Chapter I

INTRODUCTION
The Second World War was a turning point in American foreign policy. New world and regional objectives suddenly came into being. Some of these were linked to the war and its outcome. The United States emerged a victor from the Second World War. Says one writer, "the United States emerged from World War II supreme and strong..."¹ For the United States entry into the war had been primarily to prevent an adverse balance of power in Europe and the Far East. For Britain, France and the Soviet Union it had been a question of survival in the face of possible alteration of that power balance.

Of these Britain and France were also the powers which were later the protagonists in Egypt. At the end of the Second World War each one of the allies had a different vision of the international power structure.

To the United States victory meant a triumph of democracy. They were proud of their democratic system and what it had achieved.\(^2\) This triumph gave it a sense of exhilaration and power. The power in turn enabled it to spread its influence all over the world. For Britain and France, on the other hand the war heralded the end of their already crumbling colonial empires. It was very difficult for them to come to terms with this reality. And consequently Britain and France became "determined to cling to their possessions".\(^3\)

The Soviet Union had won the war but at a tremendous cost to itself. In turn the, Soviet Union had an altogether different idea of what was ahead. Worn out by the war, it was concerned almost obsessively with its own security.\(^4\) But the Soviet Union was more than a state. It also embodied an ideology that challenged the West. To the countries breaking out of their colonial past, it offered an alternative. Soon after the war ended, it consolidated its hold over Eastern Europe due primarily to the presence of the Red Army in those countries. It formed and led a block. To this was added another giant in 1949 - The Peoples

\(^2\) Winkler, n.1, p.29.


\(^4\) Winkler, n.1, pp 29-30.
Republic of China. The West led by the United States saw into these developments a Moscow led monolithic Communism trying to expand everywhere and regarded 'containment' of this expansion their solemn obligation.

In order to achieve this goal the United States believed that it had to extend its image of a strong world power ready to help nations against Communist aggression. For this a powerful arms build-up and cultivation of mutual alliances linking various regions of the world with the United States was an essential pre-requisite. Secondly the United States had to provide military and economic assistance to the countries, 'threatened' by Communism. By adopting such methods, the United States hoped to 'contain' the expansion of Soviet power and influence.

Therefore, the United States embraced, 'globalism' and 'containment' as the two central planks of its foreign policy after the second World War. Kegley and Wittkoff in a recent book entitled American Foreign Policy Patterns and Process emphasised that the containment of the Soviet Union was the more relevant of these two. "Because the Soviet Union is the
spearhead of the Communist challenge, American foreign policy must be dedicated to the containment of Soviet expansion and influence." These principles were embodied in the Truman Doctrine of 1947 that assumed the obligation to help any country where 'freedom' was threatened by Communist inspired subversion or invasion. In a speech to the joint session of the Congress on March 12, 1947, Truman outlined his proposals that later came to be known as the Truman Doctrine. He stressed, "I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures." In his memoirs, Truman emphatically asserted, "this (the Truman Doctrine) was America's answer to the surge of expansion of Communist tyranny." Commenting on this phase of United States foreign policy, foreign policy analyst, wrote:

The basic foreign policy orientation of the Eisenhower Administration was set by the Eurocentric, anti-communist ideology... all foreign policy goals—global expansion of economic


liberalism, promotion of democracy, maintenance of peace internationally, support for the U.S. dominated United Nations, establishment of collective security arrangements—were subsumed under this general approach, and if conflict occurred, anticommunism generally won out. 8

Thus the period following the end of the Second World War, saw a big metamorphosis in the foreign policy of the United States. From an isolationist posture in international politics, it came to acquire the role of an active player. And this tended to divide the world into two groups one highly pro-West and the other highly pro-Communist. Though there is no consensus as to any specific date on which the Cold War began, this period witnessed its beginning as a result of the ideological differences between the Soviet Union and the United States. The Truman administration signified its distrust of the Soviet Union with the passage of the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan and the NSC 68. The division on ideological basis, brought the two superpowers (United States and the Soviet Union) into constant and continuous power struggles in different regions of the world. Of these, Egypt in the Middle East was one. The Soviet Union appeared to be a threat in the Middle East to the United States specially because of its

geographical proximity to the region. The United State also assumed that the Soviet Union was looking for a warm port outlet through the Middle East. It wanted to prevent it. It did not want any country in the Middle East to move closer to the Soviet Union. The United States thus was unwilling to accept Russian dominance.

