CHAPTER IV

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Relations between Egypt and the United States have had their ups and downs during the last few years.

To begin with one must admit that there is a sharp clash of views and interests between Egypt and the United States of America and apparently there seems to be very little chance of a reconciliation between them. The reason for this is that the United States of America has plans and interests in the Arab world which go diametrically against the interests of the Arab "Ummah", including of course the Egyptian people themselves. What is more, the manner in which the United States exercises its policy in implementation of those plans is at once provocative and exasperating.

There are many who believe that the United States has behaved, ever since World War II came to an end, with the logic of the "stupid rich man" and that this was the logic which characterised its policy with that many, even in America itself— including Senator Fulbright, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate—have come to refer to as the "arrogance of power."

1. Al-Ahram, Cairo, February 24, 1967.
2. Ibid.
The underlying causes of the tension and friction between the U.S. and the U.A.R. may be summarised as follows:

1. Israel: The Americans have always backed it and they continue to back it.

2. The Arab kings or those whom the Egyptians call in Cairo. The Reactionaries: The Americans have always backed them and they continue to back them.

3. The Economic Pressure: exercised against Egypt.

These reasons are not quite new but there have recently been certain complications which intensified them.

With regard to the first of these causes, namely Israel, this is certainly the greatest and most serious cause of the conflict between the U.S.A. and Egypt or more accurately, between the U.S.A. and the peoples of the entire Arab Ummah as U.S.A., in the words of Guywint and Petter Calvacoressi, "had taken the leading role in the establishment of Israel."

According to Cecil V. Crabb, "Most of the causes of tension in the Middle East derived from the partition of Palestine in 1947; and the influence of the Jewish Vote within the United States was unquestionably of primary importance in shaping American policy on that issue. American advocacy of Partition


and speedy recognition of Israel were probably the root causes of a majority of the problems that the U.S.A. encountered later in its attempt to influence events in the Middle East."

Having created Israel through pressure tactics of the worst kind ever used by a Great power in the United Nations, the United States undertook to maintain a militarily superior Israel in the Arab world. For it was realised and is generally conceded that Israel could not exist without such support as was evident during the 1948 war between the Arabs and Israel, in which the latter was rescued by the western powers, led by the United States, once again through the machinery of the United Nations.

This was the policy enunciated by the United States and its allies in the Tripartite Declaration of 1950 and later on. The declaration’s main pledge was that the three powers (U.S.A., Britain and France) would not permit any armed aggression across the existing armistice lines in Palestine, and if such an aggression took place they would take appropriate action against the aggressor, "both within and outside the United Nations."

The second pledge was that the three powers would strive to maintain a balance in the supply of arms to Israel and the Arab States and to prevent the creation of any "imbalance" that would

endanger peace in the area. They also promised to supply Israel and the Arab States with enough weapons to meet their legitimate needs for self-defense, and "to permit them to play their part in the defense of the area as a whole." Since the creation of Israel, the U.S.A. has been assisting and helping Israel to consolidate itself. In fact, but for the U.S.A., Israel could not have come into existence or, having come into existence, could not have survived until today.

What is new in that story is: for the first time U.S.A. has become the official and almost the only purveyor of weapons to Israel.

The Middle East correspondent for the Scotsman analyzed the causes of mistrust felt in the Arab world toward the United States in this way:

"Western observers often express puzzlement at the depth of anti-American feeling developing here, since the U.S. has no record of direct imperialist rule in the Middle East and, furthermore, stood firmly by Egypt during the supreme


crisis of Suez. The source of the trouble is the persistent misunderstanding of Middle Eastern conflicts in high circles in America. First and foremost comes America's support for Israel, which is both substantial and more vocal than support from any other source. This, alone, may cause a fatal obstacle to Arab-American understanding for years to come. 8

In the words of Alfred M. Lilienthal "the abnormality of the role played by Israel in the formulation of U.S. Middle East policy was clearly demonstrated by President Eisenhower's decision not to visit the U.A.R. in the course of his 1959 trip to Southeast Asia and Africa. Because a stop by Ike in any Middle East Arab country would entail a counterbalancing visit to Israel, the President skipped over the Arab Middle East at a time when a gesture of good will on his part would have been most helpful to declining American prestige."

