Chapter III

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To the students of diplomacy, it is necessary to approach the study of intelligence not merely from the point of its contribution to military efforts, but from the point of examining its impact on the diplomatic process and foreign policy. The basis for formulation of diplomatic responses and foreign policy is, information. Intelligence services primarily collect, collate and evaluate information, which is provided to the foreign affairs ministry or other relevant consumers. While supplying information remains a crucial function, there are other important dimensions wherein intelligence services have an impact on diplomacy and foreign policy implementation. The manner and extent to which a country relies on and utilizes its intelligence services will depend on the distinct circumstances and needs of that country. The first case study that has been offered to examine the impact of intelligence on diplomacy and foreign policy, is that of Egypt. Before examining these aspects however, it is necessary to briefly examine the foreign policy of Egypt, which is probably the most important regional power in the Middle East. The review of Egyptian foreign policy will thus provide the framework of analysis for the case study.

The Foreign Policy of Egypt

Egypt until 1952 had theoretically been a limited monarchy. In practice however, it was a British colony, since Great Britain rigorously controlled the economy, defence and foreign policy of Egypt, under mandate granted by the League of Nations. Negotiations
had already begun between Egypt's elected political leaders and the British government on the questions of withdrawal of British troops from Egypt and the future control over the Sudan, to which Egypt had staked claim. The Revolution of July 26, 1952 under the leadership of Muhammad Neguib and Gamal Abdel Nasser, overthrew the monarchy and established a republic. The new regime, turned the course of the history of modern Egypt, broke the last ties with Britain and brought Egypt into the arena of Arab politics as an aggressive, independent actor in the Middle East.

History, geography, religion, culture and the colonial experience are important influences or factors in the formulation of Egyptian foreign policy. The thrust of foreign policy during the Nasser period from 1954 to 1967 related to three principles: opposition to Great or Super Power interference in the Middle East, opposition to the monarchical form of government in Arab states and thirdly the concept of Arab unity under Egyptian political leadership. The conflict with Israel which was relatively unimportant until 1956, assumed greater importance and attention after the Suez crisis. The political and military support to the Palestinian cause, especially in the sixties arose partly from the conflict with Israel and from Egypt's efforts to assume political leadership of the Arab people and become the spokesman of the Middle East Arab states. Nasser perceived Israel as the suppressor of the legitimate demands of the Palestinian people and the instrument of United States' imperialist designs in the Middle East.

Nasser in his *Philosophy of the Revolution* conceives of
Egyptian foreign policy as operating within three circles which form its "theater of activity". The first circle is the Arab world of which Egypt is very much a part of, both historically and culturally. The second circle is the African continent, of which Egypt is a part geographically and the third circle is the Muslim world wherein the bonds are "forged by religious faith and tightened by history." Of the three circles however, the Arab world became in practice, the most important as also the area where Egypt's influence has been the greatest. Egyptian involvement in Arab affairs derived from common language, religion and history.

Egyptian leaders have traditionally been "Egyptian" nationalists, rather than "Arab" nationalists. Yet the concept of an Arab alliance can be traced to Mohamed Ali, who in the early nineteenth century espoused a pan-Arab policy, to collectively destroy the Ottoman empire and bring Egypt onto the world political scene. Similarly Nasser, initially conceived the establishment of a strong Arab alliance under Egyptian leadership and guidance. Such an alliance would enhance Egypt's international position, its political leverage and enable it to counteract British influence more effectively. Nasser's policies were not unpragmatic since even in his broader policy of non-alignment he


was able to play off the two superpowers till 1967, while deriving the benefits of increasing Egypt's economic viability and military strength.

The pursuit of an Arab alliance policy by Nasser met with serious difficulties, the most serious challenge coming from the pro-Western monarchies of Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Jordan. In January 1955, Nuri Said, the Prime Minister of Iraq committed his country to an agreement which later became the Baghdad Pact, a defence organisation for the Middle East supported by Great Britain, and indirectly, the United States. Nasser opposed the pact as Western interference in Arab affairs and an attempt of Western imperialism to divide the Arab world. Instead, he preferred the establishment of an Arab Defence Organisation under the Arab League. The application of political pressure on Iraq failed, and Egypt's propaganda machinery became the new instrument of foreign policy.

The impact of Nasser's policies was greatest on the Arab nationalists in the Middle East, including those in Iraq. These nationalists, eager to free their countries from Western influence and desiring the unification of the Arab states in a single national state, saw in Nasser, a potential leader, though at this stage Nasser advocated only an Arab alliance. Among the Arab masses,

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4 Abboushi, n. 2, p. 172.
Nasser's popularity increased tremendously. Several incidents, such as the purchase of Czechoslovakian arms, the Bandung Conference in 1955 and the recognition of Communist China in 1956, provided evidence that he was not only a brave and independent leader but also a shrewd statesman, capable of successfully challenging the Western powers. The nationalization of the Suez Canal on July 26, 1956 and the Suez crisis that followed increased Nasser's hero image and popularity in Egypt and throughout the Middle East, since Great Britain, France and Israel were politically forced to retreat from the Suez Canal.

Nasser's alliance policy however, faced considerable opposition from other states in the Middle East, especially the conservative monarchies of Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Iraq. While Arab nationalism gained support among the masses, the monarchs felt threatened by Nasser's republicanism, revolutionary socialism and neutrality in international politics. The success of Arab nationalism would necessarily mean the abolition of monarchy, as a form of government. Lebanon however constituted a special case since it was a republican state, but it supported the conservatives since the government was pro-West and opposed to the process of unification.

The growth of Nasser's reputation and popularity after the Suez crisis in 1956 was a major factor in Nasser's conversion to a policy of unification. The main difference between him and his followers in neighbouring states had been that Nasser did not

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5 Copeland, n. j., p. 191.
believe in a single Arab national state, and he maintained these doubts throughout the unity experiments. Yet by 1957, he had become the most powerful figure in the Middle East and a new policy was needed to exploit his political stature and convert popularity into political gain. Even while Nasser was having doubts about the workability of his new policy, the first effort towards Arab unification was made by the Baath Socialist Party of Syria. The Baath was a major partner in the 1957 coalition government of Syria and, partly inspired by Arab nationalism as well as the fear of a possible Communist take-over in Syria, it initiated the creation of the United Arab Republic (UAR) under the presidency of Nasser.