THE MIDDLE EAST AND EGYPT

After 1945, the United States policy towards the Middle East was guided by three basic considerations. First was the presence of oil which made the region important. Everyone wanted to be friendly towards the countries having oil deposits. Second, the possibility of the spread of Communism, made the region an area of super-power struggle for political and economic control. The power which succeeded in the struggle would control the region's oil wealth too. And lastly, the Middle East assumed greater importance for the United States because of the rise of Arab nationalism which had an anti-Western overtone. Most Western nations felt that:

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9. Ambrose, n 6, p.103.
growing energy consumption made the western economies highly dependent on a pro-western stability in the Middle East and this they felt was being threatened by two things--Soviet Union and unfriendly indigenous nationalism.¹⁰

Since it were the European powers, specially Britain and France, that had ruled the countries of the Middle East, the feeling of anti-Westernism in the region was high. Egypt led the movement of Arab nationalism after the Second World War. This movement acquired momentum after the overthrow of its monarchy in 1952 by the "Free Officers."¹¹ One of the main objectives of the United States in the Middle East was winning over Egypt to its side in the struggle with the Soviet Union.

Despite the fact that Egypt had no oil it was the logical choice for the United States. It was the most populous and the largest country in the Arab world. Besides, it was one of the more modernized nations in the region. Unlike the monoculture economies of many countries in the area its economy was more diversified. It enjoyed great influence in the region. Besides, it controlled the Suez Canal and thereby, controlled


¹¹. The "Free Officers," also called the Junta, consisted of a group of spirited officers who led the coup d'etat against king Farouq on July 23, 1952. Headed by Muhammad Naguib and Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser, its aim was to ensure the continuity of government by carrying out economic reforms and destroying the power of rich landlords.
international commerce that passed through it. The Suez Canal was its prized possession. Also due to its strategic location, it commanded the Red Sea and parts of the Mediterranean. It had close links with Europe, as it had played an important role in the Second World War. Even though the role was not always welcomed by the Egyptians. Because, as is often pointed out that the World War had been fought with, "scant regard for the inhabitants of the Middle East."\textsuperscript{12} However, immediately after the Second World War, the United States did not pay much attention to Egypt because it was preoccupied with more pressing developments that were taking place elsewhere. Cold War was beginning in Europe and was to spread only a few years later to the Middle East.

The United States policy towards Egypt remained, coloured with indifference till the revolution in 1952 probably because Egypt was under the British influence. The United States accepted Britain's primacy. It was only the gradual decline of European influence which compelled the United States to fill the power vacuum in the region afraid that the Soviet Union might do it if it did not. In his memoirs, Eisenhower commented:

No region of the world received as much of my close attention... as did the Middle East. Against a background of new nations emerging from colonialism, in the fact of constant thrusts of new communist imperialism... we had to step in to counter the weight of Soviet Power. 13

TRUMAN'S LEGACY

The Truman administration from 1945 to 1953, was engrossed in the crises in Europe, Far East and Southeast East Asia. During this period the Middle East was not a priority area. The Middle East was however, not totally ignored either. Infact President Truman was deeply concerned about the stability in the region. But it was not Egypt which concerned him, it was Israel. Truman had played an important part in the creation of Israel in 1948. To Truman, a homeland for the Jews was a very important issue that had to be given a practical shape. In his memoris, he remarked:

The Jewish homeland was not to be just a matter of form; it had to be given the space and the opportunity to prove itself... it represented my deep conviction. 14

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Again, while writing to Dean Acheson, the then Under Secretary of State, in October 1948, he asserted, "...it is my desire to help build in Palestine a strong, prosperous, free and independent democratic state."

Dean Acheson in his own memoir, too confirms that the Jewish homeland was a, "... matter of deep personal concern." Though he himself did not see eye to eye with Turman on this issue. He stated:

I did not share the President's view on the Palestine solution ...to transform the country (Arab Palestine) into a Jewish state capable of receiving a million or more immigrants would vastly exacerbate the political problem and imperil not only American but all Western interests in the Near East.

The Eisenhower administration on the other hand was keen to lessen the impact of Truman's policy of supporting Israel, which had alienated the Arabs. John Foster Dulles later commented, that the Eisenhower administration wanted, "to restore a greater measure of evenhandedness to American policy towards Israel and the Arabs." According to Dulles, the Truman Administration had gone overboard in favour of Israel.