It is worthwhile to mention that the Arabs had come to regard Israel "as the prime expression of the western aim to maintain exclusive military control over Middle East affairs." 9

That was one cause and now to the second cause. The U.S. continuous support to Arab Reactionaries. Those Arab reactionaries are against Arab nationalism. The U.S. has

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always been behind them, ready with its support in many causes. The U.S. has even been ahead of them paving the way for them. They are its friends. U.S.A. has become for the first time the official and almost the only seller of weapons to the rulers of Arab reaction.

The third cause is the economic pressure which U.S. has always exercised against Egypt and continues to exercise. In 1966, for instance U.S. froze the Egyptian dollar funds. U.S. refused to sell Egypt wheat at easy terms.

The United States refused to give arms aid to Nasser which he so desperately needed. The United States refused to sell oil and urgently needed medicines to Egypt. Economic assistance or pressure is strongly affected by political events and it is impossible to divorce the two questions into separate economic and political compartments. Therefore another factor of a political nature also exists which promises to play havoc with Egyptian-U.S. relations. It resides in the arms race that the U.S. and its western allies appear to be encouraging between Israel and Egypt. By compelling Egypt to spend valuable capital

for unproductive arms purchases, a still further strain is placed on the balance of trade.

The above mentioned factors are from the Egyptian point of view. But what about the American charges against Egypt?

1. The Egyptian foreign policy is Sensitive.
2. Egypt tried to cultivate closer ties with the iron curtain countries.
3. Egypt recognised Red China.
4. Egypt actively helped the freedom movements in the Arab World.
5. Egypt refused to participate in any military alliance in the Middle East.
6. Egypt stood against the regimes and rulers who are friends and Allies to U.S.A. in the area.
7. Egypt is taking lead of Arab nationalism and it is against the interests of the U.S.
8. Egypt is leading the Arabs against Israel, friend number one to America.

Here we must first ask: What is it that the United States of America aims at in the Arab world? This is a very important question. The answer to this important question in brief is this:

That the United States of America, which inherited the interests, influence and responsibilities of Britain in the Arab world wishes to dominate this world for various reasons:

1. To establish its control over its strategic position in the centre of the globe. Moreover, the Arab world is undeveloped and has attracted the attention of the Soviet Union which is its rival since the end of the Second World War.

2. To ensure the opening up of the Arab world's water and air ways before its trans-continental communications.

3. To ensure its continued acquisition of the Arab world's enormous natural resources and its oil resources in particular.

4. To provide an adequate measure of protection for Israel which enjoys a special place in the interests of the United States of America partly as a result of Zionist influence over the American government and partly because of the role which Israel can play in the service of America's domination of the Arab world.

5. To support and buttress Arab reactionaries forces upon which American diplomacy depends, with the result that the consolidation of these forces has come to be a part of the same target of American domination.

What is it that makes the United States of America behave towards the Arab world in such a style?

There are two kinds of reason behind this style:

a. Causes which are far from the Arab world although it is affected by their far reaching repercussions.

b. Causes which are close to the Arab world.


Their events march under the Arab's very eyes. To begin with, there is one main and direct cause which makes the United States of America behave towards the Arab world in this dangerous style.

This main and direct cause is this:

That the United States of America has not as yet been able to achieve any worthwhile success in the Arab world, despite repeated attempts and varied means and weapons.

As a result, the United States of America finds its influence in the Arab world continuously narrowing down.

1. Narrowing down because of the exhaustion of means which had failed to achieve any success and have accordingly lost their utility.

2. Narrowing down also as a result of the diminution of the land that was once open before its movements.

The result of this is that the United States of America has come to feel that time was not on its side but was against it.

Let us begin first by the discussion of the means that were exhausted.

**THE EXHAUSTED MEANS:**

At the beginning the United States of America had imagined that the most important thing which confronted it in the Arab world was Britain's sensitivity and its desperate tenacity.

of its interests there and consequently its convulsive arms with which it encircled this area. The United State's main object at this stage was therefore to twist Britain's arms off and to wrestle a way from its tight grip some of the parts it held in its embraces.

Then came a stage during which the United States of America imagined that disputes and compromises with Britain were not the real source of danger and that the principal danger came from the Soviet Union. This was the stage during which the United States came forward to the Arab world in 1961 with the offer of a Middle East Defence Pact.

