CHAPTER I

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Non-alignment, the dominant foreign policy philosophy of the Afro-Asian world, emerged in a set of historical circumstances particularly during Cold War. The Cold War had sought to divide the world into two water-tight camps and the newly emerged independent states were forced to opt for one bloc or the other. While some of these states joined this Cold War alliance system, others resisted the pressure. They found it as a constraint on their decision-making as newly independent sovereign states. They sought to evolve an independent policy. Initially that policy was called by various names like neutralism, positive neutralism till the term non-alignment acquired universal acceptability. The policy of non-alignment, thus, emerged as the result of the determination of independent countries to safeguard their national independence and the legitimate rights of their people.1 Egypt, Ghana, India, Indonesia and Yugoslavia were the pioneers of this policy. The essence of this policy lies in its unity of purposes and a diversity of opinions. According to President Nasser, “the policy of non-alignment is for peace based on justice”.2 It is a positive stand for peace, human rights and an economically just world which, by inference, means the rejection of a relationship involving servitude and sacrifice of national self-interest by

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perpetuating injustice and inequity. The five main components of this policy, which were recalled and reaffirmed by Boutros Boutros Ghali, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Egypt, in his report in the Havana Conference held in September 1979 are:

(1) an independent policy, based on peaceful co-existence.

(2) support for the national liberation movements.

(3) the refusal to subscribe to collective military alliances that include a Super Power.

(4) the refusal to sign bilateral military alliances that include a Super Power, and

(5) the refusal to grant military bases to a big power.\(^3\)

There is no disputing the validity of its principles and objectives which include, \textit{inter alia}, the safeguarding of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, exercise of self-determination and sovereignty of the non-aligned and other developing countries, achievement of disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament, an end to colonialism and all forms of subjugation, eradication of racism and all forms of racial discrimination, especially apartheid, peaceful co-existence among States, democratization of inter-state relations, peaceful settlement of regional conflicts, attainment of developmental goals by all developing countries and protection of human rights, especially their

\(^3\) \textit{Addresses delivered at the Sixth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, Havana, 3-9 September 1979, p.186.}
social and economic dimensions. The policy of non-alignment, thus, aims to safeguard independence, sovereignty and the right to choose one's own path of development and dignity. It is to eliminate once and for all the vestiges of colonialism and other forms of oppression including racism and racial discrimination.

The term non-alignment though officially, internationally accepted in the Belgrade Conference of 1961 was initially called ‘neutrality’, then ‘dynamic neutrality’ that later became ‘uncommitted’ and finally ‘non-aligned’. The word ‘non-alignment’, in fact, was first used by late Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on 22 March 1949 and President Nasser of Egypt expressed this word ‘non-alignment’ on 1 June 1956; before that date Nasser had briefly used the term ‘neutrality’.

In Arabic the equivalent of non-alignment would be ‘adam al-inhiyaz’: though the commonly used term is ‘hiyad al-ijabi’ which literally means positive neutralism. In popular usage all these terms are synonymous and responsible

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statesmen commonly associated with this policy of non-alignment have often equated these terms and used them interchangeably. Thus, the name is a new brand while the concept is an old one.

As a concept, non-alignment gives expression to the struggle of the countries liberated from the political domination of imperialism to break their continued economic dependence, to build an independent national economy - the true foundation of political sovereignty. Non-alignment is not a mere political expression, but a reflection of a genuine policy. It is an assertion of autonomy in this international system dominated by the bipolar concept. It is cognizant of power, but it rejects power politics. By its appellation it is defined negatively. It does not mean neutrality in its classical sense. Nor does it simply imply equi-distance between two rival power blocs. It does not even imply equi-distance between two friendly nations when they are engaged in a dispute. It has never implied human inactivity, inertness and non-involvement in any given environment. It does not preclude the countries from aligning against aggression, exploitation, racialism, colonialism and imperialism. This policy also does not seek to create a third bloc. Jawaharlal Nehru, one of the pioneers of this policy, rejected emphatically the idea of a third force or neutralist bloc when he said:

> Sometimes it is suggested that the small countries of the world should band themselves together. If that implies what has been called a Third Force, it is a contradiction in terms, because numbers do not create a force. They may create moral pressures, but not force.