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15. Truman, n 7, p.195.
17. Ibid.
19. Ibid., p.184
Besides supporting the creation of Israel, President Truman had also been careful not to irritate Britain, United States' traditional ally. Since the late 19th century Britain had had a prominent and a historically dominant position in Egypt and the Suez Canal. Though Egypt was declared independent after the First World War the British had retained control of the Suez Base area. It was against this control, that for many years an independent movement had been going on in Egypt. The British on the other hand did not want to give up a prize as grand as Egypt. Its Suez Canal was too precious for British commerce. The United States just went along with the British. It no doubt, "endorsed the principle of national self-determination." But it also wanted to, "find a formula for bringing the allies and itself into partnership with the newly sovereign nations..." and thus, "contain the spread of Russian influence in the region..." According to this reasoning the weakening in the position of the allies, would have cost the United States dearly. It would have lost prime supporters in its anti-Soviet policy.

21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
This was the legacy Harry S. Truman left for the next president, Dwight D. Eisenhower. When the new administration took over, a better understanding with Egypt was high on the priority list of the United States foreign policy objectives. Israel had not been forgotten. Indeed, the United States policy towards Egypt was constantly haunted by the shadow of the Jewish State. However, the Eisenhower administration particularly the President himself, was seriously interested in winning over Egypt to the Western side. This desire was largely due to three factors: existence of the Suez Canal, lingering British influence in the Canal Zone, and the fear of the extension of Communism to the Middle East.

THE BRITISH AND SUEZ

The Suez Canal was a priceless gem in the Middle East. Eisenhower wrote at length on this in his memoirs. He stated:

Egypt occupied a(place of)...pivotal importance to the politics of the area... Egypt had within its borders one invaluable tangible asset the Suez canal, Western Europe's lifeline to the East.23

Ever since its construction in 1869, by a Frenchman, De Lesseps, and its subsequent use for navigation, a substantial part of international commerce had been dependent on it. Initially the British had opposed its construction, because Egypt had very strong links with France since the early 1800's and England and France were not allies at the time. Under the dynasty of Muhammad Ali, which ruled the country from early 19th century to 1953, Egypt had grown into a regional power to reckon with. Muhammad Ali was an ardent admirer of Napoleon. Because of the continued links between Egypt and France, the influence of the French language and culture in Egypt was very strong. It is visible even today specially amongst the upper classes. In 1874, the ruler of Egypt, Khedive Ismail, who had a large number of shares in the Suez Canal Co., fell into financial debt. To ease his situation he sold his shares to the British and they accidently became the principle share holders in the Company. The British thus, "stumbled into the inheritance which France had marked for her own." Khedive Ismail became more and more financially dependant on the British and the French


27. Ibid.
The French, finding themselves too burdened, gave up their responsibility over the Suez Canal. The British quickly assumed full charge. The British helped to reorganize the Egyptian financial affairs and even secured control over Sudan for them. Britain and Egypt remained co-partners in maintaining a semi-independent control over Sudan, until it attained freedom in 1956.

Even after Egypt's independance after the First World War, the British retained control over Egypt's internal affairs. Its forces also stayed on in the country. Britain was not going to leave Egypt so easily. The Suez Canal was the economic lifeline between the East and the West. The one which guarded the Canal would be the leader of the East-West commerce as well. Having established itself firmly in India, Britain was not going to let go of anything which aided in their economic success world wide. And the Suez Canal was one such important aid. The British, however, did realise that political control over Egypt was impossible. As a consequence, in 1924, the British promised not to interfere in the internal affairs of Egypt. It only insisted on its right to station troops in the Suez
Canal. The Canal was not only a passage for commerce, but it also brought oil for British homes and factories. As a further indication of its supreme right over the Canal, the British built an enormous base along its bank in 1936. This base was three miles wide and 65 miles long, with a billion and a half dollars worth of workshops and supplies and 80,000 troops.\textsuperscript{28}

Following the Second World War, there were insistent demands for the British withdrawal from the Canal Zone. The Egyptians wanted to manage the Canal themselves. As a result of constant pressure by the Egyptian Government, the British did withdraw its troops in stages from the Canal Zone. This withdrawal was speeded up after the overthrow of the monarchy in 1952. The 'Free Officers,' who formed the new Government, had grown up in absolute hatred of the British and their presence in what they naturally considered as their own. The Canal became a bone of contention and ultimately Nasser, nationalized the Canal Company in 1956, which led to the Suez crisis.

