efforts in building up the security of the Middle East, the idea was temporarily shelved. However, a new plan for the defense of the Middle East was proposed by the United States. It was based on strengthening the northern peripheral states of the Middle East, provided that they were interested in strengthening themselves as a measure of defense against the Soviet Union.

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The new approach to the defense of the Middle East springs from the unwillingness of the Arabs to participate in defense schemes under the leadership of the West. Thus, by shifting the zone of defense of the Middle East further to

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70 John Foster Dulles, loc.cit.

71 James W. Spain, op.cit., p. 261.

the north, the old pattern of strategy, which was based on the Suez Canal base, as the key for the defense of the Middle East, became less significant. This also made possible the by-passing of the Arab-Israeli conflict, which is a major source of tension in the Middle East, and also the North-African dispute.

From the standpoint of the West, the bright spot in the Middle East picture is Turkey. Apart from her strategic location, Turkey has a population which numbers 22 million. The Turkish army is well equipped and is rated as an efficient and reliable force.<sup>72</sup> Added to this is the fact that as a Muslim country, Turkey might play the role of a mediator between the West and the Muslim countries of the Middle East. The West also takes into consideration the willingness of the Turkish people to fight, and their determination to parry the communist menace, and to safeguard their freedom at any<sup>73</sup> cost.

As the West is aware of the weakness of the Arab states in the Middle East, the scale rose in favor of Turkey as a possible meeting point for three Western defense organizations: It is the eastern anchor of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the western anchor of the defense organization of

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72 Ibid.

73 The Staff of the Brookings Institution, Major Problems of the United States Foreign Policy, 1954, (Menasha, Wisconsin: George Banta Publishing Company, 1954), p. 282.



South Asia, and the center for a well-knit defense system of the northern tier of the Middle East.

Turkey and Greece sought to be members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and were encouraged by United States' acquiescence. In 1950, they were invited to participate as consultants, and in 1951, the United States proposed their admittance as full members to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. However, this presented difficulties; since some of the small states of North-Western Europe were apprehensive that the inclusion of Turkey and Greece, would involve them into a cumbersome relationship with the Balkans and the Middle East. Britain felt that Turkey's role as the focal center in the defense edifice of the Middle East was much more significant and natural than her being the eastern anchor of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. However, Britain's position was modified in July, 1951, and she accepted Turkey and Greece as members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, as a workable alternative based on a defense arrangement among the Middle Eastern states was lacking.

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Henry L. Roberts, et al., Britain and the United States - Problems in Co-operation, (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1953), pp. 155-156.

There was a remarkable shift in the British pattern of strategy for the defense of the Middle East. The old strategy which was based on the Suez Canal base, as the keystone for the defense of the Middle East, became overshadowed by the northern tier concept. That Britain supported this new approach may be evidenced in the statement of the then Foreign Minister, Anthony Eden, about the conclusion of the Turkish-Pakistani Pact, (on February 19, 1954). He said: "Her Majesty's Government welcome the enforcement of the ties of friendship between their ally Turkey, and a fellow member of the Commonwealth."<sup>75</sup>

The shift in the defense strategy of Britain in the Middle East came about as a result of various factors. In the first place, there was a basic change in the international scene, as the world became divided into two hostile blocs. Also, since the threat to the Middle East did not come any longer from Germany or Italy, there was a need for the rethinking and the revising of the British defense strategy in the Middle East. Again, another important factor, which made Britain abandon the Suez Canal base, was the extreme nationalism in the Middle East, and particularly in Egypt. The presence of British troops in

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<sup>75</sup> Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), February 22, 1954, p. 14, Quoted by James W. Spain, op.cit., p. 260.

the Suez Canal base was repugnant to Egypt, who insisted on complete evacuation. Still, a third factor which made Britain divert her attention to the new approach of the northern tier was the Arab-Israeli conflict, which negated prospects for any constructive defense planning in the area.<sup>76</sup>

Apart from these three factors, there were two more recent developments which had a far-reaching influence in making Britain shift her zone of defense in the Middle East further to the north. The first development was the advent of nuclear weapons and their availability to both camps; while the second was the accession of Turkey to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.<sup>77</sup>

In the debate on the Heads of Agreement of the Suez Canal base, in the House of Commons, (on July 29, 1954), Sir Winston Churchill referred to "the tremendous changes that have taken place in the whole strategic position in the world which make the thoughts which were well-founded and well-knit together a year ago, utterly obsolete."<sup>78</sup>

During the debate, Mr. Head, the Secretary of State for War then, also emphasized the change in the pattern of

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<sup>76</sup> Sir Brian Horrocks, op.cit., p. 34.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), House of Commons, Official Records, London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, V. 531, p. 752, July 29, 1954.

strategy in the Middle East, which was the result of the advent of the Hydrogen bomb, together with other thermo-nuclear weapons. He noted that the ability of Britain to equip, train and dispatch overseas big numbers of troops, would be limited. Also, the ability to maintain troops at places distant from home would be to a great extent restricted. Thus, large-scale land campaigns in the Middle East in future wars have become less likely.<sup>79</sup> Further, the advent of the destructive weapons "puts a premium on dispersion and is very much against concentration", so that a part of British strategic policy would be the avoidance<sup>80</sup> of big atomic targets.

Again, Mr. Head pointed out that the modernizing and re-equipping of the Turkish army, with the help of the United States, and the willingness and determination of Turkey to defend herself against aggression, have contributed to improve<sup>81</sup> the chances for a successful defense of the Turkish territory. It follows then, that it became possible for Britain to participate in the "more forward strategy on Turkey's right flank", which made Egypt remote relatively speaking, from the area in<sup>82</sup> which the war would most likely take place.

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 728.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., pp. 727-728.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 278.

## 2. Results

From the standpoint of the West, its defense efforts have two results. They were first, the Suez Canal Agreement and secondly, the Turkish-Iraqi Pact.

### a. The Suez Canal Agreement

On October 19, 1954, Britain and Egypt signed a seven-year Agreement in Cairo. Article 4 of the Agreement included Egypt's recognition of her mutual interest in the security of Turkey, for in the event of an attack upon a member of the Arab League or Turkey, Egypt promised that she would afford to Britain the facilities to reactivate the Suez Canal base, and to put it on a war footing.<sup>83</sup>

When the Suez Canal Agreement was concluded in 1954, Sir Ralph Stevenson, then British Ambassador to Egypt remarked that the Agreement was "a skinny bird but could be fattened up."<sup>84</sup>

The Agreement was a starting point for developing and strengthening Anglo-Egyptian relations. Without Anglo-Egyptian co-operation the terms of the treaty were useless. Although according to the Agreement Britain could return to Egypt to reactivate the base in the event of an attack on the Arab countries or on Turkey, it means very little to go back to a hostile country.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> "U.K. - Egyptian Agreement Regarding Suez Canal Base - Text of Main Agreement", loc.cit.

<sup>84</sup> The Economist, 182:16, January 5, 1957.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

After the conclusion of the Suez Canal Agreement, relations between Britain and Egypt deteriorated and two years after the signature of the Agreement, Britain and Egypt were at war with one another which resulted in the abrogation of the Suez Canal Agreement by the Egyptian Government in January, 1957.<sup>86</sup>

b. The Turkish-Iraqi Pact

The Turkish-Iraqi Pact which was signed in Baghdad on February 24, 1955,<sup>87</sup> forged a significant link in the strategic line of Western defense arrangements. It also closed a gap in the strategic arc of the northern tier of the Middle East.