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In the Belgrade Conference of September 1961, President Nasser stated:

We do not wish to insinuate directly or indirectly that the states following the policy of non-alignment wish to create a third world bloc. We live in a world suffering from the strife between two blocs and we cannot imagine that a third bloc should enter the arena and increase the tension of this strife instead of easing it.\(^\text{10}\)

Mark Nikezic, a former ambassador to Washington of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, put it unmistakably this way:

The uncommitted countries are not a bloc of powers. First of all, they have no power. Not only do they not want to, but they cannot build up a third bloc. If they wanted to take part in alliance, they would have to join one or the other side. That much for blocs in the sense of the military and political alliances in world competition. But, in attempting to influence the course of world affairs, the uncommitted do represent a group; their representatives get together from time to time, and there is a permanent cooperation between them.\(^\text{11}\)

Because of the then existing conditions the concept of non-alignment acquired an anti-imperialist and anti-neocolonial as well as anti-bloc overtone. It is, thus, regarded and recognized as an important aspect of the foreign policy of a country that claims to follow it. It has often been defined as an independent foreign policy. In a very early statement, Jawaharlal Nehru had described it as "independent foreign policy".\(^\text{12}\) It is an expression in the international field of the independent spirit and judgement of a nation. It upholds the right of all people to


freedom and self-determination and for the participation on the resolution of international problems. It strengthens resistance to the politics of pressure and domination from whatever quarter.\textsuperscript{13} It reflects a country's own perception of its national and international interests. Like neutrality, isolation and balance, it is also one of the dimensions of a foreign policy and is essentially a tactical posture struck in response to specific international situations. It is not by accident that governments pursue a policy of non-alignment but are also those which pursue active and conscious policies of national development on social and economic spheres.\textsuperscript{14} The non-aligned aspect of a country's foreign policy is influenced by the domestic components like regime legitimacy, economic development, ideological framework and national security which are in turn influenced by the existing international environment at different levels such as regional, Afro-Asian and global.\textsuperscript{15} So the non-aligned stance of a given state would reflect those variables. Moreover, policy of non-alignment is the mark of sovereign existence. No wonder then that the passion for non-alignment has shown itself to be strongest among the newly liberated nations of Asia and Africa. The Arabs, who like most other Afro-Asian people had seen imperialism and colonialism in its rudest forms, were no exception to have this passion. Their passion grew

\textsuperscript{13} Timothy M. Shaw, "The Political Economy of Non-Alignment: From Dependence to Self-Reliance", paper presented at the International Round Table Conference, University of Calcutta, November 1979, p.5.


stronger and they viewed non-alignment as a "calm and fertile plateau rising high above the futile arena of the Cold War - a sanctuary of sanity in a world poised in the extreme verge of madness". Thus, after the end of the Second World War amidst Cold War, some of the leaders of the newly independent countries of Asia and Africa conceived the policy of non-alignment with the primary objectives of protesting against colonialism, opposing apartheid, non-adherence to the multi-lateral military pacts, non-interference in the internal affairs of states, strengthening the United Nations and constructing a new international economic order. Most of the newly independent countries have been inclined to accept this policy because of the anti-colonial and anti-feudal heritage of their freedom movements and ultra-sensitiveness about their sovereignty. Egypt falls within this category.

BACK-DROP OF THE POLICY IN EGYPT

Among the Arab states, Egypt was one of the first to formulate and pursue this policy. Egypt's affiliation to this policy was not a mere coincidence nor was it merely a timely political decision, but a practical expression of an age-old cultural patrimony, a distinct geographical position, and a dynamic international role. The effect of the policy of non-alignment of Egypt has been felt more strongly in the United Nations than that of any other Arab states. Moreover, among the non-aligned states in the Arab world, Egypt has assumed great


international importance. Egypt's role in the evolution of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) has not been equalled by any other Arab country. Unlike many of the newly liberated countries Egypt has moved progressively along the path of non-alignment. Thus, a study of Egypt's policy of non-alignment under different ruling elites would highlight not only an important aspect of Egypt's foreign policy but also the general trend in the Arab world in that direction.

Though non-alignment or neutralism, as was then called, is essentially an attitude towards the Cold War, still in the case of Egypt it was an expression of the ideological, political, economic and military antagonisms with the West, even outside the context of the Cold War proper. Egyptian policy of non-alignment lay primarily not in the relationship between Egyptian society and the Cold War but in the national experiences, problems, struggles and aspirations of Egypt. Initially this policy was formulated as a matter of national expediency. It was an expression of an attitude of opposition to foreign domination and resistance to the great-power influence. Hence, it had its intimate relationship with Egyptian nationalism. It will not be wrong to say that the voice of Egyptian non-alignment was the voice of Arab nationalism in general and Egyptian nationalism in particular. Failures on the part of the West to understand and come to terms with Arab nationalism contributed to that policy.