THE UNITED STATES, THE SOVIET UNION AND THE MIDDLE EAST

The United States too used the Canal for commercial purposes. But more than that, the American interest was motivated by the Communist fear. The Eisenhower administration also felt that Egypt, the centre of rising Arab nationalism, had taken the carving of a homeland for the Jews from Arab territory very seriously. The Arab-Israeli conflict was rooted in that creation. Eisenhower said so in his memoirs. He stated:

From 1947 onward, peace in the region has never become complete. Border incidents are common and boundaries, to this day, are lined with pillboxes, machine guns, and watchful border guards.29

Gamal Abdel Nasser, writing to President Eisenhower in Mid 1956, emphasised this very issue. He wrote:

Egypt is a part of the Middle East area; concerned with the stability of the area. Any disturbance in the Middle East necessarily has profound effects on Egyptian ability to pursue a policy of peaceful development. The establishment of Israel in Palestine was the gravest imaginable challenge to the peaceful preoccupation of the Egyptian and Arab people...30

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30. Letter from Nasser to Eisenhower, February 6, 1956, Ann Whitman Diary Series, International Series, File ; Egypt (1), Box 8, Primary document material, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas, USA. Henceforth cited as AWDS-IS.
Further, the defeat of the three Arab kingdoms Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia in the Arab-Israeli war of 1948, with loss of territory to Israel, increased Egypt's hatred for it and its Western supporters. The division of their holy city Jerusalem, was something the Arabs could not forget.

Over and above the Eisenhower administration made it very clear to Britain, that though they were friends, they did not agree to being co-partners in Britain's imperialistic policies. As such the attempt of Eisenhower was to distance himself and his country from any such development that reeked of imperialism. Egypt and its Canal was one such situation.

Eisenhower wrote to Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of Britain in 1954 emphasising this fact. He stressed:

Colonialism is on the way out as a relationship among peoples. The sole question is one of time and method. I think we should handle it so as to win adherents to Western aims. 31

Since the United States had economic stakes in the Suez Canal and political stakes in keeping Communism out

of the region, Eisenhower refused to tow Britain's line of staying on in the Canal Zone. In relation to Egypt, Eisenhower believed:

in... enlightened self-interest... it would be advisable for us to do anything we could to promote mutual understanding, to help allay the anti-British sentiment... Because of the European dependence on the Suez Canal, the interests of the entire free world were at stake in Egypt... 32

United States, therefore, advocated a policy of gradualism. That was, however, not acceptable to the rising forces of nationalism in the world.

Thus the economic relevance of the Suez Canal became an important reason for the tilt in the Eisenhower Administration towards Egypt. And it also resulted in an Anglo-American divide. 33 But as early as 1947, Loy Henderson, the then Director of the Near Eastern Affairs in the Department of State, had hinted at the prickly problem of continued British presence in Egypt. He was keen that the United States play its part in establishing, " local, political stability and the open door." 34 He did not dispute that the British should continue to maintain a Base in the Canal Zone. However,

32. Eisenhower, Mandate For Change, n.28, p.1
33. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter II.
he also said that, "British presence in Egypt was a liability for western interests and poisoning the atmosphere,"\textsuperscript{35} in the region. And finally he warned that if the British did not leave Egypt soon it would, "seriously impair the prospects of good relations between the west and the Middle East nations."\textsuperscript{36} However, such voices were then ignored because it was a period of heightened Anglo-American partnership in a bid to outdo the Soviet Union. This was the crux of the problem in the United States-Britain relations. The United States could not increase its influence in countries where Britain ruled once. President Eisenhower made an attempt in the 1950's to alter this thinking, trying hard to weave it into a neutral policy towards both Britain and Egypt. He reiterated in his memoirs, "in the uneasy Middle Eastern situation, after World War II, American policy had been one of neutrality."\textsuperscript{37}

It was not an easy task, however. The United States Government realised that if the Middle East Arab nations were to be appeased, it would have to distance itself from Britain. The United States Ambassador in Baghdad wrote to Dulles in May 1953 bringing this out.

\textsuperscript{35} Aronson, n.34, p.5.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{37} Eisenhower, Waging Peace, n.13, 22.
He reasoned:

...any hope of extending U.S. influence over the Near East and building at least a minimum of strength here would have to be renounced unless we would publicly disagree with Britain...\(^38\)

The impossibility of the United States taking such a stand against Britain, restrained Eisenhower from openly siding with the Arab nations of the region. However, he did make an attempt by staying out of the attack by Britain, France and Israel on Egypt in 1956.\(^39\) Still he was always eager to follow a 'middle path' between the two, which satisfied neither side. Eisenhower thus faced a difficult choice. British friendship on the one hand and Egyptian worth on the other. And both were needed to keep Communism out of the region. Britain, because without its agreement, no regional security system against the encroachment of Communism could be evolved. And Egypt, because without its unhindered acceptance of democracy, the Soviet Union's plans of spreading Communism in the country could not be prevented.

