Chapter III

THE PALESTINE WAR AND ITS IMPACT ON EGYPT'S NATIONAL POLITICS

A. Britain's Reference of the Palestine Question to the United Nations

Hardly had the Egyptian Government been able to breathe a sigh of relief after it had successfully combated and suppressed the epidemic within three months of its outbreak, a politically more dangerous crisis of perennial consequences came up.

On 29 November 1947, the General Assembly of the United Nations passed the 'Partition of Palestine Resolution' (1). The

1. Early in April 1947 Great Britain, being absolutely unable to maintain law and order in Palestine, where the Zionists and the Palestine Arabs were engaged in fierce battle to establish their nationalist claims, ultimately referred the case to the United Nations to find a solution of the problem. The latter body appointed a Special Committee to study and suggest a satisfactory solution.

The findings of this Committee were, however, not unanimous. There was a 'Majority Plan' which proposed partition of Palestine into an Arab State and a Jewish State with economic union, while Jerusalem was placed under the UN administration as an international city. The 'Minority Plan', on the other hand, suggested a single state with a federal structure.

The General Assembly was required to adopt either with a two-third majority in favour. During the discussion on the report, majority of speakers favoured the so-called 'Minority Plan', but when vote was taken, after 24 hours' adjournment, the decisive two-thirds majority was surprisingly found supporting the partition of Palestine.

This shift in voting behaviour of the delegates was decidedly due to the 'American official and unofficial pressure' and, in certain cases, compulsion upon the smaller member nations dependent on US aid. Luxembourg, Liberia, Haiti, the Philippines and Greece who had earlier opposed the Partition of Palestine, now either favoured or abstained from voting against it. For a detailed account of the subject (contd. on next page)
British delegate had abstained from voting on the resolution because partition of the Arab homeland was totally rejected by Egypt and other Arab countries, and therefore also gave no assurance to implement it. (2) The Arabs believed that Palestine belonged to the natives - Arabs of Palestine - and only they were entitled to determine their future after the end of the Mandate. None else had any right or justification to promise or partition away any part of their territory to an alien group of people whose claims to the territory were based on doubtful remote historical connections. The British had already undermined the facts of Arab position in Palestine (3) when they promised in 1914 to establish a Jewish home in Palestine. The infamous Balfour Declaration was a masterpiece of ambiguity. It

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3. In 1917 the total population of Palestine numbered 700,000: 644,000 were Arabs and the remaining 56,000 were Jews. In 1948, the population of Palestine was 2,115,000 out of which 1,380,000 were Arabs and 700,000. In other words, when the State of Israel was established on the termination of the British Mandate the Arabs were still a two-third majority, in spite of thirty years of Jewish immigration under the auspices of the British authority.
contained contradictory pledges to both the Arabs and the Jews because they needed the support of both the communities in World War I.

At the end of the War in 1919 the Palestinians had rightfully expected to become free and to be proclaimed a sovereign nation like the other former provinces of the defeated Ottoman Empire. But they were betrayed. The British declared them to be unfit to manage their own affairs, and hence assumed the responsibility to prepare them for self-rule under the new device of the 'Mandate System'.

During the entire period of the Mandate, the Arabs struggled to preserve the dominant Arab character of their fatherland and realize the national aspirations. The 1939 White Paper was, in a way, a recognition of their legitimate struggle because it sought to restrict the immigration of Jews into Palestine and banned selling or purchasing of land belonging to the Arabs to non-

4. On 2 November 1917, Britain's Foreign Secretary, Arthur Balfour sent the following message to Edment de Roths Childs:

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights or political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

The phraseology of this statement obviously intended to please the Zionists without annoying the Arabs. The former understood it as a promise towards the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine, while to the Arabs the words 'national home' for the Jews in Palestine could not mean the establishment of a Jewish political order in Palestine as it would certainly 'prejudice the civil and religious rights' of the Arabs."
Arabs. (5) This, however, did not help much the Arab cause because during and after the Second World War, the Zionists had found another Great Power to patronise the promote their claims about Palestine. The Government and the people of the United States of America became genuinely interested in the problem of the Jewish settlement. President Truman was particularly interested in the Jewish Vote he needed to win the forthcoming elections, but the people were generally interested on humanitarian grounds, to find a sanctuary for the persecuted Jews of Europe, the victims of Germany's man-slaughter. The Zionist organizations started illegally pouring them into Palestine despite serious restrictions on immigration. (6) This new influx of Jews caused the Arabs a serious concern. They feared that unrestricted flow of Jewish immigrants, wave after wave, would