The Egyptian mind had faith in western justice. Yet, "Western statesmen, with a western sense of timing, and a vestigial air of patronage frequently aggravated a partial cleavage by insisting upon a black and white public
choice. Moreover, the Westerners expected Egyptians to behave as loyal allies while being treated as conquered subjects. Thus, the net result was an expression of protest, against this imperialism, in the form of non-alignment. Thus, non-alignment appeared in the Egyptian mind as an act of despair with the West rather than as an act of faith in the East. The Western act of despair is quite conspicuous from the Anglo-American policy towards Egypt.

**REVISION OF 1936 ANGLO-EGYPTIAN TREATY**

The first few years of the Cold War coincided with the Egyptian preoccupation with the mounting struggle for the evacuation of British forces from Egypt and for the solution of the Sudan question. Thus, the post-World War-II period had witnessed the reiterated demand for the revision of the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty. The Egyptians, during the post World War-II period, demanded the revision of the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty that negated their national independence and sovereignty. The Treaty, signed on 26 August 1936, was detrimental to Egyptian independence as it could easily make Egypt a satellite of Britain.

**The Sudan Question**

Sudan was a part of Egypt since its conquest by Mohammed Ali in 1820s. Due to financial and administrative mismanagement, Egypt lost Sudan to local uprising after the British occupied Egypt in 1882. In 1898-99 Sudan was reconquered and an Anglo-Egyptian condominium was established. Since 1899, the British had developed a corps of able administrators for the Sudan who

treated the country no differently from their other African colonies. Only perfunctory lip service was paid to the notion of Anglo-Egyptian condominium.

Unity of the Nile Valley had become a part of the nationalist movement in Egypt. But Britain overlooked it and tried to retain control over the Sudan so as to have a hold over Egypt. The famous British military hero, Field Marshal Montgomery, who arrived in Egypt in June 1946, believed that it was vital for Britain to remain strong in the Sudan in case of difficulties with the Egyptians. He commented "the weaker our position in Egypt, the greater need for strength in the Sudan - so as to control the Nile - the life blood of Egypt."¹⁹ From 1946 to 1951, negotiations continued between the Egyptian ruling elite with the British government but the British demand in terms of military alliance and the status quo on the status of the Sudan was more than the Egyptians could accept and politically survive.²⁰ Thus, the Egyptian frustration was aggravated. It became more so because the Sudanese were looked upon as an integral part of the Egyptian people. The Egyptian claim for re-union with the Sudan was based on historical, ethnic, cultural, economic and strategic considerations.²¹ So to make any concession contrary to the principle of Wihdat al-Nil (Unity of the Nile) might have imperilled leadership in Egypt. The Sudan question had assumed serious

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proportions after the World War II and was adversely affecting Anglo-Egyptian relations.

**Suez Canal Base Question**

The Egyptian policy of non-alignment that evolved after the Second World War because of an anti-imperialistic struggle was amply testified in the context of the Egyptian attitude towards the Suez Canal base. The Suez Canal base was completely subservient to British dominance under the terms of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of Friendship and Alliance of 1936 which was negotiated by Eden from the British side and the Wafd Party, then ruling over Egypt. In that treaty Egypt's independence was recognized and the international character of the Suez Canal was reaffirmed. However, the British retained the right to maintain up to 10,000 troops including 400 fliers, in the canal zone. At the end of a period of twenty years after the signing of the Treaty i.e., after 1956, the agreement on the Suez Canal base could be renegotiated. Thus, the Treaty provided sufficient scope for the continuing British domination over Egypt. It was hardly an ideal treaty from the Egyptian point of view in as much as it authorized a limited British occupation for another twenty years.  

The British control over the base during World War II had underlined its importance. The British were also reluctant to give it up in the light of their strategic consideration in the context of the Cold War. Hence, in spite of the persistent Egyptian demand for the revision of the Treaty, the British attitude did not change.

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Whatever be the legal niceties on either side about the contribution of the 1936 Treaty, the political and military realities were quite clear. An army, which stays on the territory of another sovereign state without its tacit approval and in defiance of its request to leave, becomes, in practice if not in law, an occupying and not an allied force. However, restricted it was, the occupation of territory by a foreign force was humiliating and a permanent source of indignation. Moreover, the British were strong enough to resist physical eviction, to take such forcible action as was necessary to maintain themselves in the Canal zone and to inflict damage on those who tried to drive them out from Egypt.