The Soviet Union saw in the tenuous United States-Egypt relations, a window of opportunity to make a deal

\(^38\) Telegram from Berry, United States Ambassador to Baghdad to John Foster Dulles, May 18, 1953, Ann Whitman Diary Series Dulles-Herter Series File; John F. Dulles May 1953, Box 1. Henceforth cited as AWDS-DHS.

\(^39\) This will be discussed in detail in Chapter III.
for itself in Egypt. In the United States National Security Council report on 'Communism in Egypt,' in October 1955 a former Czechoslovak Commercial Attache, Richard Sedlacek is quoted in detail on the Communist interests and strategy in Egypt. Though this is only one personal account, it is a revelation on possible Soviet plans. It reads as follows:

We always concentrated most of our efforts on Egypt, because Egypt is the biggest of the Arab countries, it controls the Suez Canal and now the big base near the Canal, and because it is a leader of the Arab world. The Egyptian newspapers are read throughout the whole Arab world; they have the biggest circulations and they influence much public opinion throughout the other Arab states. Al Ashar University, the seat of Moslem learning, is in Cairo and to it come religious men and students from every corner of Islam. Also, hundreds of Egyptian teachers go on government missions to the main cities of Egypt's neighbors to teach their children. Egypt is a primary target for Communism in the Arab world. But Egypt presented a different kind of a problem to us.

To make Communism attractive, we always pointed to the economic, political and social inequities of a country and promised that Communism would do away with these inequities. But in Egypt, a revolt by a group of army officers in 1952 accomplished the things we were promising: overthrow of an unpopular King, abolition of the monarchy, distribution of the land to the peasants who worked the land, evacuation of the Canal Zone by the British. The Revolution of 1952 damaged Communism's chances in Egypt considerably.
The Communists did not give up trying in Egypt. But different techniques had to be introduced. First the Communists tried to work with all of the groups opposing the Revolution... the corrupt political parties, a reactionary element within the once-powerful Moslem Brotherhood, the malcontents of every description... in an attempt to capture the Revolution and use it for our own purposes. Under the direction of Egyptian Communists receiving instructions from Moscow, these forces attempted to infiltrate the ranks of the Revolutionaries, to subvert the Egyptian armed forces, to use the success of the Revolution for our own purposes, to take over from the officers who planned and executed the Revolution. This was discovered by the new Egyptian Government, and a number of our Egyptian Communists were jailed or fled the country. We had to use a new method then: we tried to either overthrow the Revolution or to discredit it by calling the Revolutionary Government a pawn of the West. We created as much dissention as we could, among university students, through Communists working in the press, through dissatisfied workers, through poor illiterates gathered from the streets of Cairo's old city who would shout any slogan for or against anybody for a few coins to buy food.

In Egypt, for instance, our aim for some time was to show the Nasser Government— the Revolutionary Government— as a pawn of the Americans. This was not true, of course, but our rumors and pamphlets were effective in creating this impression among many segments of the population. To counteract our efforts, Nasser's Government asked its press to disprove these rumors by articles showing Egypt's independence of policy and independence of action. Our paid Communist writers in the Egyptian press quickly took advantage of these instructions from the Egyptian Government to publish Communist-line anti-American articles. It was a clever Communist tactic. The bribery of a small number of Egyptian reporters paid off handsomely that time.
The TASS representative in Egypt, (Dmitri Shibilov, Chief Editor of Pravada, recently spent several months in Cairo), the Russian News Agency correspondent-- he usually takes care of bribing local newspapermen. He is contact between the Cominform and the newspapermen.40

The United States Government may have thus been right in fearing a Communist takeover of the Middle East via Egypt. But the United States really had nothing to fear from the Communists ideologically. In fact Communist activity was strictly banned in Egypt. To the Egyptians both Communism and Capitalism were ideologies to be rejected. And they believed that the, "moral-spiritual substructure," of the, "Arab nationalist socialist ideology," saved them from the, "malignancies of irreligious Communism and revisionist Western nationalism."41 This thus led to the emphasis, by Nasser on 'positive neutralism.' The Communists did not really mind that, so long as Egypt maintained cordial relations with them. This cordiality from the Egyptians was amply visible in subsequent years.