Iraq was the first Arab country to take up a role in Western defense arrangements for the Middle East. It is also the first Arab country to abandon neutrality in the East-West struggle, linking herself to a pact designed specifically against the communist danger.<sup>88</sup>

A significant development from the standpoint of the West, was that the Turkish-Iraqi Pact was not directed against Israel. In the House of Commons, during the debate on the new Anglo-Iraqi Defense Agreement (signed on April 4, 1955), Sir Anthony Eden noted that the Turkish-Iraqi Pact was a desirable

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Keesing's Contemporary Archives, op.cit., p. 14058.

<sup>88</sup> The Christian Science Monitor, (Boston: February 25, 1955).

development, "because this is the first time an Arab state is looking other than simply towards Israel". The British Minister of State then, Mr. Nutting, also referred to the importance of the Turkish-Iraqi Pact, as an arrangement which would deter Soviet aggression, and expressed his hope that it would expand by including other Middle Eastern countries.<sup>89</sup>

This chapter has been concerned with three major points. In the first place, it has dealt with the military advantages and the political disadvantages of the defense of the Middle East. In the second place, it has determined whence the danger to the security of the Middle East may come, and the basic convictions underlying the West's decision to stand in the face of Soviet aggression. The last part of the chapter has discussed the different plans that have been advocated to meet the defense problem of the Middle East, along with the results achieved in the creation of a defense system for the area.

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Keesing's Contemporary Archives, op.cit., pp. 14137-14138.

## C H A P T E R   I I I

### REACTIONS IN THE ARAB COUNTRIES

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the reactions of the Arab countries to Western attempts designed to draw them into defensive alliances against the Communist Bloc. First, the reaction of the Hashemite Bloc, consisting of Iraq and Jordan is discussed. With the conclusion of the Turkish-Iraqi Pact on February 24, 1955, Iraq became tied to Western defensive arrangements. At present, Jordan is torn between Iraq on the one hand, and Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Syria on the other, and is unwilling to commit herself to either side. The Egyptian-Saudi Arabian-Syrian Bloc finds no advantages in being thrown into the tensions of the East-West struggle, and thus is in favor of an indigenous defensive pact that is isolated from the West. Finally, Lebanon's attitude towards joining defensive alliances sponsored by the West is discussed, stressing the point that Lebanon is neutral between the two Arab blocs, and that she prefers to stay aloof from agreements with either side.

It has been stated before that since World War II, three significant developments have taken place in the Middle East. In the first place, the influence of the Western European Powers has undergone a fundamental change. Their power



declined rendering them less able to play the part which their interests demand in the area. A second development is the emergence of the United States, after World War II, and her growing interest in the Middle East. A third development is the remarkable growth of nationalism,<sup>1</sup> in the Middle Eastern countries, which stood firmly in the face of Western attempts to provide a security system for the Middle East against Soviet aggression.

The Western Powers feel that in the present world situation, the small countries of the Middle East cannot afford to be neutral, for they would be burying their heads in the sands of the concept of neutrality between the two major blocs of the world. They feel that this would give the Middle East countries a false feeling of protection, and eventually would result in their sinking to the status of Russian satellites. Thus, as world security is indivisible, the security of the vital and strategic Middle East is necessary to the security of the Western Powers and the world in general. The Arab countries on the other hand, prefer to be left to themselves. They see no point in being forced into the East-West strife which primarily is not their concern. They feel that if the West considers the Soviet Union

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<sup>1</sup> The Staff of the Brookings Institution, Major Problems of the United States Foreign Policy, (Menasha, Wisconsin: George Banta Publishing Company, 1954), pp. 260-262.

moves threatening to the security of the Middle East, this very security is more threatened by the Western Powers themselves, for whereas the Russian threat is little felt in the Middle East, the Western danger is more immediate since many of the Middle Eastern countries have been under Western hegemony.<sup>2</sup> Apart from these two dangers, the Arab countries believe that there is a more real and fundamental danger in the existence of the state of Israel in the midst of the Arab countries. Their security is jeopardized by Israel, and any other danger is false, since it distracts Arab minds from Israel to another direction.

Thus, the clash between Arab nationalism and its fear of the Israeli threat on one hand, and the Western Powers' concern to safeguard the security of the Middle East area against Russian expansion resulted in a strong inclination towards neutrality in most of the Arab countries. This is discernable in the refusal or hesitation of most of the Arab countries to join Western defensive alliances against the Soviet Union. Most of the Arab countries find refuge in disillusioned neutrality as an outcome of a host of grievances against the Western Powers. Their neutrality thwarts Western efforts to draw them into pacts, which first and foremost acknowledge the Soviet threat as the main threat, and thus rendering perforce the Israeli threat as a secondary or less important one.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 275.

A. The Hashemite Bloc

The Hashemite Bloc consists of the two Hashemite Kingdoms, Iraq and Jordan whose rulers belong to the same family, namely that of Hashem. After the formation of the Arab League, a deep political cleavage was noticed which divided the League into two camps: On one hand, there was the Hashemite Bloc of Iraq and Jordan, and on the other, there was another bloc consisting of Egypt and Saudi Arabia, while Syria and Lebanon were torn between the two.

There are many factors which converged to create a wide gulf between the two blocs of the Arab League, and even the existence of Israel, which acts as a unifying factor among the Arab countries is sometimes not enough to create more cooperative attitudes among the states concerned. Egypt, who considers herself the leader and the spokesman of the Arab League, is eager to preserve and maintain her primacy over the Arab countries. She is determined that such leadership shall not pass to Iraq. Therefore, it follows that any pacts or defensive alliances which aim at strengthening Iraq

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<sup>3</sup> Gamal Abdul Nasser pointed out that Egypt, by virtue of her geographical location between Asia and Africa, is destined to play a significant role in the Arab world. Egypt is qualified to play the role of emancipating the great strength of the Arab world which would contribute its share in the building of the future of the world. See Gamal Abdul Nasser, Egypt's Liberation - The Philosophy of the Revolution, (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1955), pp. 85-88, 103, 114. The new Egypt, therefore, does not believe that the rift between Iraq and Egypt is merely a question of petty rivalry between two Arab countries for the leadership of the Arab world.

are resented by Egypt, for they would impair Egypt's pre-dominance in the Arab League, and as a result Iraq will step into Egypt's place. Again, Egypt suspects that Iraq's role in the Palestinian war was not a satisfactory one, while Iraq fastens the failure in Palestine on Egypt. Further, Egypt in her struggle against Britain was often suspicious of the relations between Iraq and Britain. Egypt was also resentful on account of Iraq's relations with other Arab states,<sup>4</sup> which might contribute to make Iraq the leading party in the Arab world.

Some of the differences between the two blocs stemmed from deep-rooted dynastic rivalries. Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia drove King Hussein from Arabia and this led later on the two Hashemite Kingdoms, Iraq and Jordan, to suspect his motives. At the same time Saudi Arabia did not trust King Abdullah and his Great Syria scheme which aimed at including Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Arab Palestine. Further, King Abudllah's friendship<sup>5</sup> with Britain brought Egypt and Saudi Arabia closer.

Among the Arab countries, and in relation to the Soviet Union, Iraq is the most vulnerable country on account of her

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<sup>4</sup> Peter Calvocoressi, Survey of International Affairs, 1952, Issued under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), pp. 235-236.