The Egyptian effort in 1947 to secure the assistance of the United Nations Security Council in the evacuation of the British garrison from the Suez Canal zone and the withdrawal of British forces from the Sudan failed to accomplish any result. Thus, the Egyptians became further convinced of direct action. It was reflected in their armed struggle against British presence in the Suez Canal zone. The year in which the world witnessed the birth of the East-West conflict was the year in which Egypt's struggle against continued occupation of a part of its national territory by a major western power reached new heights of frustration. No Egyptian Government, therefore, could have retained its legitimacy if it had acquiesced to the British presence either in the Sudan or in the Suez Canal zone.

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Impact of Cold War

The first few years of the Cold War coincided with Egyptian pre-occupation with the mounting struggle for the evacuation of British forces from the Suez Canal zone as well as with the turmoil came by the Arab-Israeli war of 1948-49. The Western hegemony was reflected in Tripartite Declaration of 25 May 1950 by America, Britain and France which in essence was an arms control imposed by the West upon the Arabs and Israel. This Declaration by equating Israel with all the Arab world, in fact, favoured Israel vis-a-vis individual Arab states and also acted as a tool for not transferring arms to the Arabs.

The Egyptian policy of non-alignment and the Cold War during this time interacted only tangentially; the sole point of contact between them being that one party to the Cold War, the West, was in conflict with the rising Arab nationalism in Egypt. The USSR during this time was largely unconcerned with the Arabs. So the advent of Cold War per se and the division of the North into two blocs was met with unconcern and disinterest by the Egyptians whose attention was directed towards matters closer at home. But things began to change soon and the very powers whose policies made Egypt remain indifferent to Cold War issues summoned Egypt to participate in their global military strategies. Feigning unawareness of Egyptian and other Arab grievances, and making no effort to redress the injustices, the western powers embarked upon a campaign of pressure tactics to bring Egypt, and through it the rest of the Arab world, into alignment with the West.

It may be recalled that the initial years of the Cold War witnessed the signing of various security pacts by the West both in Europe and in the East to
contain the major threat of the Soviet bloc vis-a-vis Communism. The Brussels Treaty of 17 March 1948 and the Atlantic Treaty of 4 April 1949 were the major treaties concluded in Europe. When the victory of communism in China and the invasion of South Korea brought the Cold War to the Pacific area, two bilateral treaties and one tripartite pact were signed in quick succession. They were the Mutual Defense Treaty between the USA and the Philippines of 30 August 1951, the tripartite pact between Australia, New Zealand and the US commonly known as ANZUS of 1 September 1951 and the Treaty between the US and Japan of 8 September 1951.

West Asia was also gradually included in this Western-sponsored security alliance system. The Truman Doctrine of 12 March 1947 had sought to meet an immediate Cold-War crisis in the Eastern Mediterranean when President Truman of USA made an unilateral proclamation to aid and support Greece and Turkey. But the association of Turkey and Greece with North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in September and October 1950 respectively brought these two countries into relationship with the western power system. Article 3 of the North Atlantic Treaty says:

In order more effectively to achieve the objectives of this Treaty, the Parties, separately and jointly, by means of continuous self-help and mutual aid, will maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack.

Article 5 of that Treaty says:

The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all; and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defense recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking
forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.\footnote{Ralph H. Magnus (ed.), \textit{Documents on the Middle East}, Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institution for Public Policy Research, July 1969, p. 71.}

The momentum for pacts, thus, directed the Western attention to the West-Asian region which was supposed to be a sensitive place due to its close proximity to Soviet territorial influence. Iran which was already under the Soviet pressure was facing domestic trouble between the monarchy and the nationalists who were anti-British. The Western attention targeted Egypt which was strategically important for them and where they already had military foothold. At this juncture, the mounting Egyptian restiveness to the British presence in Egypt and the feeling that a negotiated settlement was not possible led the Egyptian Government, in desperation, to pass a law on 8 October 1951 which declared Sudan as a part of Egypt and proclaimed King Faruq of Egypt as the Emperor of Sudan. Though Britain refused to recognize this change, Egypt by law was seeking to unilaterally resolve at least one part of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936. It was precisely at this stage that the proposal for a Middle East Defense Organization (MEDO) was presented by the USA, the UK, France and Turkey, to Egypt on 13 October 1951; just five days after the unilateral abrogation of the clauses dealing with the Sudan in the 1936 Treaty by the Egyptian government.