The political merger of Egypt and Syria into the UAR in February 1958, intensified the struggle between conservative monarchies and radical nationalists. In 1958 there was a distinct possibility that Egypt might succeed in annexing Lebanon and Iraq. The pro-Nasser elements in Lebanon stirred up a civil war in May, which eventually led to American intervention when Prime Minister Chamoun requested for American support in suppressing the rebels. Though Nasser's influence remained strong even after the settlement of the civil war, Lebanon was able to retain its


independence and foreign policy. In Iraq, a military coup by
Brig. Gen. Abdul Karim Kassem overthrew the monarchy in July 1958, 
lending hope that Iraq could now seek closer ties with Egypt.
But Kassem was unwilling to jeopardise his leadership in Iraq 
and jailed his own deputy Colonel Arif who was the leader of the 
pro-unification group.

The collapse of Nasser's ambitions in Iraq and Lebanon was 
followed by the failure in Syria. A military coup led by na-
tionalists in September 1961 broke the union between the two 
countries proving that the policy of unity was more difficult to 
implement than alliance. The Syrians had resented the unequal 
partnership and Nasser's authoritarian, centralized system of 
control. Nasser however learnt the important lesson that Arab 
unity would not be possible until the social systems of the Arab 
states had reached a degree of similarity. Mere political unity 
would not endure.

A second federation came into existence in April 1963 
when Egypt, Syria and Iraq agreed to join a Federal Union. The 
decision was made possible by military coups in Iraq in February 
1963 and in Syria in March 1963, which brought the Arab national-
ists to power again. During the tense and complicated negotiations 
however, Nasser insisted on a twenty month transitional period 
before unification, to bring the social systems together. The 
idea was extremely sound since one month after the agreement was 
signed, Egypt withdrew from the federation claiming it could no

longer co-operate with the Baath party dominating Syria and Iraq. There were too many differences in ideology, cultural attitudes, economic policies and colonial experience. More important even than lack of geographical contiguity, was the fact that the Baath, while remaining "Arab nationalist" did not want Nasser to dominate the Union. The most important consequence of the collapse of the Federation was that one more important political group, the Baath socialists became opposed to Egypt's foreign policy, and Nasser's political ambitions.

Another major development in Egyptian foreign policy during this period was its involvement in the Yemen War which broke out in September 1962, when General Abdullah Sallal overthrew the monarchy. Imam Badi, the ousted monarch, escaped from the capital and supported by Saudi Arabia gathered his loyal tribes and re-established control over a large part of Yemen, in the civil war that followed. Sallal's republican regime sought and received Egyptian political and military support. Egypt in fact, committed one-third of its army in suppressing the monarchists in Yemen. The expensive and prolonged civil war did not result in a decisive victory for either group and the country remained in effect divided. The defeat of Egyptian forces in the Arab-Israel War of June 1967, compelled Egypt to concentrate on defending her own territories. An agreement was reached in August 1967 between King Faisal of Saudi Arabia and

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9 For a more detailed study of the negotiations see, Arab Political Documents (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1963), pp. 14ff. See also Kerr, n. 7, pp. 44-77.
Nasser whereby both agreed to end their involvement in Yemen. This agreement finally permitted Egypt to withdraw all its troops from Yemen and it ceased to be involved by early 1968.

From 1965 onwards Nasser was increasingly preoccupied with the Palestinian problem, and the military threat from Israel. As the United States–Israel relation expanded and consolidated, Egypt moved closer to the Soviet Union. The Palestine Liberation Organisation was created in 1965, with Egyptian support, to bring Palestinians together and act as a second front against Israel. The decisive victory of Israel in the June 1967 war, against the combined military forces of Egypt and Syria marked the turning point in Egyptian foreign policy. Nasser was now compelled to follow a policy of moderation and reconciliation with the conservative monarchies of the Middle East. Nasser sought economic and military support on an increasing scale from the Soviet Union which was now able to gain an important foothold and sphere of influence in the Arab world. Even as Soviet influence over Egyptian affairs expanded, the American Secretary of State, William Rogers made efforts to resolve the Egypt-Israel military conflict. The War of Attrition, which involved skirmishes between Egyptian and Israeli troops at the Suez Canal Zone, continued into 1970 and American mediation failed.

On the death of Nasser in September 1970, Anwar Sadat

11 Kerr, n. 7, pp. 129ff.
became the President of Egypt. Sadat was initially preoccupied with consolidating his position in Egypt and the conflict with Israel. Sadat's Arab policy was however an advance over Nasser's moderation, after 1967. Sadat was an Egyptian nationalist; he had no intention of continuing Nasser's alliance or unification schemes. He followed a policy of neutrality towards other Arab states and did not involve Egypt in their internal political development. The major objective of Egyptian foreign policy during this period was to regain the Sinai from Israel, first by military force and later through diplomacy.

The October 1973 war, carried out in co-operation with Syria, shattered the myth of Israeli invincibility, but it failed to regain the Sinai for Egypt. American mediation through the Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger succeeded, in the disengagement agreement between Egypt and Israel. Sadat was able to evict the Soviet advisers and curb Russian influence by 1973, and turn to American influence as the technique to regaining Sinai. In 1977 he undertook his momentous decision to visit Jerusalem and make peace with Israel. The challenge that Israel often threw, that Egypt was unwilling to make peace and recognize Israel, was met by Sadat and resulted in the Camp David Agreement of 1979. The agreement however earned the anger of the rejectionist Arab states and the political and diplomatic isolation of Egypt from the Arab League. The major gain for Egypt, at the cost of isolation

however, was the complete recovery of the Sinai in April 1982 and significant economic and military assistance from the United States.

The study of the involvement of intelligence services of Egypt in diplomacy and foreign policy can be undertaken in the context of the foreign policy outlined. Of special importance, is the period 1956 to 1967 when Egyptian foreign policy was at its most radical, aggressive and outward oriented. During this period there were more governments opposed to Nasser's policies than those aligned with it. In a situation where diplomacy failed, it was necessary to utilize other instruments of foreign policy such as propaganda and intelligence services.