<sup>5</sup> Ellen Deborah Ellis, "Tensions in the Middle East", Current History, New Series, 20:332, May-June, 1951.

proximity to the Soviet Union. Strategically, Iraq is very important since she is situated on the first line of defense after Turkey and Iran. Iraq also contains the rich oilfields which are the object of interest of the Soviet Union. Apart from that, Iraq is situated on the route which leads to the area of oilfields in the Persian Gulf. It follows therefore that the defense of Iraq is very important to the Western Powers.

Treaty relations between Iraq and Turkey go back to 1937. Both Iraq and Turkey were members of the moribund Four-Power Sa'dabad Pact which was signed on July 8, 1937. After the war, General Nuri As-Said began negotiations for a treaty with Turkey in March 1946. Because he was not in office, he was not empowered to negotiate a political treaty. Thus, he asked the Suwaydi Government to permit him to negotiate with the Turkish Government; but the Suwaydi Government gave him permission to sign only technical treaties. However, General Nuri As-Said initiated a treaty of Friendship with Turkey and submitted it to the Suwaydi Government for approval. The Iraqi Government declared that they would accept the treaty on condition that it would not contravene Iraq's obligations under the Arab League Pact; but Turkey disapproved of this. Later on, the new Government of Salih Jabr in March 1947,

accepted the treaty without the former condition.<sup>6</sup> Of all the Arab countries, only Jordan signed a treaty of Friendship with Turkey and another treaty of Alliance and Brotherhood with Iraq,<sup>7</sup> while the other Arab countries considered the Turkish-Iraqi rapprochement as an attempt to strengthen Iraq and weaken their position, since Iraq was approached first.<sup>8</sup>

Again, Iraq's interest in regional security may be evidenced in the meeting of the Arab League Council in January 1954. The Iraqi Prime Minister Fadil Al-Jamali, advocated political unification of the Arab states and offered a plan for setting up common ministries. The Iraqi Foreign Minister then, Sayyid Abdullah Bakr declared that Iraq was ready to contribute to maintain an Arab army from her oil revenues. Jordan's response to the plan was favorable, while the other Arab countries were not enthusiastic about the Iraqi proposal. It was shelved in an attempt to refer to the Arab countries for study.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Majid Khadduri, Independent Iraq. A Study in Iraqi Politics Since 1932, Issued under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), pp. 261-262.

<sup>7</sup> "Development of the Quarter: Comment and Chronology", The Middle East Journal, 9:163, Spring, 1955.

<sup>8</sup> Khadduri, op.cit., p. 263.

<sup>9</sup> James W. Spain, "Middle East Defense: A New Approach", The Middle East Journal, 8:255-256, Summer, 1954.

In April, 1954, the Iraqi Government announced that the United States had approved Iraq's request for military assistance, which was to be unconditional; while the United States declared that it was with the condition that the arms were not to be aggressively used. This meant that the arms were not to be used against Israel, which also meant that Iraq had betrayed the cause of the Arab League.<sup>10</sup> In this way, the Arab League itself was weakened, since it no longer presented a unified front against Israel.

Again, when Nuri As-Said accepted the premiership, he wrote a letter on August 4, 1954, to King Feisal II, declaring that the ending of the 1930 Anglo-Iraqi Treaty would be one of the bases of his foreign policy, and that he aimed at "making Iraq's co-operation with foreign countries conform to the provisions of Article 51 of the United Nations Charter under which relations of all sovereign countries are organized for the safe-guarding of world peace."<sup>11</sup>

Turkey was another country which was interested in protecting her territory against aggression from any quarter. Yet, Turkey who liked to think of herself as a part of the West, did not want to identify herself with Middle Eastern countries,

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 256, 259.

<sup>11</sup> British Information Services, London, Reference Division, "Defense of the Middle East", Quote No. R. 2924, September 17, 1954, p. 11.

because she considered most of them politically unstable and militarily weak to participate effectively in a sound defensive system.<sup>12</sup> Thus, she preferred her position as the extreme eastern anchor of NATO, for she felt that closer links with Western Powers provided the guarantee for the protection of her interests. Turkey was also interested in strengthening her position in southeast Europe. She took a part in the creation of the Ankara Pact with Greece and Yugoslavia on February 28, 1953.<sup>13</sup> Only after she was actually admitted to NATO did Turkey show willingness to co-operate wholeheartedly with Britain and the United States in their efforts<sup>14</sup> to work out a security system for the Middle East.

When Britain suggested to Iraq that the 1930 Anglo-Iraqi Treaty be replaced by a regional security pact, Iraq was interested. Turkey was also attracted to the idea, since a regional security pact with Iraq would protect her from the east.<sup>15</sup>

On January 12, 1955, a communiqué was issued announcing that the two Governments of Iraq and Turkey would conclude a

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<sup>12</sup> Chatham House Study Group, Atlantic Alliance. NATO's Role in the Free World, (London and New York: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1952), pp. 13-14.

<sup>13</sup> The Staff of the Brookings Institution, op.cit., pp. 284-285.

<sup>14</sup> Sir Knox Helm, "Turkey and her Defense Problems", International Affairs, 30:437-438, October, 1954.

<sup>15</sup> Henry C. Atyeo, "Arab Politics and Pacts", Current History, 30:342, June, 1956.



defense agreement "against any aggression which may be made against them from within or without the region -- that is from any quarter -- in accordance with the right of legitimate self-defense as stipulated by Article 51 of the U.N. Charter". Iraq and Turkey expressed the hope that other like-minded states would join in a regional defense treaty; but declared that they would sign the pact alone if necessary. 16

On January 18, 1955, the Iraqi Government issued an official statement declaring that there were two principles, laid down by King Feisal I, which were the basis of Iraq's foreign policy. The first principle was to serve the aims of the Arab League. Thus, Iraq had taken part in the Arab League and had signed the Arab Security Pact. The second principle was to protect Iraq from aggression, and accordingly, Iraq had sought to strengthen her relations with the neighboring countries such as Turkey and Iran, to whom she was linked with common interests. The official statement went on to say that Iraq recognized the right of each Arab country to take the necessary measures for her particular interests, so that Iraq had welcomed the Suez Canal Agreement, because she regarded it as an important step in Arab-Turkish-British relations. Again, the proposed treaty with Turkey, apart from being complementary to the Suez Canal Agreement, was opened

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<sup>16</sup> Keesing's Contemporary Archives, (February 19-26, 1955), p. 14057.

to other Arab states and other countries concerned with the maintenance of peace and stability in the Middle East. Also, it did not conflict with either the U.N. Charter or the Arab League Collective Security Pact, for it is based on Article 51<sup>17</sup> of the U.N. Charter and Article 11 of the Arab Security Pact.

On February 24, 1955, the Turkish-Iraqi Treaty of Alliance was signed in Baghdad, and was to become effective<sup>18</sup> after it was ratified by the two countries. Shortly after the signature of the treaty, the Iraqi Parliament ratified it, the Senate by a vote of 26 to 1, and the Chamber of Deputies by a vote of 116 to 4. Also, the Turkish National Assembly ratified the Pact unanimously. Thus, Iraq was the first Arab state to abandon a neutral role between the East and the West, and to become a member of a mutual defense agreement, which was designed to check communist aggression in the Middle East. Further, by signing the Turkish-Iraqi Pact, Iraq became indirectly associated with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Balkan Alliance, since Turkey is a member of<sup>19</sup> both.