During a later stage the U.S.A. discovered that if disputes and compromises with Britain were of secondary importance, the Soviet, or communist danger was not also the real driving force behind the resistance of the Arab world. There was something else surging through the Arab world which, although it had not yet appeared in a clear and definite form, its repercussions could nevertheless be perceived. It was that "something else" which had brought the idea of "Middle East Defence Pact to an end, despite the fact that most Arab rulers - some secretly and some openly had expressed their readiness to accept it.

In the midst of this general atmosphere the July 23 Revolution broke out in Egypt. After some time the features and real character of this Revolution made themselves clear.

It was then that the U.S.A. realised that what confronted it in the Arab world was not Britain's desperate tenacity of its interests and, consequently, its disputes and compromises; nor the Soviet Union and the danger of Communism, nor Arab rulers but "something else", namely, the Arab Ummah itself or "Arab nationalism."

Anyone who casts a quick glance at later events will discover that American diplomacy in this last stage had launched three main onslaughts.

1. The main onslaught which appeared in the form of an attempt to create the Baghdad Pact. It began in 1964 and continued until 1966. Within the general framework of this attempt several 'battles' were waged.

   The battle of Egypt's demand for evacuation by trying to convince Egypt that the only way for making Britain concede this demand was to agree to participate in the collective (Middle East) defence system. Egypt insisted for withdrawal and declared its readiness to have recourse to armed resistance in the canal zone.

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19. Al Ahram, op. cit.
The battle for inciting rivalry between Egypt and Iraq by putting forward the idea of a Baghdad Pact with its headquarters in Baghdad. American diplomacy lost this battle also.

The battle of rearming Israel and of using it as an intimidating force. The first big armament deal of Israel was with France in 1964 at the direction and instigation of the U.S.A. This was followed by the famous air raid on Gaza in February 1966. Egypt was able to break the arms cordon sanitaire in 1966 by a deal with the Soviet Union. It was this success of Nasser at defeating the Western policy of maintaining a military balance in favour of Israel that appears to have led Israel to decide to destroy the strength of Egypt as quickly as possible through a swift military action and if possible, to force the Arabs to come to terms with Israel. The effect of the arms shock was spectacular: shock and outrage in the United States and Europe.

The battle of violence which was represented in the withdrawal of the American offer to finance the High Dam in a manner calculated to bring about the collapse of the Egyptian

20. See, The United States and the Middle East, op.cit., p. 169.


22. The United States and the Middle East, op.cit., p.162.
regime through insult and embarrassment. This battle later developed into an armed invasion which Britain and France ventured on. The United States which had itself begun the battle found itself forced to take up a stand different from that of its friends.

2. The second main onslaught against Nasser was represented by the Eisenhower Doctrine. It began in 1957 and continued until 1961.

Within its general framework several 'battles' similarly took place:

a. Economic blockade of Egypt through freezing its funds.

b. Invitation to King Saud to visit Washington and the efforts by Eisenhower and Dulles to convince him of the expediency of keeping away from Egypt.

c. Aid and advice to King Hussein to get rid of his nationalist government.

d. Creation of bad blood between Syria, on the one hand, and Jordan & Turkey on the other, which seemed at one time to be leading towards an armed conflict.

e. Moves to undo the merger of Egypt and Syria.

f. Consolidation and militarization of Israel via Germany.

g. Activities of the American intelligence inside Egypt itself.
Second: **The Diminution of the Stretch of Territory Open Before American Movement.**

A few quick glances at the changing political map of the Arab world will be enough to explain it.

1. A glance at the first political map of the Arab world at the time of the Baghdad Pact 1954 and 1956 will show:

   **Egypt:** Giving full resistance, both official and popular, all by itself.

   **Syria:** Under old traditional rule, unable to offer resistance but the people restless and vigilant, in Iraq Nauri Al Said; in Lebanon Camille Shamaun; in Jordan Haza Al Magali; in Yemen the Imam Ahmed, the Arabian South behind an Iron curtain; Libya dormant; The Sudan under the feudalist rule of Britain's friends; and the Arab Maghreb all still with varying degrees under French domination.