The United States on the other hand let itself be drawn to the influence of Europe, ignoring the more pressing need of the time-friendship with Nasser and


of Arab nationalism. Pragmatism was not a quality that Eisenhower observed in the case of United States relations with Egypt. Author Arslam Humbaraci accepts this weakness, and praises the Soviets for their astuteness. He says that the Soviet Union accepted:

the possible advantages of neutralism than the USA, who only followed this lead much later (at the time of the Suez War in 1956) and soon dropped it in favour of the Eisenhower Doctrine.42

EGYPT AND THE UNITED STATES

Egypt and the United States were highly suspicious of each other. Egypt was Arab, extremely nationalistic, anti-British and neutral in its foreign policy. And the United States was non-Arab, patriotic but not fanatic, pro-British and anti-Communist in its foreign policy. These features were so apart that they hardly endeared the two countries towards each other, even if they wanted to be friendly. This was unfortunate, because Egypt had great economic potential. At the same time, the Egyptians were walking an ideological tightrope. Rooted in tradition, finding moorings in the new concept of Arab nationalism, trying

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to free itself of colonial domination, Egypt desperately needed to be modernized. Economic independence and military might (against Israel) were the two pins on which its modernization hinged. A writer has thus explained:

They held no economic philosophy other than contained in a nationalism anxious for economic prosperity and committed to improving social and economic justice for Egypt's masses.43

And any country which could help in the achievement of these could secure for itself a permanent place in Egyptian hearts and commercial worth. The United States and the Soviet Union both made a bid. The Soviet Union succeeded. What America should have done was to guide Arab nationalism, "into channels friendly to Western powers," and "aligned against Communism."44 Instead the United States did the opposite. A Communist phobia and emotional links with Britain, prompted the United States Government to indulge in a number of political miscalculations, that disenchanted Egypt. The refusal of the Eisenhower administration to finance Egypt's Aswan Dam project is just one example.


44. Memo of Conversation by the Secretary of State on the Washington Talks, April 4, 1949, Foreign Relations of the United States, Vol VI (1949). Henceforth cited as FRUS.
On the other hand the Soviets used Arab nationalism to achieve a political advantage with the Egyptians. Writing in 1958, Notte and Polk noted:

Meanwhile, the Soviet Union, adopting the familiar language of liberal democracy without embarrassment and in all seeming sincerity, has been able... to represent itself as the unselfish champion of Arab nationalism aspirations. The result has been a glacial eastward shift of Arab opinion. 45

It is surprising that Eisenhower was unable to achieve a compromise with Arab nationalism. This aspect acquires significance in the light of the fact that he wrote to Winston Churchill as early as in 1954 outlining the United States Government's approach to nationalism. From it, it is apparent that he was concerned in giving it due importance in order to secure the sympathy of the inhabitants of the region concerned. The question then is, why did he fail to do so? The answer: a "catch 22" situation prevailed. Eisenhower was caught in the centre of such diverse forces as nationalism, colonialism and Communism. Eisenhower thus wrote to Churchill:

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We know that there is abroad in the world a fierce and growing spirit of nationalism. Should we try to dam it up completely it would, like a mighty river burst through the barriers and could create havoc. But again, like a river, if we are intelligent enough to make constructive use of this force, then the result, far from being disastrous, could rebound greatly to our advantage, particularly in our struggle against the Kremlin's power.

To make use of the spirit of nationalism, we must show for it a genuine sympathy; we must prove that the obstacles that now prevent self-government in certain regions genuinely concern the free world and engage our earnest purpose to work for their elimination. 46

In a report on the United States' objectives and policies in the Near East released by the National Security Council in December 1956, the United States realisation of the need to accept Arab nationalism emerges. It was stated in it that, "the United States tends to regard this nationalism as an inevitable development which should be channeled not opposed." 47 However, in practice nothing positive emerged in this direction from the United States, during the Eisenhower presidency.

46. Letter, n.31, p.3.

Refusal to come to terms with Arab Nationalism, as also with Britain's lingering colonialism, brought to the forefront a lot of problems for the United States in the post 1945 period. Anglo-American divide on various issues is an important one. For instance the British felt that since they had stood by the United States over the creation of Israel, so the American Government should stand by them in their non-withdrawal from the Suez Canal. And what did the British receive from the United States? A quiet hands off policy. Even on the Baghdad Pact the two Western nations were not united. The British wanted open American participation in it. They believed that, "they should together adopt an open and forceful policy towards Egypt." But the United States did not want to be a part of the pact. Egypt was against this Western sponsored pact. So American participation would have alienated it further. The whole scenerio was extremely confusing and contradictory.