On April 4, 1955, a special agreement between Britain and Iraq, replacing the old 1930 Treaty was signed in Baghdad. It became effective the following day with the adherence of<sup>20</sup> Britain to the Turkish-Iraqi Pact.

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17 Ibid.

18 Ibid., p. 14058.

19 Atyeo, loc.cit.

20 Keesing's Contemporary Archives, op.cit., p. 14137.

Pakistan and Iran were also interested in defending their security against the Soviet menace. Thus, on September 23, 1955, Pakistan joined the Turkish-Iraqi Pact,<sup>21</sup> while on the 11th of the following month, Iran communicated to Iraq her decision to join the Pact. On October 19, a simple resolution that provided for Iran's adherence to the Turkish-Iraqi Pact was passed by the Senate; while on October 23, it<sup>22</sup> received the unanimous approval by the Majlis.

Jordan, the other Hashemite Kingdom, is tied by a treaty to Britain. Economically, Jordan is dependent on Britain who gives her an annual subsidy of \$33,900,000. However, Jordan had pressed for the revision of the Anglo-Jordanian Treaty of 1948 which still had 15 years to run.<sup>23</sup>

In December, 1955, General Sir Gerald Templar, Chief of the Imperial Staff arrived in Amman, hoping to convince the Jordanian Government to join the Turkish-Iraqi Pact. The proposals which he offered were that if Jordan would join the

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<sup>21</sup> Atyeo, op.cit., pp. 342-343.

<sup>22</sup> Keessing's Contemporary Archives, op.cit., p. 14485.

<sup>23</sup> Atyeo, op.cit., pp. 344-345.  
Jordan, as of January 1957, has secured through an agreement with Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Syria a promise to have economic assistance, and will soon terminate her treaty with Britain. The New York Times, (New York: January 20, 1957).

Pact, the Jordanian treaty would be substituted by another, which would grant Jordan more economic help, and a heavy equipment of tanks, that would help in strengthening the Arab Legion. The principle of the proposals was accepted by the Jordanian Government, but then four Palestinian Cabinet members suggested that before accepting the plan, it should be submitted to "one Arab state" to secure her approval.<sup>24</sup>

Egypt who considers herself the leader of the Arab front, was against Jordan's entry into the Turkish-Iraqi Pact. Egypt held that Iraq was responsible for the split in Arab solidarity which weakened the Arab League. Thus, the adherence of Jordan to the Turkish-Iraqi Pact would further impair the League's position and would weaken Egypt as well. Also, Egypt was against any move which would strengthen Iraq and Jordan, and isolate her. Moreover, she was against any alliances with the Western Powers who created and nurtured Israel.<sup>25</sup>

Saudi Arabia also was not interested in having Jordan become stronger. Rich in oil revenues, she used her money to bribe politicians and win influence in the other Arab countries.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Hal Lehrman, "Miscalculations in Jordan", The Reporter, 14:33-34, January 26, 1956.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., pp. 29-30.

Again, Syria also opposed Jordan's entry into the Pact, since it was more inclined to Egypt and Saudi Arabia, for first of all Syria was anti-Israeli and because of this, she was also anti-Western, since it was the West who created Israel.<sup>27</sup>

Other countries which were against Jordan's adherence to the Pact were Israel and the Soviet Union, the former because it would strengthen Jordan by Anglo-American arms, and the latter because she deemed the military grouping of states along her southern border as an aggressive act.<sup>28</sup>

In Jordan, the Palestinian refugees influence the politics of the country, as they control nearly half of the Jordanian cabinet. They were against the Turkish-Iraqi Pact because it would tie Jordan to Turkey who had commercial interests with Israel. They also opposed the Pact, because it included Britain who helped in creating Israel. Again, the Pact represented Russia as their foe, drawing their attention away from Israel. Apart from this, the Pact would lure the Arabs into reaching a settlement with Israel, which would acknowledge her existence as a reality.<sup>29</sup>

Signs of disorder and unrest in Jordan soon developed into strikes and demonstrations. The forces that contributed were Saudi Arabian money plus Egyptian propaganda agents.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., pp. 29-30.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>30</sup> Egypt and Saudi Arabia denied these accusations.

A third force is the fact that many of the refugee camps became honeycombed with communists.<sup>31</sup> The refugees introduced the leaven of discontent in Jordan; for they had a grudge against the Western Powers, and in their despair they turned to communism, which is against those who were responsible for the creation of Israel. The deep resentment of the refugees against the West along with the first two factors (Saudi Arabian money and Egyptian propaganda) may have forced Jordan, the twin Hashemite Kingdom, to take a neutral stand between Iraq and the Egyptian-Saudi Arabian-Syrian Bloc.

On January 9, 1956, the British Foreign Office declared that the upheaval in Jordan was caused by communist agents who spent money in Jordan, in order to prevent the country from adhering to the Turkish-Iraqi Pact.<sup>32</sup>

The Jordanian Prime Minister and his cabinet resigned and the King asked Hazza Al-Majali to form a new cabinet on December 14; but on December 25, Al-Majali also offered his resignation, and a royal decree dissolved the House of Deputies, calling for new elections within four months. The Prime Minister could by the constitution stay in office for seven days after the dissolution of the Parliament; yet Al-Majali had to resign the next day, and Ibrahim Hashem was summoned by the King to form a new cabinet.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Lehrman, loc.cit.

<sup>32</sup> Al-Jareeda, (January 10, 1956).

<sup>33</sup> Lehrman, op.cit., pp. 30-33.

The events in Jordan were a blow to British attempts to strengthen the Turkish-Iraqi Pact, and weaken the Egyptian-Saudi Arabian-Syrian Axis. Also, it strengthened the neutralist attitude among the Arab countries.<sup>34</sup>

Some of the British influence in Jordan was also thrown off when on March 2, 1956, General John Bagot Glubb was abruptly dismissed, and a Jordanian was appointed in his place. It was believed in London that the Egyptian pressure was responsible for General Glubb's dismissal.<sup>35</sup>

#### B. The Egyptian-Saudi Arabian-Syrian Bloc

In contrast to the Hashemite Bloc of Iraq and Jordan, the other bloc consists of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria, who are strongly inclined to be neutral in the East-West cold war. Defensive pacts sponsored by the West are viewed as imperialistic designs which aim at drawing the Arab countries into the Western camp against the Soviet Union. They are reluctant to join them, because they are jealous of their newly-acquired independence and are suspicious of the motives of the Western Powers under whose hegemony they were in the past. They also feel that Western defensive arrangements cut across the Arab League which should be used as a bargaining power with the

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>35</sup> Al-Jareeda, (March 3, 1956).

West.<sup>36</sup> It follows that they are in favor of strengthening the Arab Collective Security Pact which has Israel as its main target.

The rift between Egypt and Jordan was partly rooted in the Great Syria scheme of King Abdullah of Jordan, and partly in Egypt's inclination to help the Mufti of Jerusalem,<sup>37</sup> who was against Britain and King Abdullah.

Egypt was also suspicious of Iraq's relations with Syria and Jordan. Any closer union among these countries would be unfavorable to Egypt. When Colonel Husni Az-Zaim seized power in Syria in March, 1949, he was first friendly with Iraq, yet his attitude soon changed after he visited Egypt. In August 1949, Colonel Husni Az-Zaim was assassinated, and the succeeding regime was also friendly to Iraq; but in December 1949, Colonel Adab Shishakli came into power, and joined hands with Egypt against any scheme aiming at the union of Syria and Iraq.<sup>38</sup>

Again, Egypt who refused the Four-Power Proposals of 1951, was suspicious of Western defensive alliances. This was rooted in her experience with Britain when she was under British

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<sup>36</sup> Spain, op.cit., pp. 258-259.