The idea of such an organisation was first expressed a year earlier by Ernest Bevin of England in the course of the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations on the future of the British forces in the canal zone. But it was not until the negotiations had broken down and after the unilateral abrogation of part of the 1936 Treaty by
the Egyptian government on 8 October 1951, that the proposal for a Middle East Defense Organisation was formally advanced. The proposal now advanced was not by Britain alone but by the Western powers as a group.

THE MEDO

The governments of the US, the U.K., France and Turkey, on 13 October 1951, presented to Egypt proposals for the Middle East Command. Point III, Document A said that "the defense of Egypt can only be assured through the effective defense of the Middle East area and the coordination of this defense with that of adjacent areas".27 The Western group, in the Technical annex of Document B, also expressed the wish that Egypt would agree to furnish to proposed Allied Middle East Command Organization such strategic defense and other facilities on her soil as were indispensable for the organization in peace-time of the defense of the Middle East and that she would undertake to grant forces of the Allied Middle East command all necessary facilities and assistance in the event of war, imminent menace of war, or apprehended international emergency including the use of Egyptian ports, airfields and means of communication.28

In return, Egypt was promised facilities to train and equip her forces by those participating members of the Allied Command that were in a position to do so. As far as the Anglo-Egyptian bilateral relations were concerned, it stated:

If Egypt is prepared to cooperate fully in the Allied Command Organization in accordance with the provisions of the attached annex, His Majesty's Government for their part would be willing to agree to supercession of the 1936 Treaty and would also be willing

27 Ibid, p.75.
28 Ibid, pp.75-77.
to agree to withdraw from Egypt such British forces as are allocated to the Allied Middle East Command by agreement between the Egyptian Government and the Governments of other countries also participating as founder members.

The document also added that:

The present British base in Egypt would be formally handed over to the Egyptians on the understanding that it would simultaneously become an Allied base within the Allied Middle East Command with full Egyptian participation in the running of this base in peace and war.

Lastly, it was suggested that:

An air defense organisation including both the Egyptian and Allied forces would be set up under the command of an officer with joint responsibility to the Egyptian Government and to the Allied Middle East Command for the protection of Egypt and Allied bases.29

Thus, the proposal to hand over the Suez Canal base was only a fiction. Moreover, the Suez Canal base would be pledged to a group of Western stead instead of a single Western power, the U.K. The most interesting part is that now Egypt's own forces could be used to thwart a dual danger - the international danger (Communist danger) and the national danger (Egypt's national freedom). Thus, it was quite natural for Egypt to reject the proposal outrightly. The United States Government received notification on October 15 of the rejection by the Egyptian Government of the proposals presented to it on October 13 by the United States, France, Turkey and the United Kingdom.30 It was only after the Egyptians rejected the proposal that the US government took the position that the

29 Ibid.

action of the Egyptian Government with respect to the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936 and the agreements of 1899 regarding the Sudan was not in accord with proper respect for international obligations. In any case, it was a strong step by Egypt to nullify the Western effort to bring Egypt into the containment system. Many Arabs scorned the proposal of the Western group as a thinly disguised effort to maintain foreign military bases and occupation on Egyptian territory in a new guise and under a new name at a time when nationalist sentiment was demanding nothing less than unconditional evacuation and total liberation.

Nasser reportedly told the U.S. Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, during his Cairo visit, that a mere change of flag from the British to the MEDO would not satisfy the Egyptians.

The failure of Western powers to enlist the support of Egypt, which would also act as an incentive to other Arabs, in their military alliance system compelled them to seek new avenues. The whole strategy of the defense of the Middle East was reorganised. The previous strategy which centred round the Suez Canal base, was abandoned in favour of the Northern Tier concept in which Turkey and Pakistan, supported by the Western powers, were to play leading parts. The Northern Tier was the implementation of the idea which was to provide a fatal division in the Arab world and do more than anything else to aggravate suspicion.

31 Ibid, p.2183.


33 K.R.Singh, n.15, p.316.
between Egypt and the West. The Northern Tier concept was favourably received by only one Arab state - Iraq. But the Iraqi Government too could not openly side with the West without crushing all the nationalist forces which were against this concept.