5. In the 1939 White Paper the British Government declared that neither their undertakings to the Jews nor the national interests of Britain warranted that they should continue to develop the national Jewish home beyond the point already reached. The Government, therefore, decided: (1) "That the Jewish National Home as envisaged in the Balfour Declaration and in previous statements of British Policy had been established." (2) "That to develop it further against Arab wishes would be a violation of Britain's undertakings to the Arabs, and that such a policy could only be carried out by the use of unjustifiable force". (3) "That, therefore, after the admission of a final quota of 75,000 more Jewish immigrants should stop." (4) "That during this period of five years, a restriction should be placed on the acquisition of further land in Palestine by the Jews". (5) "That at the end of five years, self-governing institutions should be set up in the country. See British Parliamentary Papers 1939, Cmd. 6019, pp. 1-12.

soon outnumber them, alter their social position and undermine their political claims. They protested against the Government and fought the Zionists in the streets of the towns and cities of Palestine. The latter had by now organized several paramilitary organizations, the 'Irgun' and the 'Hagana' and now a large number of trained young men to kill and terrorise the Arab population. The Arabs resisted with whatever little means they had. Law and order had been completely paralysed, and there was no security of life and property. The whole of Palestine was plagued with killing, looting and dynamiting buildings and houses. (7) The Arabs were already desperately looking for safer places. Villages and towns were being forcibly evicted to make room for the newcomers. A new problem of Arab refugees was being created by trying to solve the problem of Jewish refugees. (8) The British felt themselves quite disabled to enforce law and restore order. The Zionist terrorism was not sparing the Englishmen and officers. Two young sergeants in British uniform were hanged as a reprisal; a British Minister of State, Lord Moyne, was assassinated in Cairo by a fanatical Jewish youth, next the


8. The Arab civil population of Palestine began increasingly to disperse under the pressure of Jewish terrorist attacks. The climax was on 9 April, the Zionists of Irgun Dai Leumi, the larger of the two terrorist organizations, raided the Arab village of Deir Yasin near Jerusalem and Massa some 250 Arab men, women and children, who were done to death with every barbarity. By the end of October nearly 650,000 Palestinian Arabs had become refugees. See, Sami Hadawi, op.cit., pp.14-54. See, also Annual Register 1948, p. 308.
King David Hotel which housed several British offices, was blown up causing grievous loss of life. (9)

It was in this frustrating state of disorder and lawlessness and want of security to their own people in His Majesty's service, that the British felt utterly helpless. The Attlee Government was, under the circumstances, rather unwilling to carry on the 'Whitemen's burden'. Their inability to find a solution of the Palestine problem which could be acceptable to both, the Arabs and the Jews; the new growing American pressure in favour of the Jews; (10) her own war-exhaustion coupled with


10. In early 1945 President Truman urged Attlee that 100,000 Jews be admitted into Palestine. Expressing his inability to comply with the request of the American President explaining it will be highly resented by the Arabs and there will be serious administrative problems for the mandatory authority. Instead, however, he invited the United States to participate in a joint inquiry into the conditions in Palestine and problems related to it. The US accepted to share the responsibility of finding and implementing a solution acceptable to both the communities.

A Joint Committee of Inquiry was established which after several months of investigations, called for the issuance of 100,000 certificates for admission into Palestine of Jews who have been the victims of Nazi and Fascist persecution".

Of all the other recommendations this was the most satisfactory from the point of view of the American President, who immediately started demanding its implementation. Britain, however, had her own limitations of considerations of national economic and defence interests to weigh before agreeing with the unrealistic recommendations. On the final assessment of their own vital interests and pledges to the Arabs, they

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serious financial crisis and mounting criticism from the opposition, finally impelled the Labour Government to ask the UN to find a solution and own the responsibility for doing so.