**Intelligence and Crypto-Diplomacy**

The conventional channel of communication between governments, under normal circumstances is the diplomatic structure. However, even while cordial and friendly relations may exist between two governments, they often retain multiple channels of communication to each other. Among these secondary channels, is liaison between intelligence services, often used for the exchange of sensitive information. Crypto-diplomacy or "concealed diplomacy" through intelligence liaison serves the purpose of sending

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13 For further details on the economic and political gains of Egypt from the Camp David Agreement see, Steven Rosen and Francis Fukuyama, "Egypt and Israel After Camp David", *Current History* (Philadelphia, Pa), vol. 76, no. 443, January 1979, pp. 1-5.
messages bypassing the diplomatic structure, which is of such nature, that neither diplomats nor the general public should be informed. This may involve the sending of "feelers" for new directions in current negotiations, or bargaining that needs to be carried out directly between heads of state.

Where there may be a paralysis or rupture of diplomatic relations, intelligence services can play a very important role as the only link between belligerents. Governments also find it useful to maintain some form of crypto-diplomacy, where the political circumstances do not permit them to openly maintain diplomatic relations with another government. There is however a third and different role that intelligence services undertake. Governments may find it necessary, to achieve foreign policy goals, to maintain contact with opposition political groups in another country. Intelligence personnel operating under diplomatic cover, provide this channel if there is need to closely observe, direct or manipulate political developments in the host country.

In the case of Egypt, intelligence services have been a very effective form of crypto-diplomacy. While the Free Officers were planning to overthrow the monarchy of King Farouk in early 1952, the CIA was trying to establish contacts with credible opposition groups that may replace the monarchy with a republic. The intelligence officers, who were secretly Free Officers, but serving under the Royalist government, were the initial contacts to the CIA and negotiated on behalf of Nasser. They played a crucial role in the successful coup d'etat of July 26, 1952. After the coup, the revolutionaries sent Ali Sabri, then Chief of
Air Force Intelligence, and later Director of General Intelligence and Political Adviser to Nasser, to the American Embassy in Cairo. Sabri informed the Americans of the coup and asked them to pass on a message to the British Embassy in Cairo, urging the British to keep out of what was purely an internal affair.

This channel was also put into service, during the period 1967 to 1974, when Egypt had broken diplomatic relations with the United States. For Egypt however, contacts with the Americans in 1970-71 were exceedingly confused, mainly because the Americans insisted upon using two distinct channels of communication with Egypt. The Secretary of State William Rogers' messages to the Egyptian Foreign Minister came through conventional state department and diplomatic channels, but other important messages mostly from President Nixon to President Sadat, came through the CIA-Mukhabarat channel. The problem was made more complicated by the fact that the messages were not always reconcilable. The problem was not solved until 24 February 1973, when Hafez Ismail, the National Security Adviser to Sadat, met President Nixon. Nixon acknowledged that the secret channel of communication through CIA-Mukhabarat, which was supervised by Henry Kissinger, but unknown to the State Department, would be the channel for the actual settlement of issues. The channel was later extensively used during the October 1973 war between Egypt and Israel.

Another occasion when intelligence liaison was utilized, was in settling the "Randopolo Affair" in September 1971. Tanashi Randopolo, an Egyptian of Greek descent had been arrested on charges of espionage for collecting information on a Soviet airfield near Alexandria. His contact to the Americans had been Miss Swain, who worked for the British Embassy section now handling American affairs, and had also been arrested for interrogation. The diplomat in charge of American affairs however contacted the legal adviser to the Interior Ministry, Ahmed Osman and accused the police of harassing and using force on an American diplomat. When the issue became sensitive with the diplomats and government officials vehemently accusing each other, Ahmed Ismail, Director of General Intelligence, sent for the CIA station Chief, Eugene Trone who also operated from the embassy. Trone urged that the business should be settled with minimum fuss and built up the case that the operation had been against the Soviet Union and the target was not Egypt. The information would have under no circumstances reached Israel. Bergus was made to apologise to Ismail and the matter was settled with Miss Swain's release a few months later. The affair is significant in that it shows the importance attached to the intelligence channels of communication between Sadat and Kissinger. According to Heikal, it was only to keep open the CIA channels, that he finally agreed to release Miss Swain.  

In September 1969, King Idris of Libya was overthrown in a coup d'etat by Colonel Muammar Quaddafi. The Egyptians who had,
had no contact with the revolutionaries did not know whether they were Baathists, socialists or Nasserites. The Libyan Revolutionary Council however wanted Mohammed Heikal to be dispatched to Libya as the initial contact with Egypt. A three-man delegation was thus sent, consisting of a military liaison officer from the Defence Ministry, an intelligence officer for political liaison from the Mukhabarat and Heikal. While Heikal returned the same day, the liaison officers stayed back in Tripoli to send reports on developments in Libya.

The use of intelligence personnel for quasi-diplomatic purposes was evidently an established practice. In November 1976, King Hussein of Jordan, probably after opening secret negotiations with Israel, wanted to come to Cairo. However, to allow his visit would indicate approval of his moves, so it was decided to send General Sadiq to Amman, and find out whether he had opened negotiations with Israel. Sadiq was the former Director of Military Intelligence but still responsible for liaison with liberation movements. On 23 November Sadiq visited Amman and returned with the distinct impression that King Hussein had secretly met Yigal Allon. Hussein's visit to Cairo was thus delayed indefinitely since Nasser did not want to approve of negotiations with Israel.

The most interesting aspect of crypto-diplomacy however

17 Ibid., p. 71.
18 Ibid., pp. 120-21
has been the tenuous links between the intelligence services of Egypt and Israel. Israeli intelligence had come across information of a plot to assassinate President Sadat, financed and directed from Libya in late 1977. Since Egypt still had no diplomatic relations with Israel, and Sadat had not decided on his peace moves, Yitzak Rofé, the Director of Mossad and Kamal Hassan Ali, the Director of General Intelligence decided to meet in Rabat, capital of Morocco. The information was of a sufficiently serious nature that Sadat undertook pre-emptive measures. This was followed up by a massive border raid into Libya by the Egyptian army to punish Muammar Quaddafi. According to a former Israeli diplomat, such exchange of information had taken place on earlier occasions. Mohammed Hassan Tohami, who had served as divisional chief for many years in the Mukhabarat, was sent as Egyptian delegate to the International Atomic Energy Commission at Vienna. There the first Mossad-Mukhabarat links were established. In 1977, Sadat made him Vice-Premier and special envoy. The venue for exchange of information was now shifted to Morocco, which Tohami visited clandestinely. It was these discussions, including one with Moshe Dayan that eventually laid the ground for Sadat’s visit to Jerusalem in November 1977 and the signing of the Camp David accord.