2. A glance at the second political map of the Arab world during the Eisenhower Doctrine, between 1957 and 1961 will at once show:

   **Egypt:** Giving full official and popular resistance, but not all by itself this time.

   **Syria:** Under a progressive rule and had become a part of the United Arab Republic on 22 February 1958.

   **Iraq:** Had witnessed the fall of Nauri Al Said and later of Abdul Kareem Qassem also in their places came a nationalist rule.

   **Lebanon:** Going through a revolutionary convulsion which ends in the fall of Camille Shamaun.
in Jordan: Haiza Almagali was nowhere.

in Yemen: The entire Imamate comes to an end.

Algeria: Achieves independence.

in the Sudan: The Pro-British feudalist government collapses.

3. A third glance at the political map of the Arab world after the 1961 will show the following:

The most conspicuous change on the map of the Arab world, has taken place in the South of the Arabian Peninsula, where the British were forced to take a decision to withdraw in the face of a nationalist revolution no less violent and no less effective than the Algerian Revolution, with all its consequences both to Maghreb and to the general nationalist stand.

Saudi Arabia witnessed something very serious for the first time. A king was replaced by another.

The Sudan: Undertook a successful revolution on 25 May 1969.

Libya: A dramatic change took place. The people led by the army could overthrow the king Idris and it was proclaimed "Libya Arab Republic."

in Tunisia: The youth are moving.

The United States of America thus finds its scope of action in the Arab world narrowing down.
The study of Egyptian-American relations forms an important chapter in the contemporary history of Egypt. It is a human conflict rampant with ideas and personalities. It is moreover, an interesting study of the policy of smaller developing countries and of their diplomacy and desperate efforts to assert for themselves a positive existence in a world governed by the advanced Great Powers.

Let us analyse the Egyptian-American relations from 1952 up to 1963 i.e. the post revolution period as it has been the most critical and important period in these relations. At one stage after the revolution, to be more precise, between July and December 1952, things seemed to point to the possibility of there being good Egyptian American relations. The Egyptian Revolution of July 1952 enjoyed American approval from the beginning. United States diplomatic support helped the new regime to achieve some political objectives. In the words of Harriet Clair MC Bride, "it seems clear that the Americans trading on the general dislike of the British had ingratiated themselves with the army. And in a way had abetted the coup by showing their toleration of the free officer movement. One Cairo resident told the author that she had seen a senior official of the American Embassy sitting next to an army officer.

whom she later realised was Nasser, in the Revoli Cinema as early as December 1951." The author also said "C.I.A. agents and British intelligence agents were close to these young reformers (free officers) at the time and correctly gauged their strength." After the revolution took place Assistant Secretary of State, Henry Byroade said that the "policy goals and actual accomplishments of the new regime in Egypt are such as to deserve our full support." In the words of Harry N. Howard, (Secretary Acheson on September 3, 1952 noted that there had been "some encouraging developments in Egypt, including the reform programme announced by the Egyptian Government" and stated that the United States had been following these events "with much interest and declared relations between the United States and Egypt remain most friendly and cooperative."

When Prime Minister Ali Maher resigned on September 7, 1952. the Department of State announced that it saw no fundamental significance in the move since the programme of the Egyptian Government remained "based on principles rather than personalities," and that there was no change in U.S. policy toward Egypt. In my opinion there were certain objective factors which were conducive to the achievement of these good relations:

25. The Egyptian Gazette, December 6, 1952.
27. The Statesman, Delhi, 5, September 1952. Also see Al Ahram September 22, 1952.
1. Britain was the principal enemy in the area; it was the colonialist occupation force in Egypt, Iraq, Libya, the Sudan, and the Arabian South. Similarly, Arab oil sources and the routes of Arab oil transportation were under its control.

2. The Soviet Union was far away and conditions there under Stalin did not encourage any one to try to come closer to it. Moreover, the Soviet Union on its own part paid greater attention to the European Question.

3. The United States of America, of the two great powers at the time, reflected an acceptable picture. America's wealth, America's victory in the war and American films had played an important role in creating a good image of the land of Lincoln and liberty. Added to these were the famous Four Freedoms which Roosevelt had declared as a code for the new world after the defeat of Nazism and Fascism, and the fact that America had no colonialist past in the Middle East.