B. Partition of Palestine Plan

The solution which the UN had found in November 1947, however, was the one the British had long shirked. Their own Commissions (11) in the past had suggested partition as a solution, but they had rejected it on the ground that it contradicted the original British promise to guard the interests of both the communities, and said that Britain would take no action that was not agreeable to both the Jews and Arabs. (12)

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rejected the findings of the Committee on practical grounds. The Arab Higher Committee and the League of Arab States, with its headquarters at Cairo, had already warned "the Committee report doomed Palestine to be a land of bloodshed and misery." See International Events (Chatham House), May 1946, p. 286.

The US President, under the influence of his Zionist advisers of the White House, however, decided to back the Zionist cause in Palestine by all means and methods.

11. The Peel Commission appointed in 1930 recommended partition of Palestine which being unacceptable to both was undone by the findings of the Woodhead Commission in 1938 that Partition was absolutely unsatisfactory and unworkable solution.

12. On 18 February 1947, the British Foreign Secretary had announced in the House of Commons that His Majesty's Government had found that "the Mandate has proved to be unworkable in practice, that the obligations undertaken to the two communities had been shown to be irreconcilable." See, Parliamentary Papers, Cmd. 7088.

After the question of Palestine was referred to the UN, the British representative said at a meeting of the UN General Assembly on 15 May 1947, "We have tried for years to solve the problem of Palestine. Having failed so far, we

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Yet, even before the UN General Assembly had finally decided on the report of the Special Committee on Palestine, the British Government announced that they intended to give up the Mandate and withdraw their administration and all their forces as rapidly as possible. And eventually on 15 May 1948 they formally terminated their Mandated authority without making any arrangement for the peaceful and orderly transfer of authority. The same day David Ben Gurion proclaimed the establishment of the Jewish State of Israel as decreed by the General Assembly on 29 November 1947. (13) President Truman immediately recognized her as a new member of the family of nations, assuring thereby security of her existence. (14)

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Now bring it to the UN in the hope that it can succeed where we have not. All we say is that we should not have the sole responsibility for enforcing a solution which is not accepted by both parties and which we cannot reconcile with our conscience. Official Records of the First Special Session of the General Assembly, April-November 1947, vol. III, pp. 183-4. See also H.C. Deb., 11-12 December 1947, cols. 1402-5.

Upon this statement, Sami Hadawi, a prominent Arab scholar, commented as follows: "To have taken the British Government thirty years to find out that the Mandate for Palestine was 'unworkable', after having created a problem in 1917 where none existed before, and after flooding the country with Jewish immigrants until they became strong enough to wrest the country from its original inhabitants; and then to wash its hands at this late hour and declare its unwillingness to enforce a solution, "not acceptable to both parties" under the pretext of conscience, does not speak well of either the British conscience or intelligence. Sami Hadawi, Bitter Harvest (New York, 1967), p. 77.


Israel a more solid position than was provided for by the partition, and to create a running sore in the heart of the Near East, British diplomacy had deliberately chosen to set the Egyptian bull against the Israeli 'muleta'. (19)

While all of these factors might have contributed in making Egypt's decision to join the Arab war against Israel, it is not doubtful that the absence of any or even all of them would have averted the war. During the last thirty years the whole question of Palestine had been so developed that recourse to arms was inevitable. The Palestinians had become more conscious of their national rights and were determined to protect these rights including that of self-determination. The Jews under the spell of Zionism, on the other hand, were seeking a national existence implying their resurgence as an independent political community within the same historical area.

The real issue was that the Jews wanted Palestine for themselves, although the country was already inhabited by Arabs. If the Jews were to achieve their ambitions, the Arabs would have to be either evicted or eliminated. In face of two such directly opposed objectives, neither side being prepared to consider any reduction of its demands, a reconciliation was unattainable.