<sup>37</sup> George Kirk, The Middle East, 1945-1950, Royal Institute of International Affairs, (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 144.

<sup>38</sup> Calvocoressi, Survey of International Affairs, 1952, op.cit., p. 237.



control. In the past, two factors contributed to make Egypt oppose Western defensive pacts. First, there was the Anglo-Egyptian controversy on the Suez Canal, which stood in the face of co-operation between Egypt and Britain. Secondly, there was the post-war frustration of the Arabs with the West, due to the belief that Britain and the United States were responsible for the creation of Israel. Egypt felt that it was necessary to settle the Arab-Israeli problem before allying herself with any of the two blocs. With the conclusion of the Suez Canal Agreement, the stumbling-block to closer Anglo-Egyptian relations was removed, as Britain hoped it would be; but this did not mean that Egypt would tie herself to any Middle East security arrangements sponsored by the West.<sup>39</sup>

Although Egypt is not a physical part of the northern tier, the West cannot afford to disregard her in its arrangements for the defense of the area, for even before Egypt received arms from behind the Iron Curtain, her army of 100,000 men was the largest among the armies of the Arab countries.<sup>40</sup>

There are many factors which made Egypt against the Turkish-Iraqi Pact. In the first place, Egypt considers the Turkish-Iraqi Pact as an imperialistic pact designed to draw

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<sup>39</sup> "Aftern the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement", The World Today, 10:416, October, 1954.

<sup>40</sup> Spain, op.cit., p. 263.

the Arab countries into the Western orbit against the Soviet Union. Secondly, the Pact strengthens Iraq's position in relation to Egypt. Thirdly, if other Arab countries join the Turkish-Iraqi Pact, Egypt would be forced into isolation.<sup>41</sup> Fourthly, the rivalry between Egypt and Iraq for the leading role in the Arab world made Egypt jealous of Iraq who was the first Arab country to have defensive ties with the Western Powers. Further, Egypt was sensitive to the fact that Iraq was approached first by the West. Lastly, Egypt's opposition to the Turkish-Iraqi Pact is based on her fear for Arab security. The Arabs should defend their safety, not by alliance with the West; but by their collective action, even if it is weak, because it offers the only guarantee against the Israeli danger.<sup>42</sup>

The other Arab states which supported Egypt in her opposition to the Turkish-Iraqi Pact did so because they did not want to lose the Egyptian support in a 'second round' with Israel. They were also reluctant to accept defense assistance programs, which required their acceptance of the non-aggressive provisions that would make the United States interfere if they attacked Israel.<sup>43</sup>

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Ibid., pp. 258-259.

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"Development of the Quarter: Comment and Chronology", op.cit., p. 164.

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Spain, loc.cit.

When it became known that Iraq would conclude a military alliance with Turkey, the Egyptian Government proposed on January 16, an emergency meeting of the Prime Ministers of all Arab League countries which had signed the Arab League Collective Security Pact. The meeting was to be held in Cairo on January 22, to discuss the "blow to Arab unity" which would be caused by the Turkish-Iraqi Pact. Major Salah Salem, the Egyptian Minister of National Guidance then, said that Egypt considered the Arabs as "an independent force" in international affairs. Thus, they should take upon themselves the responsibility of their own defense by means of the Arab League Collective Security Pact. Also, Iraq's intention to conclude a separate treaty with Turkey would "threaten the very existence<sup>44</sup> of the Arab League, and endanger the Arab nations as a whole!"

The Prime Ministers of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt met in Cairo on January 22. Later on, they were joined by the Prime Ministers of Yemen and Libya. General Nuri As-Said was prevented by ill health from attending the Conference. His suggestion that the Conference be postponed until he could attend, was rejected by the Egyptian Government. The Egyptian press which opened a violent campaign on Iraq since the latter announced her intention to conclude a treaty

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<sup>44</sup> Keesing's Contemporary Archives, op.cit., p. 14057.

with Turkey, held that General Nuri's illness was "diplomatic".<sup>45</sup>

At the opening session on January 22, the Egyptian Prime Minister Colonel Nasser criticized the proposed Turkish-Iraqi Pact, and pointed out that an alliance with Turkey would be without value to Iraq, for she had enough protection by her treaty with Britain, and by receiving military aid from the United States. As Iraq had recently suspended her diplomatic relations with Russia, he concluded that Iraq aimed at tying herself to the Western orbit.<sup>46</sup>

The Conference decided not to go on with its work and to wait in order to know whether General Nuri As-Said would attend the Conference. On January 23, General Nuri replied expressing his hope that he would be well enough to visit Cairo after a few days. On January 25, the Conference proposed that if General Nuri was still not well enough to come to Cairo, a deputy should be sent in his place. As a result, Dr. Fadil Jamali, the former Prime Minister, Sayid Bashayan, Deputy Foreign Minister, and Khalil Ibrahim, Director of Propaganda, joined the Conference as Iraq's representatives.<sup>47</sup>

On January 27, Dr. Jamali told the Egyptian press that it was "necessary for the free nations to cooperate in accordance with the principles of the U.N. Charter, and also added that "neutralism is impossible in existing circumstances." The semi-official organ of the Egyptian Govern-

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

ment, Al-Goumhuriyah, hoped that Dr. Jamali would convince General Nuri As-Said that it was not advantageous to Iraq to have the Arab states "dragged one after the other into Western alliances."<sup>48</sup>

At the Conference session on January 27, the Iraqi delegation presented the view of the Iraqi Government on the Pact. Later on, they had a private audience with Colonel Nasser, Major Salem, and Dr. Fawzi. The Egyptian side emphasized the danger of a break in the Arab front. After the meeting, a member of the Egyptian delegation stated that General Nuri's illness was diplomatic and that political leaders in Iraq did not approve of his policy. Dr. Jamali replied on January 29, declaring that six former prime ministers issued a statement stressing Iraq's right to con-<sup>49</sup>clude treaties according to her interests.

In an effort to reach an agreement, the Arab Prime Ministers sent a four-man delegation to Baghdad, on January 31, to confer with General Nuri As-Said on the situation which resulted from Iraq's intention to conclude a defensive alliance with Turkey. The delegation was composed of Major Salah Salem of Egypt, Mr. Sami Solh of Lebanon, Mr. Faydi Al-Atassi of Syria and Mr. Waleed Salah of Jordan. Before the adjourning

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

of the Cairo Conference, the Egyptian Government declared that if Iraq concluded the proposed treaty with Turkey "definite steps" would be taken. The Egyptian newspapers explained these steps in terms of Egypt's withdrawal from the League Collective Security Pact.<sup>50</sup>

The delegation visited Beirut on January 31, to talk with the Lebanese President, Mr. Chamoun. Later on in the day, the delegation flew to Baghdad. On February 2, with the end of discussions in Baghdad, it was announced that General Nuri As-Said had accepted a Lebanese proposal to meet President Chamoun and Colonel Nasser in Beirut, in order to reach an agreement. It was also stated that General Nuri As-Said had rejected President Chamoun's proposal to suspend, for a limited period, plans to sign the Pact with Turkey.<sup>51</sup>

