

ABSTRACT

The Arab world has been the ancient seat of civilization. It is the place of origin of three religions. It is very important, economically, geopolitically and otherwise. It contains 76 per cent of the world's oil reserves excluding the Soviet Union. It supplies 76 per cent of the oil needs of Europe and represents nearly 30 per cent of the U.S. income received from all its direct foreign investments. The Arab world stands as a crossroad between the East and the West. The Suez Canal, which is of international importance passes through the Arab world.

The United States had until the First World War no vital interest in the Arab world.

Three different images of the U.S.A. have been formed by the Arabs in the course of the past century and a half. First, the image of America as a nation which sent scholars to spread education in the Arab world through missionaries and philanthropic institutions; second, as a revolutionary nation with the ideal of self-determination, which harmonises with the national movement throughout the Arab world; third, its image as a great military and economic power with interests which do not always harmonise with resurgent Arab Nationalism.

During the inter-war years the United States reverted to "isolationism", but only politically. Economically it set out to avail the opportunities offered by the discovery of vas

quantities of oil in the Middle East. The Arab oil fields began to attract increased attention of the Americans. The United States is, therefore, vitally interested in the continuous flow of oil from the Arab world. Closely allied to oil is the U.S. interest in the various communication lines which pass through the region. The U.S.A. tried to establish its control over the strategic position of the area. She has also tried to support the reactionary regimes in the Arab world.

Another objective of the U.S.A. is to contain communism and prevent the Soviet Union from dominating the area. To protect and support Israel is also one of the American objectives.

The unwavering support of the U.S.A. to Israel is due to Zionist pressure and to the fact that Israel could serve the interests of the U.S. in the Middle East. On the level of ground strategy, the American-Israeli policies harmonize very well. They are connected with each other in terms of the general and broad objectives. The U.S.A. was the first country to recognize the State of Israel. The U.S. recognition was granted before it had even been requested by the provisional government of Israel.

To the Arabs, the U.S.A. has been the leading architect of Israel's creation. The U.S.A. has supported Israel economically, politically and militarily.

American policy in the Arab world has been and still is pro-Israel and anti-Arab as far as Arab-Israel conflict is concerned.

The U.S. interests go diametrically against the interests of the Arab people including those of the U.A.R. By her support to Israel, the U.S. evoked Arab hostility which increased with her will to impose regional military alliances such as the Baghdad Pact, the Eisenhower Doctrine and later on her efforts to gain control of bases in the area.

With regard to Egypt, the U.S.A. had very close relations with the new government which came after the revolution of July 1952. Nasser hoped that the U.S. would help Egypt to a great extent. Relations between the two countries have had their ups and downs during the last few years.

There are four stages through which the relations between the two countries have passed from 1952 onwards. First, the stage of attempted taming of Egypt. The U.S.A. began its attempt in this direction from the very early days of the Egyptian Revolution in 1952. This stage continued until 1955. Second, the stage of attempted harassment, or one can say, punishment. This stage began in 1956 and lasted until 1958. Third, the stage of attempted containment. It began in 1959 and continued until 1963. Fourth, the stage of attempted violence which continues till today.

One should also point out the following events. The Americans refused to give arms aid to Egypt in 1956. By withdrawing her aid for the Aswan High Dam Project, the U.S. had brought her influence to a low ebb. Her reaction to the Tripartite aggression against Egypt in 1956 made quick and favourable impact on the Arab people including the Egyptians. Following this, the American Government refused to rush badly needed medicines for the victims of the aggression and also shocked the Arabs by refusing to release the Egyptian dollars frozen in the U.S. Banks which caused much hardship to the Egyptian Government and also had an adverse effect on the Egyptian economy. The U.S.A. has put economic as well as political pressure on Egypt. The U.S.A. tried to weaken Nasser's position through economic pressure. These American tactics did not help the U.S. Government to win over Nasser. Nasser was not unnerved and he refused to fall in with the U.S. Policy in the regime.

One of the differences between Egypt and the U.S.A. is in regard to the Egyptian Arab policy i.e. her relations with the other Arab countries. The main difficulty in promoting good relations between the two countries lies in the American leadership's failure to adopt a fair policy towards the Arabs. The U.S. Government has heavily armed the Israeli forces with the most sophisticated weapons including phantom jets, sky hawks and napalm bombs which have all been used against the Arabs, whose territories are illegally and forcibly occupied by Israel.

The U.S.A. has also provided Israel with technical know how and allowed its citizens to participate in armed operations against the Arabs. Israel is also getting the largest chunk of American foreign aid. Even at the international level, the U.S.A. has always been in favour of Israel. All the U.N. resolutions in favour of the Arabs have been in practice nullified because of American influence and support to Israel.

American-Egyptian relations have deteriorated from hopeful expectations and good relations with the Egyptian revolutionary regime in 1962 to bitter resentment and open hostility and to break-down of diplomatic relations.

The prospects of American-Arab relations particularly American-Egyptian relations depend to a great extent on how far the gulf between their respective interests is bridged. It also depends on how far the U.S.A. is prepared to adopt an even handed policy and change some of her interests in the region such as supporting and protecting Israel at the expense of the Arabs.