The very logic of the unprecedented situation made it imperative for the native Arabs to protest and agitate against injustice. It was the Arabs whose land was being subjected to alien rule, whose culture and history was being suppressed, whose national identity and character was being undermined and, in fact, being replaced by another people, another culture which had nothing in common or even reconcilable with their own. The

The British High Commissioner, General Cunningham, and Lt. General Macmillan, the British GOC in Palestine and a host of other senior officials left Palestine the same fateful day of 14 May, without delegating authority, assets and responsibilities to anybody. They virtually abandoned the country to its fate. (Italics mine) The fight between the Arabs and the Zionists became more fierce to grab more of territory, buildings, stores and other assets. 'The remaining British forces stood by, intervening less and less frequently and less and less effectively, and preparing solely for their evacuation'. 'As they quitted police-posts, forts and strong-points there was usually a race between Jews and Arabs for their capture'. A senior British officer explained the policy by stating that

I have no desire whatever to involve my troops in these clashes (between Arabs and Jews). All I want is to secure the routes and sectors that I need to complete the British evacuation of Palestine. (15)

C. Egypt's Role in the Arabs' War Against Israel 1948-49

Prior to the formation of the League of Arab States Egypt neither had a particular desire of bothering about the affairs of other Arab countries nor she practically had any prospect of


In March 1948, Bevin had told the House of Commons that the aim of the Labour Government was to be rid of an incubus that was queering their relations with important allies. He said: "I do want to emphasize that we want to get into a position to enable us to get out of Palestine. That is the fundamental point of British Policy". H.C. Deb., 23 March 1948, vol. 448, cols. 2817-18.
having independent contacts with any or either of them, her foreign relations were controlled and guided by the British authority in Cairo in consultation with the Foreign Office in London. Some might have indeed felt strongly about the injustices being done to their fellow-Arab brothers in Palestine but they were helpless to do anything for them. They had their own problems of a continuing struggle for full freedom and national dignity. But now through her established position of leadership in the organization of the Arab States, she could deliberate with and influence other Arab leaders and the course of events in the common Arab affairs. It was under Egypt's influence and insistence that the Arab League had taken over the conduct of the Arab cause in Palestine. 'The headquarters of the Arab League being in Cairo, and Abdul Rehman Pasha Azzam, an Egyptian, being the permanent Secretary-General, the actions of the League at this time were very nearly those of Egypt'. (16)

Besides, there was now also present in Cairo the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husaini, (17) who equated Zionism with Western imperialism, and urged the Egyptians and all other Arabs to resist the implementation of the UN Resolution of November 1947. He explained to his listeners that "the United States was helping to create Israel ... not because of any

17. The Grand Mufti had taken refuge in Germany during the war because the British were looking for him to put him behind the bars for his anti-Allied activities. He held the Germans in many ways. After their defeat he returned to Egypt and organized movements in support of the Jewish cause in Palestine.
interest in the homeless Jews but in order to get an imperialistic foothold in the Middle East". The Brotherhood gave the call of 'Jihad' and asked the Government to fight to protect and preserve the Islamic faith in Palestine. And thus they were able to transform the Arab-Jewish conflict in Palestine and particularly the support which the Western Powers gave the Partition Resolution at the UN into an Arab-Islamic Holy War against foreign domination and all those whom they disliked or distrusted. They worked diligently to excite their fellow-countrymen against the Jews of Palestine, against Great Britain that had created the troubles in Palestine in 1917 where none existed, against the United States which was trying to replace the British position in the Middle East by establishing her own economic and political hold, against the home-government that had failed at the UN, was undisguisedly inimical to the Ikhwans, and was feeling shy of facing the Zionists in battle.

The King supported the idea of military intervention not entirely because Hajj Husaini's influence and persuasion but also because the declaration of war was likely to restore his shattered prestige, (18) and give him more authority to suppress his enemies and enable him to win new supporters and admirers. There were also some private individuals, traders and industrialists who had certain well calculated economic and commercial interests in pushing Egypt into a war with Israel. Some of them were to

18. In February 1948 Faruk was jeered at in public for the first time. All sorts of stories were being circulated about his personal life; his love of wine, women and gambling had made him quite unpopular. See Lacouture, op.cit., p. 101.
make real fortunes out of numerous military purchases. There were people who had good connections inside the palace and could convince the King that by declaring war against Israel, he had everything to gain, nothing to lose.