4. With regard to the problem of Palestine, the main issue which engaged the attention of the Arab world in the post-war period, the United States was not at the time considered to be primarily responsible for it; the primary responsibility for the problem was held to be that of Britain. It was Britain

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which had officially blessed the concept of a national home for the Jews in Palestine. It was again Britain which had helped the Zionists in Palestine during the British Mandate. It was similarly Britain which had begun to withdraw from Palestine with such haste and in such a manner as to leave the Hagana Forces in a position of strategic strength. Moreover, Britain had been the dominant power in the Arab world. Its word was supreme in Cairo as well as in Baghdad. King Abdullah, whom Arab kings and Heads of State had chosen to be the commander-in-chief of the Arab Armies which were to enter Palestine and to emancipate it, was himself Britain's own man. His first assistant, too, who was responsible for making military plans in his name, General Glubb was similarly a British subject.

The utmost that America could be accused of at the time was that the votes of the Jews in the American General Elections had prompted Truman to take a pro-Israel line.

5. Politically and socially the Arab Revolution had not as yet reached the process of violent polarisation which it began to assume later in 1955 in opposition to the Baghdad Pact.

All those factors, inspired at the time the feeling that it was possible to have good Egyptian-American relations.

Thus, on the morning of July 23, following the success of the revolution, the first diplomatic contact which the new regime made was with the American Embassy in Cairo. On that day a special envoy, on behalf of the Revolution Command Council, went to see Jefferson Caffery, the then American Ambassador in Cairo and conveyed to him a message to the effect that "the old regime in Cairo has fallen and in its place a new revolutionary regime has come; that this new regime aimed at the achievement of the nationalist aspirations of the Arab people; and that if Britain intervened against it militarily from its occupation Base in the Canal Zone the results of such intervention would be very grave indeed, since the Army - the implementer of the will of the Revolution - and the people - the source of the will of the Revolution - will both resist any British intervention to the utmost limit."

Then, on the morning of July 26 in Alexandria, while steps were being taken to depose Farouk and barricade the Ras-el-Tin Palace, where he was staying the King asked the American Ambassador, Jefferson Caffery, to intervene for his protection. When Caffery contacted the office of the Prime Minister at the time, inquiring about the fate, that awaited the King, the Prime Minister told him — after contacting the Revolution

Command Council - that no one wished to kill the king, that he was not even worthy of a trial, and that all that was required of him was to sign the instrument of Abdication which would be submitted to him at noon exactly and quit the country six hours later, thereby drawing the curtain over his Monarchy and putting an end to the whole affair.

This means that the American Ambassador was given careful attention in those early days of the Revolution and it was a sign of the good relations between the United States and Egypt in that period.

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According to Miles Copeland "The Coup had been bloodless, it was obviously acceptable to the Egyptian people, and no one seemed to regret the departure of the profligate king."

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In an editorial Al Ahram wrote: "In less than a couple of days the valiant Egyptian Army has proved to the whole world that its soldiers, its men and its officers are heroes, for it organised its movement in both the military and political aspects, in such a way as to arouse the admiration of the whole world and even the whole nation, its sons and its foreign residents, for it passed peacefully without the shedding of one

drop of blood. Egypt's name today occupies the front pages of world press appearing in hundreds of languages and Egypt's name echoes from every broadcasting station in all the languages spoken on the globe."

36. Al Akhbar El Gadida also wrote: "The Egyptian nation as well as the whole world knows that the aim of the wonderful movement of the Army is to eradicate corruption and reorganise state affairs on a new basis and with a new mentality. Great hopes are attached to the future. The Army movement has relieved the nation's political life from the blunder that kept all authority in the hands of the sovereign against the provisions of the constitution. With this glorious act, the nation restored its authority and power."

37. Almisry: "Egypt has won the first battle on the way to liberty but it has to win other battles in order to achieve perfect victory. In the past era, Egypt was ruled under the absolute power of one individual and not by its people according to the written constitution of the country. He (Farouk) was an extreme ruler who was never inspired by the spirit of reform but was merely incited by evil, selfish and disgraceful instincts."

37. Almisry, Cairo, July 31, 1952.
Thus one can observe that the press was entirely 
38 favourable.

The Herald Tribune said editorially "The events of the 
last several days in Egypt, climaxed by the abdication of King 
Farouk, bring no direct threat to British or American interests; 
indeed the firm maintenance of public order promised by the 
Army under Maj-Gen. Mohamed Naguib Bey may in the end provide 
a framework within which existing problems may be settled."