48. Acheson, n. 16, p.601
For Eisenhower the dilemma was multifaced. He wanted to win over Egypt, while at the same time keep Israel happy. And the British fitted somewhere inbetween. Britain felt caught up in American politics. The same, however, was said of it by the United States. Eisenhower for example believed that the British Government was wrong in its decision to stay on in Egypt. And also that it was wrong on its part to expect the American Government to stick by it. In his memoirs, Eisenhower recorded, "I believed that it would be undesirable and impracticable for the British to retain sizable forces permanently in the territory..." The Eisenhower administration felt embarrassed being linked to a country which still indulged in imperialistic ventures. This constant Anglo-American tussle in Egypt led to serious differences between them, which were never patched up politically, but kept hidden diplomatically.

On the other hand, the United States found the Egyptians a hard lot to please too. Any suggestion of United States mediation was looked on with suspicion by Egypt. For example the Baghdad Pact (1955), did not have

Egypt as a member. It had the countries of the North - Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Pakistan as its members, forming what was called the 'Northern Tier.' All these were non-Arab states. This pact was opposed by another one proposed by the Soviet Union, which consisted of Egypt, Sudan, Ghana and Tanzania, called the 'Southern Tier.'

The terms of the Baghdad Pact, "amounted to assisting those regimes which would and could work in concert with the United States and Britain against Russia." This the Egyptian Government could not accept. Though Nasser really appreciated the Americans and wanted their friendship more than that of the Russians, but being an ally of Britain, the United States was at once labelled anti-Egypt even though this really was not the case. Further the United States recognition of Israel as a separate state really irked the Arab nations of the Middle East. For as far as the Jewish-Arab relationship was concerned, the two communities had lived side by side in complete peace till the Arab - Israel War of 1948.

THE ARAB AND THE JEWS

In a sense, Judaism is the root of both

50. Polk, n.12,p.87.
Christianity and Islam. Jews entered into Islamic society more readily than into a Christian one. Jewish merchants were often business partners of Muslims in medieval Cairo. They were not prevented from practicing more prestigious professions as in Europe.\textsuperscript{51} Even in the 20th century, "many Jews were among the most highly educated, affluent and respected citizens in Islamic areas."\textsuperscript{52} However, this historical and traditional friendship did not withstand the pressure, "of the European experience."\textsuperscript{53} As Nolte and Polk asserted:

The Nazi genocide, the holocaust is so horrible, so gripping and so recent a memory as all but to overshadow other historical memories for the Western and Israeli Jewish communities.\textsuperscript{54}

From Egypt's point of view the events that occurred in the Middle East after the Second World War were unfair. To them, the Jews no doubt had suffered an inhuman treatment at the hand of the Germans. But that did not justify their imposition on others. This was the plain and simple way the Egyptians looked at the whole affair. President Truman had also realised that the Araba had been ignored, in the United States quest to

\textsuperscript{51} Polk, n.12, p.19.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.,20.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.,p.21.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
give the Jews a home. And thus on March 24, 1949 the President ordered the sum of $16,000,000 for the relief of Palestine refugees.\textsuperscript{55} And the United Nations' Palestine Conciliation Commission accepted the proposal of the United States in August 1949, to send an economic survey mission to the Middle East, to analyse carefully the difficulties associated with the resettlement of the Arab refugees.\textsuperscript{56} But to Egypt all this was of little value. These effort paled into insignificance when placed alongside the fact that their Arab brothers had been pushed out of their homes to accommodate the Jews.

Eisenhower looked at the whole issue from a different angle. He felt that since Israel had already been created, it would be better for both the Arabs and the Jews to live harmoniously together in accommodation to the new circumstances they found themselves in. For that matter, Truman it seems had also been keen to see the people of Palestine live in peace after the partition came into effect on March 25, 1948. In a statement released in the White House on the same day, he clearly said, "If we are to avert tragedy in Palestine, an immediate truce must be reached between


the Arabs and the Jews."\textsuperscript{57} It, however, seemed like lip service, since he had already supported the creation of Israel. Maybe Truman wanted to put on record, that the interests of the Arabs were dear to him as well.