The Government headed by Nokrashi Pasha was already weakened by its failure at the UN and was being openly criticized and condemned by the Opposition. The Brotherhood was blunt and outspoken in its criticism of the Government and the Prime Minister in particular. In these circumstances, the Palestine crisis presented a situation to divert the attention of the embittered masses and silence opposition by imposing Martial Law in the country.

There is, however, another view which suggests that the British had purposely created a situation of tussle in Palestine by leaving Palestine abruptly. They were now seriously worried about retaining their possession of the Suez Canal, and so needed an issue of this sort to distract Egypt from the Suez problem.

Nothing is so monotonous or irritating as the constant search, in the Middle East affairs, for the 'hand of Britain'. But in this case everything falls into place with remarkable ease... It was the British Government which, from 1917 Balfour Declaration down to the hasty evacuation in May 1948, ensured the birth of Israel in spite of pro-Arab sympathies in the Foreign Office. It is the same Government which in 1943 entrusted Nahas Pasha's Cabinet with founding the Arab League, in spite of suggestions put forward earlier by the very devoted and intelligent Nuri Sa'id. Finally, it was the same government which fixed the hour and day of the intervention, pressing on with the evacuation so urgently that neither the Arabs who favoured compromise - such as Abdullah of Jordan - nor the British experts whom as General Spears who favoured the Arabs, were listened to while they advised caution and stressed the risks of the undertaking. Everything happened as though in order to distract Egypt from the Suez problem, to give...
Zionists too were aware of the inherent irreconcilability of their claims and contentions with the existing majority of Arabs. As such no amount of persuasion and promise of better economic future which would be the result of Jewish enterprise, skill and experience, would appeal to them. No self-respecting nation could accept economic benefits at the cost of its national dignity and identity.

Even at that late stage the Arabs were prepared to accept the Jews already in Palestine, (20) on the condition that further immigration stopped and that independence and a democratic constitution, guaranteeing political equality and decisions by majority, be accepted. This was obviously and totally unacceptable to the Zionists who had taken a pledge at Baltimore, USA, in 1942 to create a Jewish State. 'Jewishness' was in fact the romance and the sole justification of their demand for a state in Palestine.

The Arab rebellion of 1936 had convinced them that the ultimate issue would be decided by force. They had foreseen the British evacuation of Palestine and the struggle with the Arabs, and therefore had already started 'studying methods to be adopted for the physical eviction of the Arabs from Palestine. (21)

During the last war, a Jewish brigade had been formed and had

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20. In mid-May 1948 the total population of Palestine was 2,065,000 of which 1,415,000 were Arabs and 650,000 were Jews. See, UN Document A/364, vol. I, Ch. IV, p. 54. See also, Israel Government, Yearbook 1950 (Tel Aviv), p. 339.

been trained by the British. It went into Europe and fought in the final stages of the Italian campaign. It had therefore obviously been trained to a level of efficiency comparable to that of European armies. In addition, when it was thought that the Germans might occupy Palestine, other Jews had been trained by the British in guerrilla tactics. Many thousands of Jews who had served as officers or soldiers in different armies during the Second World War had arrived in Palestine by 1948. With this material the Jews had built up the Hagana, into reasonable troops. In addition great quantities of arms had been smuggled into the country or stolen from the British Army, and large secret arsenals of weapons were located underground in the Jewish colonies. (22) In the words of Lacouture:

Fierce exchanges between the Mufti of Jerusalem and heads of different Arab Governments; terrorism on the part of Irgun; rivalry between Egypt and Iraq; the conclusions of the Anglo-American Committee in favour of another 100,000 Jews being allowed to immigrate into Palestine; the Secretary-General of the UNO's undisguised sympathy for Zionism; the last-minute change in the demarcation of frontiers to the detriment of the Arabs - everything seemed to encourage the Arabs in the direction of violence, especially as events were being directed by cleverer men than themselves. (23)

Egypt being a founder-member of the Arab League and being its leader was honour bound to defend the cause of Palestine. The partition of Palestine was a staggering blow to her prestige and therefore, a challenge to undo what the Zionists and their new patrons - the Americans - had achieved. And so, on 15 May

22. Ibid., p. 287. See also John Connell, op.cit., p. 9.
she sent her regular armies into Palestine to forestall the establishment of an Israeli State. Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Jordan also rushed volunteers to Palestine to reinforce their brother in their struggle against the partition. It seemed that they had temporarily sunken their mutual differences, rivalries and fears, (24) to the extent of agreeing on a joint armed intervention against the Zionists.