Intelligence and Decision Making

The primary function of intelligence services is the

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collection, collation and analysis of information, on the basis of which decisions and policy can be formulated. The task of decision-making is thus that of the political leadership. However, intelligence is often a crucial input in decision-making and in a variety of ways can modify, or change policy decisions through biased or prejudiced reporting. The interchange of personnel between the intelligence services and the Foreign Ministry increases the possibility of intelligence personnel bringing the clandestine mentality and misconceptions into the direct processes of foreign policy. Often the intelligence directors are close confidants and advisers to the political leadership, and themselves compose part of the political elite. This is in addition to the formal advisory role, intelligence directors are vested with constitutionally. Depending on the political nature of a society, intelligence services can become an important power base for the political leadership, and enable the formation of 'cliques' and factions capable of obstructing or implementing policy.

Even before the success of the July 1952 revolution, Nasser indicated his reliance on intelligence. The Free Officers had ideologically penetrated the Royal Intelligence service, and drew upon it through some principal participants, in the planning and implementation of the revolution. These intelligence officers kept the revolutionaries informed about developments in high army and political quarters and it was on the basis of their information that the government would be taking action shortly, that
the Free Officers advanced their own attack on General Headquarters. The intelligence officers involved were Osman Nuri from military intelligence, Ali Sabri, and Abdel Muneim al-Naggar who was later appointed ambassador to Paris and Baghdad. Further these officers were also instrumental in opening contact with the CIA and carrying out negotiations to ensure tacit American support for the Revolution.

A study of the movement of Free Officers from the Revolutionary Command Council set up during the revolution, into government positions, is revealing about the nature of preferences and actual distribution of posts. The diplomatic corps apparently possessed special attraction since 7 officers moved directly from the military to ambassadorial posts. A few others moved to the National Assembly and 5 officers assumed Cabinet offices. However, comparatively, 7 officers were involved with intelligence work as their primary posting and another 6 serve at some time prior to entering cabinet positions, making the largest constituent of 13 postings. These findings point to the prominent position of the former intelligence personnel in the government as well as the regimes concern with security. According to K. Hrair Dekmejian, "taken together with other information, the high proportion of former intelligence operatives, manifests the military elites conspiratorial mentality and paranoia, which was periodically rein-

forced by Israeli and Western attempts to overturn the regime."

During the Nasser era, from 1954 to 1970, the key people in the hierarchy of power were Ali Sabri, Zakaria Mohieeddin, Shams Badran, Sharawy Gomaa, Sami Sharaf, Salah Nasr and Amin Huweidi. With the exception of Field Marshal Abdel Amer and Mohammed Heikal who were close friends and advisers to Nasser, the others had at one time or another been closely connected with the administration or co-ordination of the intelligence and security services. Some of the most powerful figures of this period whether in the cabinet, Arab Socialist Union or Presidential Office, directly or indirectly were part of the extensive intelligence and security network.

Zakaria Mohieeddin was Minister of Interior for nearly a decade and Prime Minister from 1965 to 1966. Ali Sabri became the Director of Intelligence till 1966, later the Prime Minister and Secretary of the ASU Executive Committee till 1969. Sharawy Gomaa was Interior Minister towards the end of the regime and Sami Sharaf, the Minister for Presidential Affairs was the Counsellor to the President on intelligence affairs.

There are certain incidents which however, indicate indirectly the role of intelligence services and their potential impact on decision-making. In September 1969, President Nasser desired to go abroad for treatment and he wished to form a committee to handle domestic affairs and foreign policy, during his absence. Present at the meeting which was called for this purpose were

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Sadat (Vice-President), Gomaa (Interior), General Fawzi (War) Jbarar (Presidential Affairs and Information), Heikal and Amin Huweidi, the Director of Intelligence. The presence of the Intelligence Director at an important meeting, his participation in the discussions and the prospect of inclusion as a member of the Interim Committee, would indicate close contact, implicit trust and reliance on intelligence services. The paradox of the meeting however, is that Nasser had since 1967, been trying to reduce the importance of intelligence services and control them more effectively; an aspect that will be dealt with in detail later.

The same pattern continued at the first crucial meeting to be held after the death of Nasser in 1970. An Interim Committee had been formed to act as the cabinet and met to take decisions on foreign policy. The major item on the agenda was the discussion of a renewal of ceasefire between Egypt and Israel in the War of Attrition. William Rogers, the American special envoy had made certain proposals to settle the conflict, but in Egypt the first indications of manoeuvring among factions and policy differences had begun to take shape. Present at the meeting were Sadat, now interim President, Mahmoud Riad (Foreign Affairs), Heikal now Minister for Information, Sharaf, Gomaa and once again, Amin Huweidi. While Sadat was willing to seriously consider the Rogers' proposals, and make concessions, the pro-Russian Ali Sabri group opposed the granting of any concessions. The Director of Intelligence not only deliberated over the important issue

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23 Heikal, n. 15, pp. 73-74.
concerning foreign policy, but also supported the Ali Sabri group. Intelligence experts are entitled to be present at Cabinet meetings where their expertise and insight may be needed to clarify issues or details, but the intelligence expert is himself not expected to support or side any particular stand on the issue, which is the prerogative of decision-makers.

The Directors of Intelligence were also on two different occasions, official members of the Presidential and high level delegations visiting the Soviet Union. The first occasion was in November 1965 when Salah Nasr, the Mukhabarat chief was included in the Egyptian delegation headed by Vice-President Marshal Abdel Hakim Amer. The second instance was the inclusion of Ahmad Ismail in the delegation headed by Prime Minister Aziz Siki which visited Moscow in October 1972. Intelligence liaison was evidently one of the items on the agenda. It is also interesting to note that these visits to Moscow, preceded the expanded supply of arms and eventually resulted in Arab-Israel wars.

Intelligence liaison has certain inherent dangers when the element of rational doubt is replaced by implicit trust. In the case of Egypt, liaison with the Soviet Union's intelligence was an important input in the process of belligerency and eventual outbreak of the 1967 war. Egypt did not have the independent resources to verify the information received from the Soviet Union.

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24 Ibid., pp. 122-25.

The 1967 war is also an example of decision-making on the basis of military intelligence.

