PREFACE

Egypt is an outstanding example of a country whose political destiny and economic development has been more vitally affected by her physical geography and strategic position rather than anything else. Being situated at the cross-roads of Asia, Africa and Europe, she has irresistibly attracted great adventurers and empire-builders who sought to extend their influence and authority over the largest possible area of the world. During the last 2,500 years, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Arabs, the Turks, and the last of all, a succession of Western Europeans were drawn to this verdant delta of the Nile for the simple reason that it was the symbol of world-power-status. Napoleon acknowledged this fact when he called Egypt "the most important country of the world." The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 further enhanced the strategic importance of Egypt, as it substantially reduced the time and expense of rough sea-going via the Cape, by connecting the Mediterranean with the Red Sea.

Great Britain, had initially opposed the undertaking of this project as unfeasible and politically indivisible. But later on it felt it necessary to get hold of the management and control of the canal with a view to neutralising the French influence in Egypt, and in order to strengthen her own position in Asia and Africa. A series of timely accidents, however, led to the acquisition by Britain both of a major bloc of the canal stock and the actual defense of the canal site. In 1882, Britain's
army forcibly occupied Egypt after suppressing Colonel Orabi's nationalist agitation against foreign interference in Egypt's domestic matters. Since then, Egypt's political life has been dominated mainly by the problem of her relations with Britain. The various political parties and groups have been more seriously concerned with this most important issue than with any other matter. The most prominent of them, the Wafd, has been particularly engaged in dealing with and trying to redefine their country's relations with Britain. They have repeatedly insisted that their complete independence was the pre-condition for her socio-economic regeneration, that successful experiments in constitutional processes could be undertaken only in the absence of external and un-called for interference in their domestic affairs.

I have dealt with many other sectors of society and pressure groups which also directed their zeal and energy to oppose or adjust their position with the British dominance. The Communists and the orthodox Ikhwans, though diametrically opposed to each other in their ideological approach and philosophical cannotation, have made common cause against the British.

The king who occupied the central position in the triangular tussle for power and supremacy has always distracted Britain's interference in the making and unmaking of governments.

These features of Egyptian politics became more prominent during the post-second world war period. In the new pattern of international politics in which the USA, and the U.S.S.R. emerged
the strongest powers, Great Britain immensely desired to stay on in Egypt. The Egyptians, on the other hand, desired nothing more than the attainment of her complete independence. Their demand for the revision of the 1936 Treaty was accentuated to a large extent due to the Palestine debacle.

During the decade from 1945 to 1954, Egypt's nationalism became more vigorous and assertive, occasionally resorting to violence and sabotage. The orgy of unprecedented violence, looting, arson, killing and chaos that characterised the Egyptian political scene during 1950-52 was an expression of their anti-British feelings and their utter disappointment to settle accounts with the British at the conference table.

The revolutionary regime of Neguib and Nasser also soon discovered that stability and popularity of the new order as well as successful implementation of various reform plans were largely dependent on an early settlement with Britain. The question of the Sudan and the Suez Canal evacuation were therefore, taken immediately by the new elite.

They succeeded in resolving their disputes with Britain in an amicable manner mainly due to the diplomatic astuteness, the straightforwardness and realism of the leaders of Revolutionary Command Council. They recognized the principle of self-determination for the Sudanese. This greatly facilitated the conclusion of the most important and epoch-making agreement of the Suez Canal zone in October 1954.
An effort has been made to highlight, analyse and justify Egypt's struggle to emancipate herself from the fetters of colonialism. It has been maintained that it was wholly and primarily an expression of genuine nationalist sentiments, and not an attempt to divert the attention of the masses from the poor state of their national economy and administration, as some western scholars have sought to establish. Their explanation of Egypt's unrest and chaos is characterised by a prejudicial approach and is not borne out by facts. It amounts to intellectual dishonesty as it is intended to thwart a judicious analysis and is invariably based on deliberately distorted facts. The British hegemony over the Egyptian politics operated as a constant limitation over her full sovereign status and vitiated her efforts in the economic sphere.

Since it has been my purpose to examine and emphasise the Egyptian point of view in respect of their relations with imperialist Britain, the title of the present study has been accordingly worded as 'Egypt's relations with Great Britain.' This appears somewhat uncommon and unconventional in the sense that most studies in this subject have been styled in the reverse order, obviously seeking to defend the British stand vis-a-vis the Egyptian cause of evacuation and freedom.

I have tried to make an extensive study of the Egyptian source-material that could be made available to me in the libraries of Cairo, Damascus and Beirut. The archives of the Arab League Head Quarters at Cairo, were particularly helpful in this
regard. More often, however, I had to depend on official sources because press-censorship and ban on party publications has been too frequently and too rigidly applied by successive governments in Cairo during this period.

Throughout this study I have used the term 'Middle East' instead of the currently popular and more appropriate term of 'West Asia.' Uniformity of expression is the main reason. The various documents, debates, conversations and resolutions have invariably used the term 'Middle East.' Even the Egyptians and other Arabs have used this same term in their expressions of thoughts regarding the problems of the area. Moreover, the term 'West Asia' came in common use only during and after the Suez episode of 1956, while the period of my work is confined to the conclusion of the 1954 Suez Canal Evacuation Agreement.

In the concluding chapter I have tried to summaries the whole issue of relations between the two nations with my observations and comments. The more suitable title for this chapter would be 'resume'.

The appendices attached here, have been selected from the point of view of their frequent reference in the text of the thesis. While going through the relevant chapters, one might need to look for a more comprehensive reference of the brief citation.

Finally, I deem it my most pleasant duty to gratefully acknowledge the invaluable help and scholarly guidance of my teacher and supervisor, Professor Dr. S.A.H. Haqqi, Head of the Department of Political Science, in completing this work. Without
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