24. The members of the League differed widely in culture and outlook. Each of them wished to enlarge its territory, power and position. Each of them was jealous and suspicious of the other. Each of them desired and made efforts to use the slogan of greater Arab unity to its own advantage by proposing to achieve this aim by conquering its neighbours and annexing them to itself. This mentality served to keep them all in a constant state of fear and anxiety.

As a result of this approach to the ideal of unity, Lebanon lived in a fear of annexation by Syria, while the latter was apprehensive of attack by Iraq. The increasing fame of the Arab Legion, the army of Jordan gave Syria further cause for apprehension. Amir Abdullah, after the withdrawal of France from Syria, seriously toyed with the idea of using force, but was strongly dissuaded by Britain. After Syria became an independent republic, Abdullah sought Syrian-Transjordan unity with himself ruler of both. Syria, on the other hand, wanted this unity on the condition that the President of Syria became the head of the enlarged state.

The Arabian Peninsula was still divided by dynastic hostility between the Sherifian and Saud families. Syrian fears of Iraq and Trans-Jordan resulted in a drawing together of Syria and Saudi Arabia.

Ibn Saud had serious apprehensions about Egypt's motives in creating a League of Arab States, which later were dispelled by a meeting with King Faruk of Egypt.

While Egypt was in favour of complete Arab unity, she desired it under her suzerainty. She therefore did not wish any other Arab governments to combine, lest, in doing so, they produce a new country equal in power to Egypt. Particularly was she afraid of a union of the Fertile Crescent; that is, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. If these four countries were to unite, they would produce a new State as influential as Egypt. The latter, therefore, endeavoured to keep them apart by creating mistrust between Syria and Iraq.
In this battle, Egypt as was expected, played an important role. For her the existence of an enemy state right across her borders was too big a danger to her security and a threat to her economy and political institutions. At first things went well for the Arabs. The Egyptian army advanced easily into the parts of Palestine awarded to the Arabs by the partition plan: (25) the South-West Negeb, the coastal plain through Gaza to Magdal and beyond. But then by a combination of terrorism (as at Deir Yasin, where 250 Arab villagers were murdered), of military dash and skilful utilisation of truces, the Jews had consolidated their grip on a far larger area of the country than they had been awarded.

At this state of serious reverses, Britain tried to restrain further Jewish advances as they were obliged to defend Egypt under the 1936 Treaty obligations. (26) But the Egyptians preferred to negotiate an armistice with Israel (27) rather than invoke the support of the British garrison in the Canal Zone under the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty and thereby perpetuate its continuity which was an abnoxious symbol of the incompleteness of their independence.


The conclusion of an Armistice with Israel, instead of a 'Peace Treaty' shows that Egypt did not accept these setbacks as her defeat. She only needed some time to prepare herself for a final struggle to liquidate Israel. (28) The Armistice enabled her to maintain a state of technical belligerency against Israel, to invoke economic boycott and blockade of passage through her territories and waters; to refuse recognition and to withhold the right of refusing exchange of legation with the enemy state.

D. Causes of the Arabs' Defeat

The Egyptians and other Arabs had plunged into the war mainly on the strength of emotional fervour and sentiments. Their preparations were far from being adequate. Numerically also the proportion of trained personnel was not imposing. Against a total of 65,000 better equipped and enthusiastic Zionists who fully understood the purpose they were fighting for, the Arabs had been able to muster only 21,500 ill-armed, ill-trained and unwilling and ignorant soldiers. (29) Comparatively, most prepared for war

28. Article 5 of the Egyptian-Israeli Armistice signed on 24 February 1949, stated that the line demarcated in Articles 6-7 was "delineated in pursuance of the purpose and intent of the Security Council resolution of Nov. 4 and Nov. 16, 1948" was "not to be construed in any sense as a political or territorial boundary", and was delineated "without prejudice to the rights, claims and positions of either party to the armistice as regards the ultimate settlement of the Palestine question." The basic purpose of the demarcation line was "to delimit the line beyond which the armed forces of the respective parties shall not name."