In his effort to do justice to both the Arabs and the Jews, President Eisenhower lost the trust of the Arabs. Egypt wanted the wholehearted support of the United States, which Eisenhower was not able to give. To cite one example; the United States wanted to sell the equal number of arms to both the sides. However, even after the armistice was signed in 1949, Israeli raids on Egyptian territory continued. As such Egypt had requested for more arms from the United States. This was an opportunity that the Eisenhower administration could have used to advantage given the dire prospect of the Soviet Union barging in the region vital for the United States. But Eisenhower refused. He believed in being fair to all. Though Eisenhower did recognise that Egypt was, "militarily ... weak."\textsuperscript{58} He also accept that, "... there was no question that, should war break out between Israel and Egypt, the latter would be decisively defeated."\textsuperscript{59} But the refusal to provide Egypt with more arms was a


\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.

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tactical mistake. Later events proved this. The Soviet arms deal with the Egyptian in 1955, not only brought arms to Egypt but also proved to the Arabs that the United States was anti-Arab.

The United States refused Israel extra arms too as Eisenhower believed that, "... a United States shipment of arms would only speed a Middle East arms race ..."\textsuperscript{60} But it is important to note that United States, requested the Canadian and the French Governments to provide Israel more arms and thereby served as a means through which Israel obtained arms to be used against the Egyptians. The Eisenhower Administration was, therefore not anti-Arab or anti-Egypt but it was an anti-United States - Egypt coalition. It had a number of political and military responsibilities to fulfill worldwide. And Egypt though very important for the United States was not the focal point of the United States foreign policy in the 1950's. Britain and the Soviet Union were more important.

\textbf{DILEMMA OF THE UNITED STATES MIDDLE OF THE ROAD POLICY}

Therefore President Eisenhower was unable to break away from these multitude of compulsions to create a

\textsuperscript{60} Eisenhower, \textit{Waging Peace}, n.13, p.25.
special place for his country in the Middle East region. He could not read the pulse of Middle East politics or of the rising Arab nationalism, at that time epitomized by Egypt. He could not link it to the United States aspirations of sticking by their ally Britain, keeping the Communists at bay and doing justice by a wounded Arab race as well. Does it mean that Eisenhower was a failure? Does it mean that the United States policy towards Egypt from 1953-1961 achieved nothing concrete? The answers to both the questions are in the negative. The reason for the dismal show in positive terms during this period in the United States-Egypt relations lay not in Eisenhower's policy but as one historian has pointed out in the, "impossibility of the tasks."61 Perhaps it would be more nearer to truth to say that his policy failed because the objectives were mutually not compatible with one another. It was extremely difficult to bring the two warring groups, the Arabs and the Jews together and to establish a common peace plan. And the crux of the problem for the United States was:

having sponsored and supported Israel, yet having desirable economic interests in the Arab countries, it could not subsequently find a policy

that met the acceptance of both parties.\textsuperscript{62}

Despite the armistice between Egypt and Israel, the Egyptians totally mistrusted, 'Zionist ambitions.'\textsuperscript{63} And because of Israel's links with the United States, this issue became very volatile and contradictory to what Eisenhower wanted for the United States policy towards Egypt. The rise of an ardent patriotic nationalism, gave birth to 'Arabism,' which was conservative and generally anti-foreign. Such a tendency was difficult to tackle at a pragmatic level.

The inability of the United States to adjust with all the diverse trends, became thus the main reason for its failure and the victory of the Soviet Union in the Middle East. The Communist success in the Middle East has been due more to the demerits of the West than to the merits of the Soviets. If in the Middle East, the seeds of Communism have fallen on fertile ground, it is because that ground had been thoroughly prepared by the West.\textsuperscript{64}

Humbaraci has referred to the short

\textsuperscript{62} Hoopes, n.18, p.184.

\textsuperscript{63} United States Department of State Bulletin, No. 8885, FRUS, n.44, p.215.

\textsuperscript{64} Humbaraci, n.42, p.10.
flirtation of the United states Government with Nasser's 'positive neutralism' and its rejection in favour of the Eisenhower Doctrine.\textsuperscript{65} That was the final mistake on Eisenhower's part. The goodwill the United States had earned amongst the Arab, specially Egypt, as a result of its support to it in 1956, was wasted. The Eisenhower Doctrine was an anti-climax. Coming in the wake of a major political upheaval in the Middle East, it focussed its attention on an issue that was in no way related to it. Instead of dealing with Western aggression and finding ways of winning over the Arabs, it directed itself against Communism.

Eisenhower's diplomacy was on the whole restricted. We see the President coming out with 'neutral,' 'fair to all,' and 'Middle of the road' policies which ultimately distanced Egypt from the United States instead of bringing it closer.

\textsuperscript{65} Humbaraci, n.42.