The Egyptian foreign policy did not change basically despite the 1952 coup d'état and then coming into power of a military regime headed by Mohammed Naguib. Other members of the regime were Gamal Abdel Nasser, Kamal al-Din Hussein, Abdul Hakim Amer, Hassan Ibrahim, Abdul Moneim, Abdul Raouf, Salah and Gamal Salem, Abdul Latif al-Baghdadi, Khalid Mohineddin, Anwar Sadat, Zakariya Mohieddin and Hussein al-Shafei. Naguib and Nasser who headed the military regime one after another pursued anti-imperialist roles because they were fully convinced about the popular sentiment. However, their pragmatic attitudes brought about the agreement on Sudan on 12 February 1953 in which the Sudanese were given the option to join with Egypt or to be independent. Though the Sudan Agreement belied the Egyptian hopes for a merger, still then it was a success for the Egyptians from the point of view that imperialism was loosing its strength in Egyptian soil. So from this vantage point, it would be wrong to presume that the Egyptians were not security conscious, whether it relates to MEDO or anything else, but what they wanted was that in their attempt to maintain their security they tried to rely more on themselves rather than on the West. It would also be wrong to conclude that the new government after the coup d'état of 1952, had any intention of turning to the Communist bloc in its

34 M.H. Heikal, Cutting the Lion's Tail; Suez: Through Egyptian Eyes, London: Andre Deutsch Limited, 1986, p.52.
confrontation with the West. In fact, the Egyptian Communist Party was suppressed soon after the coup d'état. Also, during this period the Soviet Union, under Stalin, was hostile towards Egypt. So the adherence of the ruling elite to the Communist camp was not feasible.

Nasser believed in strengthening the internal front in order to combat Communism. He emphasized the clash between nationalism and Communism during his meeting with Dulles in 1953. He warned Dulles:

I think you are complicating the football game. Colonialism is played out, and now the match is between two teams - Communism and nationalism. And if you insist on playing, you are going to spoil the game for others.\(^{35}\)

Thus, Nasser had no intention to align with the East. In fact, he was searching for an honourable deal with the West that would safeguard Egypt’s national interest while protecting the strategic interests of the West, as seen from the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement of 1954. At this juncture, the fear of Communism induced the Western mind to reach an agreement with Egypt to secure the Western defense system in Egypt. Washington reportedly pressurized London to reach a settlement on the Suez Canal zone that would be acceptable to Egypt. Soon London gave up the idea of MEDO and in its place initialled a new formula to Egypt on 27 July 1954. It was significant that the Cairo delegation was led by Colonel Nasser himself.

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Under the new Anglo-Egyptian Agreement signed on 19 October 1954, Britain agreed to evacuate the base by 1956. Egypt was formally not made a member of the Western alliance system. However, under article 4 of that agreement, the evacuated bases could be used by Britain, whenever Britain, or any member of the Arab League or Turkey was threatened. That suggested a concealed link of Egypt with Western Bloc in the Cold War as Turkey had already become a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the seeds of the Baghdad Pact were germinating. Thus, by the new formula, Egypt allowed the West to use its territory in case of war, thereby indirectly joining the Western alliance system.

Though the Cold War was penetrating West Asia during 1953-1954 through several pacts like the Turkey-Pakistan Pact, the Pakistan-US Agreements etc., it was not until the Baghdad Pact of 24 February 1955 that it directly affected the Arab world and indirectly challenged the Egyptian policy of non-alignment.

The possibility of finding a mutually acceptable formula for voluntary association between a free Egypt and the Western powers, which was obtained in 1954, was destroyed by the advent of the Baghdad Pact. Whereas alignment had been opposed on the past records of the Western powers with the suspicion that it would perpetuate foreign control, it came to be unconditionally opposed by Egypt after 1955.

The year 1955 was a turning point in Egyptian foreign policy. Nasser had consolidated himself in the domestic power politics. Events of Gaza in February 1955 showed the possibility of an open military clash between Egypt and Israel. Egypt's search for arms was not yielding results. Finally, the new turn given to the Soviet policy by Khrushchev opened new options for Egypt. Soviet Union, in its search for new friends in the Afro-Asian world, was willing to support Egypt's economic developments, military requirements and to offer political support in the United Nations. These were powerful incentives that Egypt could not ignore. Consequently, non-alignment which was peaceful and moderate in nature and was marked by anti-imperialism took a vigorous turn in 1955. The year 1955, as Dekmejian opined, constituted a main turning point in the evolution of Nasserite neutralism from a quiescent to a positive or active phase.37