On February 8, the Conference was resumed in Cairo. Colonel Nasser refused to meet General Nuri As-Said if Iraq did not agree in advance to abide by the decision of the majority of the Arab states, as to whether it should conclude the Pact or not. When General Nuri As-Said also refused to accept this condition, the Lebanese proposal for a meeting between General Nuri and Colonel Nasser was defeated. An Egyptian resolution, which proposed that the Arab states stay

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., pp. 14057-14058.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 14058.

aloof from defense pacts with powers outside the Arab League was also defeated by Syria, Lebanon and Jordan.<sup>52</sup> Thus, the Conference which ended on February 6, failed to persuade Iraq not to go ahead with the plan for signing the treaty.<sup>53</sup>

On January 24, it was announced by a spokesman of the Egyptian Foreign Ministry, that Egypt had rejected an invitation by Turkey to join the proposed Turkish-Iraqi Alliance. On February 8, the Saudi Arabian Prime Minister, Amir Feisal declared that if Egypt withdrew from the League Collective Security Pact, Saudi Arabia would do the same.<sup>54</sup>

On his way back from Iraq, Mr. Adnan Menderes, the Turkish Prime Minister, visited Damascus and had a meeting with the Syrian Prime Minister, Mr. Faris Al-Khoury and some of the members of the Syrian Government.<sup>55</sup> Syria expressed her opposition not only to the proposed Turkish-Iraqi Pact; but also to Mr. Menderes' visit to Damascus. On January 13, the police checked a student demonstration in Damascus, and on January 15, in an attempt to check a demonstration in Aleppo, 45 persons were arrested. Again, on January 16, student demonstrations against the proposed Turkish-Iraqi Pact broke out

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52 Ibid.

53 Atyeo, op.cit., p. 342.

54 Keesing's Contemporary Archives, op.cit., p. 14058.

55 Ibid.

in Aleppo, with the result that 50 demonstrators and 32  
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policemen were injured.

On February 24, 1955, the Syrian Parliament gave Prime Minister Sabri Al-Asali its confidence by a vote of 66-53 on his decision to stay out of the Turkish-Iraqi Pact. In the debate before the voting, Mr. Al-Asali pointed out that the interests of the Arab League nations demanded that  
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stand.

Egypt charged Iraq of betraying the cause of the Arab League, and of violating its neutral policy by linking herself to an alliance with Turkey, who had deserted the Muslim cause by recognizing Israel. Iraq also had allied herself with  
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the Western Powers who helped in the establishment of Israel.

Iraq denied Egypt's accusations and maintained that the preamble of the Pact explained that the Treaty of Joint Defense did not affect Iraq's right to conduct bilateral negotiations with Turkey. Also, according to Article 4, the Turkish-Iraqi Pact did not contradict the international obligations that were assumed by the signatories. Apart from this, the Iraqi Government held that the Pact would further Arab interests

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56 Ibid., p. 14057.

57 The Christian Science Monitor, (Boston: February 25, 1955).

58 "Development of the Quarter: Comment and Chronology," loc.cit.



by promoting regional security. Moreover, General Nuri As-Said claimed that by his exchange of letters with the Turkish Prime Minister, which accompanies the text of the treaty, he had won Turkey's support to effect the carrying out of the United Nations' resolutions on Palestine.<sup>59</sup>

Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria were not the only countries against the Turkish-Iraqi Pact. Israel was against it, for whereas Egypt considered the Pact a shattering blow to the Arab League, Israel considered it a new strength for the Arabs. To Israel, a united Arab front would be still weak if it was isolated from Western assistance. As Iraq had cast her lot with the West, and would receive arms and equipment, other Arab states might be attracted into allying themselves with the West, which would result in a strong Arab grouping. Further, Israel was not sure that Iraq was primarily interested in defending her security, for she suspected that Iraq was first and foremost interested in a war of revenge. Thus, her fear would be intensified if other Arab countries besides Iraq joined the Turkish-Iraqi Pact, for this would force her into isolation. Moreover, Israel believed that a Middle East defense system should be based on Turkey and herself, being the two Middle Eastern countries with the will and the ability to fight.<sup>60</sup>

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59 Ibid.

60 Ibid., p. 165.

There are two reasons which make a defense strategy based on Israel unsatisfactory to the Western Powers. In the first place, the area of Israel is small, and in time of war would be difficult of access to provide a basis for an effective system of defense for the Middle East. Secondly, basing a defense system on Israel will cost the Western Powers the friendship and the co-operation of the Arab world, a price which they are not willing to pay, since the location, oil resources and man power potential of the Arab countries exceed<sup>61</sup> in importance those of Israel.

Lastly, the Soviet Union was against the Turkish-Iraqi Pact, because it was considered as an attempt to persuade the Middle Eastern states into joining aggressive military alliances. Further, the Turkish-Iraqi Pact was considered as an instrument of colonial oppression which was directed against the sovereignty of the Middle Eastern states. It was also held that the Pact was meant to perpetuate Britain's privileges in Iraq and to strengthen her control<sup>62</sup> over the country.

When the Turkish-Iraqi Pact was concluded, Egypt tried to secure the support of other Arab countries to participate

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> "Dissolution of the Middle Eastern Empire", News, (Moscow), 10:9-10, May 16, 1955.

in an indigenous defensive alliance. Saudi Arabia did not hesitate in approving the new Egyptian plan for an Arab defensive pact, since the Hashemites were her rivals. Syria had a grudge against Turkey because of the loss of Iskanderun in 1939, when Syria was under French Mandate.<sup>63</sup> The Syrians were also bitter because to them Turkey had betrayed the Arab cause in Palestine. Again, they were afraid that Turkey will be used by the West as a means to bring the Arab countries under Western tutelage.<sup>64</sup> Also, the Syrian nationalists wanted to continue the struggle with Israel which is the major obstacle standing in the way of fulfilling the Pan-Arab aspirations. It follows then, that a defensive chain of military alliances surrounding Israel was favorable to Syria, making her strongly inclined to align herself with Egypt.<sup>65</sup> Again, an Egyptian plan for a new Arab defensive pact may help to guarantee Syria's status quo that has been endangered by the signing of the Turkish-Iraqi Pact. However, effective military cooperation between Syria and Egypt is hampered by the fact of the geographical position of the two with Israel and Jordan in between.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup>"Development of the Quarter: Comment and Chronology", op.cit., pp. 164-165.

<sup>64</sup>The Christian Science Monitor, (February 10, 1955).

<sup>65</sup>"Development of the Quarter: Comment and Chronology", loc.cit.

<sup>66</sup>The Christian Science Monitor, (March 7, 1955).

On October 20, 1955, Syria and Egypt signed a Mutual Defense Treaty in Damascus. According to Article 2 of the Defense Treaty, an attack upon one of the two countries would be considered an attack upon the other. On October 27, a similar Mutual Defense Pact was signed between Egypt and Saudi Arabia.<sup>67</sup>

The Damascus Pact is interested first, in providing effective defense against Israel and secondly, in uniting the southern tier of Arab states.<sup>68</sup> Invitations to join the Pact were sent to members of the Arab League with the exception of Iraq,<sup>69</sup> because from the political point of view, these military pacts between Egypt and Syria on one hand and Egypt and Saudi Arabia on the other were directed against Iraq.<sup>70</sup>

There were four factors which contributed to bring the Damascus Pact into being. First, the Damascus Pact was the result of some attempts made in the past by members of the

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"Documents: Egyptian-Syrian Mutual Defense Pact (October 20, 1955), Egyptian-Saudi Arabian Mutual Defense Pact (October 27, 1955)", The Middle East Journal, 10:77, Winter, 1956.