29. Nasser's biographer, Robert St. John gave the following account of how Nasser felt disgusted and disappointed when he incidently picked a soldier of his own battalion, during one of the cease-fires, just to find out whether his men understood what the war was all about, and found that he

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was the Arab Legion of King Abdullah of Jordan, but even his army consisted of only four infantry battalion and one recently formed battery of field artillery, together with an improvised 'home-guard' that was seriously under-equipped in many important respects. It had received from Britain six Twenty-five Pound guns a few months before, but its gunners had had only three months training and the Zionists for their part had manufactured large numbers of mortars and were skilful in their use; the Legion's fifty British armoured cars, though obsolete by British standards in 1941, were superior in quality but were greatly outnumbered by the eight hundred home-made armoured cars of the Zionists. (30)

The root cause of the Arabs' defeat, however, was the absence of adequate cooperative planning of the campaign by Arab States which in turn had been due to insufficient mutual trust and confidence. Secondly, whereas the Jews were struggling for

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had just no idea. The soldier even did not know whether he was in the battlefield or in the training right. Following few dialogues were exchanged between Major Nasser and his soldier:

Major Nasser: 'What are we doing here?'
The soldier: 'We are on manoeuvres, Sir.'
Major: 'Manoeuvres? where?'
Soldier: 'At El-Rebèki Sir'.

Nasser looked at the soldier, a Fellah from Upper Egypt incredulously. El-Rebèki was on the road running from Cairo across the desert to Suez, hundreds of miles away. It was where the Egyptian Army used to hold its annual manoeuvres. See, The Boss (London, 1960), p. 65; also, Richard Hilton, Thirteenth Power (London, 1958), p. 106.

their very existence, many of the Arab troops had 'little stomach' for the war. Moreover, whereas the Jews conducted the war with a coordinated organization, a unified and total conscription, the Arabs betrayed disunity, diversity of plans, improvisation, and, above all, slackness and lack of seriousness about winning the war. Musa-Alawi, a fairly well-known Arab writer, remarks that "in face of their enemy, the Arabs were not a state but petty states, groups, not a nation, each fearing and watching the other and intriguing against it. What concerned them most and guided their policy was not to win the war and save Palestine from their enemy, but what would happen after the struggle, who would be dominant in Palestine or would annex it to themselves." (31)

This attitude owed not a little to their illusions about their capability to easily uproot the new political entity. 'Abd ur Rehman 'Azzam, the Egyptian Secretary-General of the Arab League, thought that 'the strategic and technical position of the Arab Forces was particularly favourable ... so that they would have no great difficulty in bringing about a military decision to their advantage in a very short time'. (32) The Egyptian Prime Minister also seemed to have no doubt about the defeat of Israel. While asking the Senate's approval for the invasion of Palestine, the Egyptian Premier hoped that 'the war would last no more than two weeks before the Zionists were defeated.' (33)

32. Folk Bernadotte, To Jerusalem (London, 1951), p. 34.
The Arabs thus being over-confident were mainly concerned about making the most for themselves out of the episode. That King Abdullah of Trans-Jordan intended to "annex to his kingdom as much of Palestine as he could occupy" was not a secret. He was even prepared to make some compromise with the Zionists over the division of Palestine territory. (34) President Nasser also said once that the Arabs were defeated because they were "several armies". "Had the Army been one, Palestine would have been saved." (35)

Other important factors were shortage of war material and stoppage of supplies of arms by UK in accordance with the UN request, (36) while Israel had been reinforcements in arms and volunteers from abroad, (37) mainly from Czechoslovakia. (38)

34. Marlowe, op.cit., p. 327.

Adjudged as traitor to Pan-Arabism he was done to death on the 20th July 1951 reportedly by a Cairo fanatic in the al-Aksa Mosque in Jerusalem. The Jordanian Court which sat in judgement on the crime found that a nephew and intimate counsellor of the Grand Mufti, al Hussaini, was one of the principal instigators and sentenced him to death. Sir Pierre Randot, The Changing Pattern of the Middle East 1919-1958 (London, 1961), p. 133.