A number of theories have been advanced about the immediate cause of the outbreak of hostilities in June-July 1967 between Egypt and Syria with Israel. The problem began in May, when Syrian and Egyptian listening posts - electronic eavesdropping devices in the Mediterranean area, picked up radio messages from an Israeli operational network, indicating that an outbreak of war was imminent with Syria and Israel would launch a pre-emptive strike against Damascus. The Syrian military intelligence and the Baath leadership apprised President Nasser of the fears of an Israeli attack. Around the same time reports from Lebanon, Syria, from Soviet circles and from Egyptian military intelligence, reached Nasser, confirming that there were large troop concentrations being undertaken by Israel on the northern frontier for a possible attack on Syria. Nasser however was still uncertain and demanded more proof. (On 15 May, the British press published aggressive statements by Defence Minister Moshe Dayan, which seemed to confirm Israeli intentions). At this stage he sought Moscow's opinion on the Syrian intelligence report that Israel was about to launch a large scale military operation aimed at toppling the Baath regime. Soviet intelligence not only confirmed the veracity of the Syrian and Egyptian intelligence reports, but also passed on to Egypt the complete Israeli plan of attack in the form of documents, originating from Israel's Ministry of Defence.

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The question of troop concentration is mysterious, as its existence was denied by both Israel and United Nations' observers. General Odd Bull reported that there was an absence of any significant troop movement on both sides of the border. This in itself is not significant since Israel could move troops to the border in a matter of hours and does not prove its intentions.

But the Government of Israel denying any real threat, claimed that an Israeli contingency plan, prepared by Yuval Neeman, like those prepared by all General Staffs of most nations, to cover all possible eventualities of attack, had been stolen by the Soviet intelligence and presented to Nasser as a plan for a real and imminent attack. Reinforcements which had been left at the border following the April 1967 incident with Syria must have given a false appearance that aggressive troop concentration existed.

Moscow definitely helped to catalyse the crisis by accusing Israel of massing troops and planning a preventive war against Syria, in an effort to activate Egypt and thereby shore up the Damascus regime. It is acknowledged by most Middle East experts that the Soviet reports were a decisive factor in convincing Nasser of the reality of the Israeli threat. In an interview with Eric Houleau on 8 May 1967, Nasser acknowledged seeking Moscow's opinions on intelligence reports. Says Houleau, a pro-Nasser, Middle East

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27 Secretary General U Thant based his statement on the lack of significant troop concentrations on the border, on the report of General Odd Bull, Commander of the United Nations Truce Supervisory Organisation (UNTSO). Other senior UN officers in the area did not consider the report significant since Israel could mobilize her troops to the borders in a matter of hours.

expert: "When the Soviet intelligence services confirmed that indeed Israel intends to attack Syria, Nasser was convinced that immediately thereafter, it would be his turn." On the question of Egyptian intelligence services intercepting Israeli network radio messages, Maxime Rodinson, leftist historian and Middle East expert, discounts the theory that these messages were planted by Israeli intelligence in an effort to threaten Syria. It was more possibly an effort by Israeli right extremists to manoeuvre and provoke Arab reaction and indirectly a more militant Israeli attitude which might have brought rightist militants to power in Israel. On the question of Russia passing on Israeli attack plans to Egypt, the Israeli theory is plausible as just previously, Israeli counter-intelligence had uncovered Israel Baer, a military officer with access to the Neeman brief, as a Russian spy. Moreover, the Russian intermediary to Nasser was Sami Sharaf, adviser on intelligence problems, belonging to the pro-Soviet Lobby and later alleged to be a KBG spy.

Egyptian military intelligence had a more positive role in some of the crucial decisions made in preparation for the October 1973 war. It was continuously pressed for more and more information and estimates as the war neared. Its role in the planning and implementation of a massive deception plan for "Operation


30 Rodinson, n. 26, p. 188. On the episodes of the Neeman Brief and Colonel Israel Baer, see: Derogy and Carmel, n. 26, pp. 213-14. Copeland, n. 3, p. 234; also believes that the 1967 war was a Soviet Union intelligence failure.
Badr has been dealt with in the last chapter. The participation of the Director of Military Intelligence in the High Command meetings and the reliance on his information as the basis of decision-making indicate the important role that General Fuad Nasser (DMI) occupied and the contribution military intelligence made to the war effort. It is interesting to note that the former Director of Military Intelligence had been sacked in October 1972 possibly for being a supporter of General Sadiq and other staff officers who had opposed Sadat's concept of a limited war and had forcibly expressed themselves. This opens possible speculation that along with other top Generals who were sacked, Sadat did not trust the Military Intelligence section to hinder or sabotage his plans, or enter the war on their own terms.

The Joint Egyptian-Syrian High Command met on 22 August 1973 at Cairo to put together the final touches to simultaneous attack plans on occupied Israeli territories and the meetings went on till 28 August. These meetings, consisting of the Chiefs of Staff, Defence Ministers and Commanders of the three armed forces, included the Directors of Intelligence of both countries. On 3 September at a meeting of the Egyptian High Command with Syrian representation, the first question was put to Director of Military Intelligence General Fuad Nasser, to give an assessment of the enemy's probable reaction to the attack. The assessment the DMI gave was based on three sources. Firstly, an intensive study which had been prepared following Israeli manoeuvres in May. These manoeuvres had been a reaction to Egyptian concentrations built up
in the canal area. Secondly, on the known disposition of Israeli forces in the Sinai at that moment and thirdly, on the general intelligence background. The next question put by Chief of Staff, General Shazli was related to, when Israel would know about Egyptian preparation for attack. The intelligence estimate given was fifteen days in advance of the assault. This led to a long and animated discussion, since in other words once the countdown started, the enemy would be in a position to move up its reserves. The problem was solved by decision to equip the first shock troops heavily with anti-aircraft missiles.