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Atyeo, op.cit., p. 344.

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On April 22, 1956, Yemen joined in a military alliance with Egypt and Saudi Arabia, Ibid., pp. 344-345.

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"Development of the Quarter: Comment and Chronology", The Middle East Journal, 10:60, Winter, 1956.

Arab League to establish a defense alliance for the Arab countries. Secondly, it was brought about as a counterbalance to the creation of the Baghdad Pact. Thirdly, the clashes with Israel along the northern Syrian border, and the southern Gaza strip border accelerated the creation of the Damascus Pact. Fourthly, the Pact which was concluded after the Egyptian arms deal with Russia was a compensation for Western criticism of Egypt for her accepting assistance from the Communist Bloc.<sup>71</sup>

On March 6-7, 1956, an important meeting of the Pact members was held in Cairo. President Shukri Al-Kuwatly, King Saud and Colonel Nasser were satisfied because King Hussein of Jordan had dismissed General John Bagot Glubb. Yet, they were afraid that Jordan would hesitate to break away from British domination. Thus, the Syrian Prime Minister, Said Gazzi was dispatched to Amman to offer their readiness to replace the annual British subsidy of \$33,900,000. However, Prime Minister Gazzi did not meet with any success in attempting to convince Jordan to accept the offer, or to join the Damascus Pact. Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria were anxious that Jordan enter the Pact, because this would draw a circle of defense around Israel. Further, if Jordan were to join the Damascus Pact, her Arab Legion would add strength to the armies of the Pact members.<sup>72</sup>

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71 Atyeo, loc.cit.

72 Ibid., pp. 344-345. See p. 100, footnote 23.

Apparently, Jordan did not want to commit herself to either Iraq or to the Egyptian-Saudi Arabian-Syrian Bloc. In January, 1956, Jordan refused to join the Turkish-Iraqi Pact, and in March, she also refused the offer of the Damascus Pact members to replace the annual subsidy paid by Britain. Jordan's reluctance to join the Damascus Pact may have stemmed from the rivalry between the Hashemite and the Saudi Arabian dynasties. Further, the rivalry between Egypt and Iraq, with both vying for leadership of the Arab countries may have had some bearing on the attitude of Jordan, since the ruling houses of Jordan and Iraq belong to the same family.

1. Arms from Behind the Iron Curtain

There have been a number of reasons responsible for Egypt's announcement on September 27, 1955, that it would purchase arms from the Soviet Bloc. First, Egypt was annoyed with the United States because she refused to bolster Egypt's strength to balance that of Israel. Secondly, the Israeli attack on the Gaza strip in February, bore due weight in making Egypt decide to buy arms to build up her strength. Thirdly, the arms deal with Russia was probably provoked by the conclusion of the Turkish-Iraqi Pact earlier in the year, and was in itself an answer to it.

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<sup>73</sup> "Development of the Quarter: Comment and Chronology," The Middle East Journal, 9:434-435, Autumn, 1955.

By the Tripartite Declaration of 1950, the three Powers, Britain, the United States and France attempted to maintain a balance of arms between the Arab countries and Israel. When on September 27 Egypt decided to buy arms from the Communist Bloc, her move was welcomed by Russia, while to the West it was a source of disappointment. The arms deal upset Israel tremendously, because she feared Egypt's new strength would drive her into the sea. As Israel in the past had leaned heavily on arms from the Communist Bloc, she could not blame Egypt for doing the same. Nevertheless, Israel claimed that while she bought arms for defense, Egypt bought them for aggression.<sup>74</sup> However, Colonel Nasser denied this when in an interview with the Life Correspondent, Keith Wheeler, he stressed the point that the arms Egypt was getting, were to be used for defensive and not offensive purposes. Colonel Nasser added that he had bought arms because he was all the time afraid that Israel would start a preventive war. He believed that there was an arms race in the Middle East but "it was only a one-sided arms race", and as the West did not give him arms, he turned to the Communist Bloc; yet this did not mean he was importing communist principles.<sup>75</sup>

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Ibid., p. 435.

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Keith Wheeler, "Egypt's Premier Tells Story of Red Arms Deal Which Upset the West", Life, December 12, 1955.

The Egyptian arms deal is an important event, since it opened new horizons for Egypt who felt her ability to follow an independent course in buying arms from sources other than the West. More important is the fact that by the arms deal, Russia had entered the Middle East theatre, showing her hand in an area which was long considered as the center of Soviet aspiration. This also brings the East and the West face to face in an area which is strategically vital to both sides, in their struggle against one another.

C. Lebanon

Between the Hashemite Bloc on one hand and the Egyptian-Saudi Arabian-Syrian Bloc on the other, stands Lebanon edging away from both; yet at the same time trying to keep a fairly even balance between them.

Lebanon with nearly half of her population being Christians was against the Greater Syria scheme of King Abdullah. Likewise, Lebanon agreed to participate in the Arab League on condition that each member will retain its full sovereignty.<sup>76</sup>

On January 14, 1955, after he visited Damascus, Mr. Menderes proceeded to Beirut, where he had talks with the Lebanese Government. The Lebanese Foreign Minister, Mr. Naccashe,

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<sup>76</sup> George Lenczowski, The Middle East in World Affairs, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1952), p. 250.



stated on January 15 that Mr. Menderes had invited Lebanon to participate in the proposed Turkish-Iraqi Pact, and added that Professor Kprulu gave him the assurance that Turkey would not make similar arrangements with Israel. Before Mr. Menderes' departure, a communique<sup>77</sup> was issued stating that the two Governments had agreed on continuing conversations to develop friendly relations between Turkey, Lebanon and the other Arab countries. In a press statement, Mr. Menderes stated that the Lebanese Government was interested in a healthy defense organization in the Middle East; but did not want to act independently, or out of step with the Arab League members.<sup>78</sup>

When Egypt threatened to withdraw from Arab League membership, Lebanon was concerned lest Egypt's withdrawal from the League would strengthen Iraq, and as a result Lebanon's sovereignty would be threatened. At the same time, Lebanon has declared herself neutral on the question of the Damascus Pact sponsored by Egypt as a counterweight to the Turkish-Iraqi Pact.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Lebanon has an old claim against Turkey for Lebanese property confiscated when Ataturk was in power. (The Christian Science Monitor, February 10, 1955).

<sup>78</sup> Keesing's Contemporary Archives, op.cit., p. 14057.

<sup>79</sup> The Christian Science Monitor, (March 7, 1955).

This chapter has presented a picture of the reactions of the Arab countries to Western approaches, which aim at providing a defensive system for the Middle East. Whereas Iraq has allied herself with the West, Jordan, the other Hashemite Kingdom, is still uncommitted to either side. Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Syria do not want to be forced into the East-West conflict, and thus are in favor of neutrality. Lastly, Lebanon is neutral between the two Arab blocs, so that the balance will not tilt in favor of any one of them, because in that case Lebanon's sovereignty might be threatened.

## CONCLUSION

Western defense policy in the Middle East was not successful in attaining its major aims. In fact, the defense of the Middle East at present is more than ever a source of great anxiety to Britain and the Western Democracies.

The aim of Western defense policy was to establish in the Middle East a defense organization on the pattern of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to defend the area against Russian aggression, and to maintain stability in the area for the better protection of Western interests. The defense organization was meant to embrace all the Middle Eastern states and not merely the states of the norther tier.