The New York Times, commented that "King Farouk's role, 
it must be admitted was far from distinguished." The Newspaper 
said: in this case purposes may have been served."

On July 28, 1952, The British Press also speculated on 
Egypt's future following the abdication of King Farouk. The 
London Times, commented "Along with King Farouk a complete 
sweep has been made of all his unworthy favourites, who together 
made up the selfish and corrupt system of rule, against which 
Egyptian opinion has now revolted." The response of the Indian 
Press was not favourable to the Egyptian army's coup d'état. 
For instance The Times of India wrote: "Coups of this kind are

42. The Times of India, New Delhi, July 24, 1952.
never effective means of purging a country of corruption, and it is unlikely that Gen. Nagib's eruptive action can result in the far-reaching reforms which Egypt urgently needs. The new Premier's first task is to control the passions and mob-hysteria that the coup has aroused...."

The Tribune on July 25, 1952 commented: "The danger of military rule, like that of all arbitrary authority is that it leads to political megalamania and exposes the country to the vagaries of uncontrolled power. Experience of military rule in all countries shows that military power, however beneficial in its earliest stages, rapidly sinks into tyranny and corruption and disintegrates."

The Hindu said: "If, after purging the body politic of undesirable elements, the army enables a genuine general election to be held, that would be a healthy development but it is regrettable that even in Egypt, the most advanced of the Arab countries, the army have interfered in politics."

With a look at the line of the march of Egyptian-American relations, from the outbreak of the Egyptian Revolution in 1952 until this day, it will be possible for any analysis to define four general features - or should I say four semi-

43. The Times Tribune, Ambala, July 25, 1952.
44. The Hindu, Madras, July 25, 1952.
defined stages, which emerged on this line consistently with the following developments:

First: The stage of attempted taming. The United States began its attempt in this direction from the very early days of the Revolution as soon as its first surprises culminated in the events of July 23 and July 26, 1952.

The new Regime in Egypt, on the one hand, had imagined that Britain was the arch enemy; that the Soviet Union was far-removed and was sealed off under Stalin's rule; and that of all the Great Powers at the time the United States of America alone appeared in an acceptable form, unmarred yet by new-colonialist greed, particularly as America's role in Palestine was not yet sufficiently clear in the minds of the Arab people.

Moreover, Egypt, particularly after the cotton deal scandal and the Cairo Fire of January 1952, was faced with the danger of an economic collapse and the only remedy that was suggested by conventional economists and also available was the magic dose of American aid dollars.

The United States of America, on the other hand, had imagined that the New Regime in Egypt, especially on account of the role of the Army in this regime, could easily become something very similar to the military upheavals in Latin

America. It was with this conception that the United States had thought that the new regime could be dragged into the western military pacts system with the possibility also of its being enticed into concluding peace with Israel.

This stage continued until 1955 and came to its final end with Egypt's armament deal with the Soviet Union.

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As Credeaux observes: "It has often been claimed that from the Egyptian revolution until 1955 Nasser's policy was based on hope that the United States would provide the resources necessary to pull Egypt out of the morass in which Farouk and the Pashas had left it." To Jean and Simone Lacoutre, veteran French correspondents who were in Egypt at that time, there was "an element of ideological understanding," between Nasser and the Americans.

48

To Credeaux: "The expectations of Nasser and his collaborators were raised very high by various indications of American willingness to assist the new regime. Not the least of these was President Eisenhower's letter to President Nagib on July 15, 1954, which gave assurance that "simultaneously" with the

conclusion of the Suez agreement the United States would enter into "firm commitments" with Egypt for economic assistance and for strengthening the Egyptian armed forces."

Second: The stage of attempted punishments. This stage began in 1956, with the withdrawal of the offer to contribute in the High Dam Project. After the tripartite aggression on Egypt it took the form of economic war which lasted until 1958.

Third: The stage of attempted containment. It began in 1959 and continued until 1963 when the revolution took place in Yemen.

Fourth: The stage of attempted violence. It began in 1963 and continues until this day.

These in general were the features or stages in the chequered development of Egyptian-American relations from 1952 until the present time. In this study I am concerned only with the period upto 1963, i.e., the three stages mentioned above. Analysis would however require a more detailed account of each of these features or stages.