Both the Director of Intelligence (Central) and Director Military Intelligence were members of the National Security Council - a political body which included the cabinet and presidency. On 2 October a meeting of the war council was called which included the Chief of Staff, Minister of War, Director of Operations, chiefs of various armed forces and Heads of all service departments. It was here that the first directive for the battle was read out officially. One of the questions the President asked was whether Israel was aware of Egyptian moves, and in answer received conflicting reports. While there were signs of top Israeli military staff visiting the advance posts there was no change in the actual disposition of enemy troops. On 3 October, General Ismail asked the DMI to give an estimate of the forces Israel could spare for the Jordanian Front, if Jordan joined battle or even merely put its forces on

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31 Heikal, n. 15, pp. 11-15.
alert. At the same meeting of senior officers the intelligence estimate of Israel's awareness was requested again. The intelligence report was negative, but General Ismail decided to strengthen the deception picture. On 5 October, two Israeli reconnaissance planes entered the Sinai area and photographed the canal zone, without violating Egyptian air space. The pulses of the aircraft were picked up by Egyptian electronic reconnaissance and the military intelligence was convinced that Israel was now aware of bridging equipment near the canal zone. However, in all its estimates of Israel's awareness of Egyptian moves, the analysis of military intelligence reflected its past experience with Israeli intelligence. It was thus unaware and had not calculated that the Aman would decrease in its efficiency and accuracy of analysis. It is therefore not surprising that Fuad Nasser's estimates did not prove to be accurate.

Another dimension of the functioning of Egypt's intelligence services during this period was their involvement in domestic affairs and development into a "centre of power". By the early sixties, the political intelligence services had reached a sufficient degree of cohesiveness and control so as to become an independent "centre of power." The responsibility partly lay with the personality of Nasser, the nature of the political system and the easy access to the president. In an atmosphere of intrigue and factional rivalry, the intelligence services thrived, expanded and fully exploited their special official status and powers.

Ibid., pp. 27, 32, 33, 36.
A natural corollary for any independent power base is its involvement in domestic politics. In a speech delivered on 23rd November 1967, President Nasser claimed that numerous irregularities had been discovered in the intelligence services, resulting from attempts to create positions of strength and to consolidate a group capable of seizing power. Nasser informed the public that these irregularities had been dealt with, and that what he denoted as an "intelligence state" had been eradicated.

In September 1967, the Director of Intelligence, Salah Nasr had been arrested for his role in the conspiracy headed by Field Marshal Amer, aimed at "replacing the existing regime". Salah Nasr was brought to trial, which was held behind closed doors, and sentenced to life imprisonment for his overall conduct as Director of General Intelligence, over a period of fifteen years. He was found guilty on four specific counts: exploitation of his position for activities opposed to the principles of the Revolution, manipulation of the intelligence apparatus for personal aims, misappropriation and maldistribution of intelligence funds and blackmail or torture of prisoners. His deputy Hasan Alish, Secretary Ali Ahmad Ali and divisional head Hamdi al-Sahmi were acquitted.

Nasser's efforts at curbing the powers of the intelligence

33 The speech was reproduced in Al-Ahram, 24 November 1967.

34 Caroz, n. 25, pp. 184-5.
and controlling its activities apparently failed. The testimony of Ahmad Kamel, Director of Intelligence in 1971, at the Ali Sabri trials, indicate that the intelligence services had secretly tapped the telephone of President Sadat and withheld vital information from him, while being involved in an attempt to overthrow Sadat. The chief conspirators were once again officials closely involved with intelligence affairs. Ali Sabri, the Vice-President had earlier been the intelligence chief, Gomaa controlled the security services, Ahmad Kamel was the Director in 1970, and among other personalities implicated was Amin Huwaidi and Mohammed Saad el-Din Zayed, a Minister who had earlier served in military intelligence. The conspirators were people who had believed they could wield power from behind the scenes, with the new president serving as their front. When they realized that Sadat had his own views and policies and was moving decisively against them, an attempt to depose him, had been undertaken.

**Intelligence and Foreign Policy**

Nations use a multiplicity of instruments to achieve their foreign policy objectives, such as diplomacy, war and foreign aid. The nature of the foreign policy also determines the choice of instruments. Propaganda and intelligence services are utilized when the foreign policy is aggressive and expansionist oriented and

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is facing considerable opposition from the targets. In the case of Egypt the decade 1957 to 1967 marks the revolutionary period of Egyptian foreign policy. In an effort to assume leadership in the Arab world and to spread the revolution in other Arab states which were monarchies or opposed to the concept of Arab unification under Nasser's leadership, the intelligence services were the clandestine contact with various opposition groups. They not merely served as the channel of communication, but also as the instrument to finance, direct, manipulate and arm the rebel movements or Liberation movements. One of the objectives of Egyptian foreign policy was thus to create instability through subversion and interference in domestic affairs of the Arab and African states. It should however be remembered that intelligence services were only one instrument used in conjunction with and simultaneous application of other instruments such as diplomacy and propaganda.

**Egypt and Iraq**

The involvement of Egypt in Iraqi affairs is the best substantiated and documented study of the use of clandestine activities as an instrument of Egyptian foreign policy. Nasser from 1952 onwards supported the efforts of the Iraqi Baath Socialist party and republicans to overthrow the Iraqi monarchy. It was part of the "Arab Revolution" conceived by Nasser. Egypt was continuously accused by the Iraqi Monarchy of engaging in subversive activities, until it was overthrown in July 1958 by the Baath. The revolution was welcomed by Egypt and granted recognition. The Arab
historian, Fadhil al-Jamali claimed that "Egyptian intelligence" played an important part in the disintegration of the Iraqi monarchy. However differences arose in the Revolutionary Command of the Baath, with Kassem, the President being pro-Communist, close to the Soviet Union and offering sanctuary to Syrian communists. The strongman Arif, second in command, pro-Arab and anti-communist wanted Iraq to merge with Egypt. Arif lost the ideological and power struggle with Kassem, though supported actively by Egypt, which then resorted to clandestine activities to overthrow Kassem.

The best substantiated and documented accusations were those relating to the activity of the United Arab Republic, particularly its involvement in the abortive coups of Rashid Ali al-Gaylani (December 1958) and Abd al-Wahid al-Shawaf (March 1959). The evidence of Egypt's involvement in the Gaylani affair came from Rashid Ali's two main accomplices, Mubdir al-Gaylani and Abd al-Rahim al-Rawi. They testified in the military "People's Court" in 1959, that they had established contact with the Counsellor at the UAR Embassy at an early stage and had been promised arms supply and financial assistance. The weapons were to be supplied from the Syrian border town of Susa. If needed the UAR would use its air force to drop further arms supplies to the rebels inside Iraq. Moreover in December 1958, the UAR

Embassy paid Gaylan 10,000 Iraqi dinars in a current account at the Baghdad branch of "Banque Nationale Pour la Commerce et l'Industrie". Although the Egyptian Press denied UAR involvement there can be little doubt that the UAR Embassy was an active participant in the affairs, as it was strongly opposed to the Iraqi government.