The Middle East is an area of vital importance to the Western Democracies. Beneath its sands lie an immense reservoir of oil which is greatly needed by the Western Powers and particularly Western Europe. As oil is necessary to the Western Democracies, they attempt to maintain access to the Middle East to be able to use it.

Moreover, from the viewpoint of strategy, the Middle East is an area of crucial significance to the West. It is a region where the central land, water and air routes cross.

The Middle East has long been an object of great power rivalry. During the nineteenth century, the region was a magnet of Russian desires, while Britain strove to dam the Russian expansionist urge towards the south. During World War II, the Middle East was an objective of German ambitions and very nearly fell into their hands.

With the end of World War II, the victory of the U.S.S.R. along with the West left her in a greater power position than before. The aims of Russian foreign policy though largely attained in China and Eastern Europe, appeared to be frustrated again in the failure to attain control of the outlets to the south which she wanted.

For a brief period after World War II, it seemed as if the Soviets would attain a foothold in the Middle East. The U.S.S.R. failed to withdraw her troops from Iranian territory as agreed, but finally did so in May 1946. The U.S.S.R. also collaborated with the Tudeh party in bringing about a revolt in Azerbaijan against the Iranian Government. Again, pressure was exerted on Turkey for the cession of the districts of Kars and Ardahan, and for establishing Russian bases in the Straits. However, from 1946 until 1955, Moscow's policy became less active. ~~as events seemed almost automatically to favor Russian opportunities.~~

The Western Democracies, aware of the danger inherent in the political and economic instability of the Middle Eastern states, tried to organize a defense security system aimed at building up their military strength, in conjunction with local forces, strength designed to stop Soviet penetration, to insure access to the oil and bases of the Middle East, and to maintain stability in the area.

When the West saw that it would be unable to secure the adherence of most of the Arab states, the balance was tilted in favor of the northern tier concept which was based on bringing together in a regional defense alliance the states that were ready and willing to co-operate against possible Russian aggression. On February 24, 1955, the Turkish-Iraqi Pact was signed in Baghdad. Britain adhered to the Pact on April 5 and later in the same year, Pakistan and Iran became parties to the Pact too, the former in September, and the latter in October.

Thus, Western defense policy produced the Turkish-Iraqi Pact which could be viewed as a limited success, especially if it can be shown to have acted as a deterrent to more overt Russian ambitions. Whether this alliance is adequate or not, when measured against the original Western defense aims, the Western Powers believed that it could be developed and strengthened to a point where it could effectively guard the northern part of the Middle East against a Russian offensive.

On the other hand, the Pact may well have meant a loss to the West. Prior to the conclusion of the Turkish-Iraqi Pact, in the period between 1946 and 1955, Russia's role in the Middle East was, relatively speaking, a passive one. It was not until the formation of the Turkish-Iraqi Pact that Russia had resumed a "forward" policy in the area. The Turkish-Iraqi Pact was a turning point for both the Western and the Russian policies. To Britain and the Western Democracies, it was the beginning of a defense system, while to Russia it meant that the situation in the Middle East required her immediate attention. Her former role of passive watching and waiting was changed to direct participation in the affairs of the region.

On September 27, 1955, Egypt announced a deal to buy arms from the Soviet Bloc. Was the deal provoked by the conclusion of the Turkish-Iraqi Pact? If so, it may have contributed to the rapprochement between Egypt and Russia. Furthermore, after Iran adhered to the Pact in October, 1955, the tempo of Russian activity in the Middle East quickened. Russia sought to develop closer relations with the states of the Middle East, particularly those states that had not yet thrown their lot with the West. Russia offered arms to Saudi Arabia and Syria, and her relations with Yemen were strengthened.

Thus, the Turkish-Iraq Pact did not satisfy the defense needs of the West in the Middle East. Iraq, the only Arab country which joined the alliance was but a part of the Arab world, and as a member of the Arab League had other commitments which took precedence over the Pact. Also, the northern tier remained uncovered in the rear since beyond it there was still a vacuum.

The refusal of the Arab countries to join Western sponsored alliances had its roots in nationalism, which became a prime force in the Middle East after World War II. The newly independent states resented the idea of allying themselves with the Western Powers because they suspected their motives in attempting to win them over to their side against Russia. Joining the West in the terminology of the nationalists meant an infringement on the sovereignty of their countries. Their independence would become less of an independence, because it was difficult for them to envisage an association with the West on a basis of equality, when in the past they were under its control. In addition to this, the revival of Arab self-confidence and the newly developed sense of power and prestige would disappear or become less significant, if they allied themselves with those who were once directing their affairs and in whose hands rested the real power.

There was a strong tide of anti-Western feeling which colored the relations of the Arab countries with the Western Powers. It sprang from past experiences which the Arab countries had when they were controlled by the West. A major cause of resentment was the founding of the alien state of Israel in their midst.

The West failed to persuade the Arab countries to join in defense alliances, because these countries preferred to be neutral in the struggle between East and West, either because they harbored grievances against the West, or because they resented the creation of Israel, or they felt that joining one of the two blocs would result in sacrificing their sovereignty to one of them and antagonizing the other. Also, they felt that by being neutral, they might, by collaborating with other like-minded states, keep a sort of balance between the two blocs, so that the resort to war would be less likely.

When viewed within the Middle East picture, actual neutrality is unreal as long as the Arab countries consider Israel as an alien body which should be wiped from the map, and as long as Israel tries to maintain herself in the area, and to expand at the expense of her neighbors.

Thus, the security problem is a principal point of difference between the Western Powers and the Arab countries. To the Western Democracies, the security of the Middle East demands its protection first and foremost against the Soviet



Union. The Middle East is treated as a unit, and local conflicts inside it are less important than the Russian danger. On the other hand, the Arab countries feel that the real danger to their security comes first from Israel and not from Russia. Israel is also afraid of being swallowed up by the neighboring Arab countries. To both the Arabs and the Israelites, the threat to their security comes from within the Middle East.

Communism and communist propaganda had their influence in the failure of Western policy. Communism with its promises of a better life had a special appeal for dissatisfied people, especially the intelligentsia. Its anti-imperialist propaganda was logical and persuasive to the Arabs. Also the desire of the Arabs for quick attainment of modern technology as accomplished by the U.S.S.R., made the communist pattern more attractive than others.

Though the period of this study is 1945 to the beginning of 1956, it would be impossible to ignore the sharp climax of events which took place in the second half of that year. The Suez crisis, which began with the nationalization of the Canal in July, followed by the Israeli attack on Egypt in October, the armed intervention of Britain and France, and the organization of a United Nations police force are deeply connected with, and have deeply affected the defense policy

which the Western Powers might implement in the Middle East.

The attack and withdrawal under pressure of the British from Egypt may well signalize the bankruptcy of British policy in the Middle East. Certainly, the opportunity for Soviet penetration was greatly enhanced thereby, and the U.S.S.R. has not failed to follow up her advantages.

The United States, for the first time breaking with her Western allies, stood against Britain and France, though making it clear to the Russians that interference on their part would encounter American "opposition".

More recently, President Eisenhower has offered protection and economic help to those countries of the area which desire it, and declared that the United States would resist Soviet aggression.

What this means for the future is not yet clear. But what does seem clear is that British power in the Middle East has been gravely and even fatally weakened. Whether the United States, the U.S.S.R. or the Arabs themselves will be able to fill the power vacuum remains to be seen.

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