The UAR has also been implicated in the abortive Shawaf revolt of March 1959. The trials of the primary conspirators in the "People's Court" clearly indicate UAR involvement. However, the most damaging evidence came in 1966, in an article written by the leading civilian member of the abortive coup, Mahmoud al-Durra. Durra admitted that on the first night of the revolt, he and another plotter took an army lorry to the Syrian border and brought back a small radio station, which was used to broadcast the first communiqué, composed by Durra, to the people of Mosul. Durra further suggested that "there was a prior understanding between the revolutionary officers and the UAR authorities that a squadron of UAR planes would be used for the protection of the revolutionary base in Mosul, from the air ... the reason for the non-implementation of this agreement could be the time-factor; the speed with which the coup had collapsed."

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37 Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Defence, Mahkamat al-Shaab/Proceedings of the Special Supreme Military Court (Baghdad, 1959), vol. 5, pp. 185ff.

In the aftermath of the Mosul revolt, nine members of the UAR Embassy in Baghdad were asked to leave Iraq in a day. In Cairo, the Iraqi ambassador defected to Egypt, claiming that Iraq was ruled by a "red clique". This was treated in Cairo as a diplomatic coup, but it only served to heighten the paralysis of diplomatic channels. Iraq refused to attend Arab League meetings dominated by Egypt, and also the first Arab oil conference which met in Cairo, causing further erosion into diplomatic channels.

The Egyptians expelled the assistant cultural attache in the Iraqi Embassy from Egypt and by May 1959 an almost complete breakdown in diplomacy between UAR and the Iraqi Republic had resulted.

The problem however did not stop even after a pro-Egypt faction came to power in Iraq. The official records of the Unity Talks between Egypt and Iraq in March 1963 show that the Iraqi delegate Salih Ali al-Saadi, informed President Nasser that he had proof that "certain groups" operating from Cairo were working to undermine the Baath regime in Iraq. Though this might not have been one important reason for the breakdown of the merger negotiations it certainly was the cause for considerable tension during the negotiations.

39 Dawisha, n. 12, p. 29.
Egypt and Syria

The merger between Syria and Egypt, collapsed in 1961, when a new nationalist faction of the Baath Socialist came to power in a coup d'etat and moved closer to the Soviet Union. Egypt's activity in Syria did not limit itself to propaganda warfare, after the collapse of the union. In August 1962, the Egyptian military attache in the Lebanon, defected to Syria and supplied the Syrians with a list of Egyptian intelligence agents working against the Syrian government. The Syrian government promptly called for a meeting of the Arab League which was duly held in Shtoura in the Lebanon. Once assembled, the Egyptians were accused of interfering in Syrian domestic affairs and endeavouring to undermine the security of Iraq; the long list of 'agents' having been produced. The Syrians were strongly supported by the delegations of Jordan and Saudi Arabia. After a stormy meeting which necessitated the intervention of the Lebanese police, the Egyptian delegation walked out of the meeting. As a result, among other factors, this caused by the middle of 1962, the almost complete political isolation of Egypt from the Arab world.

The question of Nasser's use of intelligence agents cropped up again during the second unity talks between Egypt, Syria

and Iraq in March 1963. Syria charged that Nasser tended to work through "stooges and agents" in achieving the kind of unity that he desired. After the negotiations broke down, the Syrians again charged that the earlier union had been dominated by stooges, opportunists and agents of the Egyptian intelligence service.

Egypt and Lebanon

In 1958, in the Lebanon a civil war broke out following Prime Minister Chamoun's policy of keeping the Muslims out of power and opposing the merger of Syria and Egypt. In May, the foreign minister Charles Malik, accused the UAR of "massive, illegal and unprovoked intervention" in the Lebanon, through large scale supply of arms to the rebels, the direct training and employment of terrorists and a hostile radio and press campaign. Among the rebels were a former President, his ministers and party supporters. There is little doubt that Nasser was willing through the Syrian intelligence 'Deuxième Bureau', and the Mukhabarat, to supply enough arms and money to the Lebanese rebels to ensure that they would not be crushed and that Chamoun's policy would have to be modified. At the same time at the overt level he was trying behind the scenes to bring the conflict to a negotiated settlement.

It is not surprising that after the Iraqi revolution of 1968, the British and Americans were shocked and uncertain, confused by their own tendency to identify all manifestations of

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42 Al-Ba‘ith (Damascus), 26 June 1963; see also Kerr, n. 7, pp. 53, 85.
Arab radicalism or neutralism with Nasser's leadership plans, communism and Soviet expansion. In Washington the CIA head, Allen Dulles reported that the Iraqi coup had been made by pro-Nasser elements of the Iraqi army but there was no information that Nasser had been directly responsible for the coup d'etat. Nevertheless, Britain and America were not willing to take chances and following the appeal of Prime Minister Chamoun of Lebanon, they sent troops to the Lebanon and Jordan to suppress rebels and prevent the spread of the Iraqi revolution and keep out Soviet influence.

Egypt and Jordan

The monarchy of King Hussein of Jordan was another target for subversion and clandestine activity. Starting from 1958 King Hussein has frequently accused the Egyptian authorities of attempting to overthrow his regime, especially through the Palestinian forces in Jordan. Many of the Jordanian leaders such as Wafsi al-Tall, considered the creation of the Palestine Liberation Organisation as the handiwork of the Egyptians to foment trouble in royalist Jordan and control the Palestinians. In 1966 "the Palestinians had begun to practise subversion on a grand scale" and the PLO offices in Jordan were closed down. Their activities were aimed at dividing the Palestinian people and replacing the monarchy with "some other political authority". King Hussein in fact claims

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that since he occupied the throne he has had to deal with twelve such plots, "hatched across the borders" and at times had to call out the army to restore peace.

**Egypt and Yemen**

In Yemen during September 1962, the Sallal revolutionary group overthrew the Imam and established a republic. Egypt declared her support for the revolution, which was carried out by a Free Officer faction of the Yemeni army. The Egyptian military mission which had been in Aden since 1960, had recruited and encouraged the band of republican Free Officers, and after the uprising, Yemeni political exiles in Cairo, immediately flew home to join the new revolutionary government. Egyptian troops were sent, against the reinforcement and extension of Saudi Arabian domination over the Arabian Peninsula, and the American influence behind it. Maxime Rodinson however points out: "It is of course true that once these regions fell into the hands of the ruling Egyptian military caste, it exercised an unbridled authoritarianism there. It need not be supposed either that Egypt's political and military services, both public and secret, did not try to exert the maximum influence in every field of operation, sometimes using highly unsavoury methods."

**Egypt and Saudi Arabia**

In 1963, Nasser did not consider his enemy to be the

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45 Ibid., pp. 29-30. See also Dawisha, n. 12, p. 178.
46 Ibid., p. 182; and also see Rodinson, n. 26, p. 119.
Aden Protectorate under Badr, but King Feisal of Saudi Arabia. In Egypt-Saudi Arabian relations, Yemen proved to be a problem. Nasser took a long time to reconcile the fact that Egypt would have to depend for economic development heavily on Saudi finances, with his attempts to spread the revolution. During the 1962-63 Yemen War, relations were at the lowest ebb. Nasser could strike at Saudi Arabia in two days. Firstly by a combination of military harassment and internal subversion or indirectly at Saudi feudal confederates, the Sheikhs and Sultans of the Aden Protectorate who were later foresaken by their British patrons. The fact that Nasser chose the indirect method is an acknowledgement of the realization that Egypt could do little against Saudi Arabia, or antagonize it directly. Foreign policy and national development had to be reconciled. Thus at Taiz in South Yemen, the terrorist undergrounds of the protectorate received, arms, ammunition, cash and training from the Egyptian army intelligence and from there proceeded to Aden, for sabotage operations and efforts to overthrow the Sultans and hasten the retreat of British power.

In 1967 after the Khartoum Conference, relations between Saudi Arabia and Egypt improved and Saudi economic assistance for economic development increased significantly. However, Heikal's reports indicate that the problem of subversion and clandestine

47 Burdett, n. 45, pp. 186-7.
activity again cropped up. In late 1969 an abortive coup took place by Saudi Air Force officers, some of whom had just returned from abroad. In the course of their secret trial, the officers mentioned the name of Sami Sharaf as a contact with Egyptian intelligence. When King Feisal visited Cairo in December 1969, he claimed that Egypt was resorting to subversive activities with Sami Sharaf, the communist, as a link with the rebels who were also communists, and that Mohammed Haikal's al-Ahram was stirring up trouble as a semi-official mouthpiece of Nasser, inside Saudi Arabia. Nasser tried to convince Feisal that Egypt had stopped its subversive activities against Saudi Arabia, in 1967, when orders were given to stop all operations, and claimed that as al-Ahram was a private paper it could not be controlled. It is interesting to note that Nasser did admit to subversive operations before 1967, and that when he came to the issue of requesting further financial assistance for Egypt, King Feisal claimed Saudi Arabia was going through a difficult period, its reserves of foreign currency almost over and blamed the PDLP (Palestinian Freedom Movement) the friends of Egypt, for Saudi Arabia's extremely difficult position. Thus it was that Egypt and Saudi Arabia went to the Rabat Conference without any real basis of understanding with each other.

_Egypt and African Affairs_

_Egypt began to involve itself in African affairs in the_

48 Haikal, n. 15, pp. 77-79.
fifties when it began to support the Algerian liberation front with arms and supplies, against the French Government, as well as providing sanctuaries and bases for the FLN inside Egypt. It is however, with President Bourguiba of Tunisia that relations deteriorated rapidly. Bourguiba was the first Arab statesman to ask Arabs to reconcile to the existence of Israel and also to oppose Egyptian domination of the Arab League. In 1961 Bourguiba was at loggerheads with Nasser whom he accused of sending Egyptian secret services agents to plan his assassination. Between 1962 and 1963, Bourguiba's dislike of Nasser increased as he suspected that Nasser was interfering through subversive agents in Tunisia's internal politics. Bourguiba feared the alliance between racial elements of the Algerian nationalist leadership and Egypt. In June 1965, they again quarrelled and in September 1965, Nasser was accused of trying to overthrow every state in the Arab world.

**Egypt and the Palestine Liberation Organization**

The Palestinian al-Fatah group first got in touch with Egyptian authorities in 1966. At that time the Mukhabarat, which was responsible for all clandestine activities and dissident movements in the Arab world, was convinced that the al-Fatah was an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, which had been banned since an attempt on Nasser's life in 1954. In 1967, Nasser was thinking of activating a second front and through Heikal arranged to meet Yassir Arafat, Farouk Quadumi and Salah Khalaf. On the day of

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49 Stephens, n. 10, pp. 301, 378, 412 and 454.
the meeting the Mukhabarat which had not changed its views on al-Fatah insisted that the three Palestinians be searched and disarmed as it was not satisfied about their intentions. After initial hesitation, the Palestinians complied, through the tact of Heikal, Nasser opened the conversation at the meeting by saying: "According to a message our intelligence people received from Kuwait, you came here to assassinate me". Possibly Nasser had not taken it seriously and after the Palestinians protested that some one was trying to drive a wedge between al-Fatah and Egypt, the meeting went off well. Nasser wanted induction of Palestinian element into the struggle against Israel, to show that Palestine would resist politically by its presence and militarily by its actions.

After 1967, Egyptian authorities started to co-operate with al-Fatah helping in the training and equipment of its members. General Sadiq, the DMI was responsible for liaison with al-Fatah and special operations against Israel, with base facilities in Cairo. On his visit to Russia in 1968, Nasser took Yassir Arafat along with him and put him in touch with Kyril Mazurov who was responsible for national liberation movements. However in August 1970, when Nasser accepted the Rogers' initiative for ceasefire, relations between Egypt and al-Fatah deteriorated. Jordan had already been unhappy with co-operation between al-Fatah and Egypt. However, the guerrilla radio station operating from

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Egyptian territory began attacking Nasser, the Roger proposals and called Egyptians "traitors". Requests to moderate the broadcasts were turned down. Later, the Mukhabarat intercepted a coded message from Palestinian headquarters reading: "Do not yield to pressure from any quarter. Attack anybody you like". On receipt of this message, Nasser ordered the Minister of Interior to close down the station.

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51 Ibid.; p. 97.