35. President Nasser's Speeches (Director of Information, Cairo, 1958), p. 72.


E. Impact of the War on Egypt's National Affairs -
Bid to Resolve Disputes with Britain

The Government of Egypt which was much more deeply committed over Palestine for reasons of her geographic proximity and political realities, and which unlike Jordan had not gained anything from the Palestine campaign (39) with which to appease public opinion, found itself faced with a dangerous domestic situation. The already discontented middle class found in this defeat an evidence of Government's weakness, corruption and misjudgement.

Their humiliating defeat in Palestine had a profound and immediate effect on Egypt's public life. Prime Minister Nokrashi Pasha's efforts to conceal from public the disastrous course of the war had failed. They came to know about the inefficiency, corruption and cowardice in high places, which caused their showdown. (40) The shocking stories of misappropriation of war

39. Judea, Samaria and Hebron which included the old city of Jerusalem and other important towns like Nablus, Jericho, Lydda and Hebron, were held from 1949 onwards by the Arab Legion until they were captured by the Israelis in 1967 campaign. See map. For detailed account of the war, loss and gains on both sides from 15 May 1948 to March 1949 when the final armistice was concluded. See Survey, op.cit., pp. 270-94.

40. Nasser made an entry in his diary as to why the Ninth Egyptian Battalion was defeated: "The Commander of the battalion was on leave. The next in command was hit by a splinter and died immediately. The third in command took a car and fled with it, stopping only when he reached Ismailia on the Canal. The fourth in command left the battalion to go to General Headquarters." See Robert St. John, The Boss (London, 1960), p. 73. See also Peter Mansfield, Nasser (London, 1969), p. 42.

About corruption and bungling in the supplies of arms, medicines and general stores, official investigations revealed that a good number of people connected with the

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funds, of stealing of military stores and the neglect of the wounded (41) disgusted them with the Government and the King, who, in their opinion, intended to use the war to eliminate opposition and 'rule with an iron hand'. (42)

Frustration, humiliation and anger caused the outbreak of violence and destruction. Many ardent spirits desired to overthrow the entire political set-up that proved to be so incompetent to upkeep the nation's prestige and safeguard its territorial and ethnical integrity.

The Muslim Brotherhood (Ikhwan ul Muslemin) who enjoyed great popularity and prestige with the general masses for her enthusiasm and record of personal service in the fight against Israel, was most active in the anti-Government and anti-West campaign.

40. (contd. from back page)

Palace were involved. Prince Abbas Halim, a cousin to the King was also accused of pocketing nearly half a million dollars of secret government funds given to him to cover his expenses on a trip abroad to obtain arms. Another person confident of the King who was reported to have collected several million dollars in bribes from munitous men who had been supplying Egypt with expensive, albeit defective, arms; that exploded on the face of the soldier. See, R.S. John, op.cit., p. 98.

41. Writing about the siege of Faluja, Nasser described the scene of war and the plight of his soldiers thus: 'Air raids were launched on our positions, forcefully and numerously. Our own air force disappeared completely. We never saw any of our Planes. Enemy artillery began throwing fire on our heads, never keeping quiet for a moment. What bothered most was the number of casualties in our forces. The existence of the wounded in our midst was a tax on our nerves.'

42. Tom Little, op.cit., pp. 177-78. See also Mansfield, op.cit., pp. 42-3.
The lamentations of the Moslem Brotherhood were tinged with a sense of triumph, for some of its phalaeuxes had been sent to the front as volunteers and had so distinguished themselves by their fighting spirit that in this period, darkened by inefficiency, treachery and defeat, they shone like a beacon light of Pan-Arab patriotism. Thousands of people flocked to join the movement, until it was able to boost by 2,000,000 members. (43)

The news of the conclusion of the first Armistice at the end of a month's fighting was strange and upsetting for many people in Cairo. From the very first day of the outbreak of fighting, the Egyptians were being told through official announcements and press-release that their armies were marching ahead successfully and that very soon they will wipe out the enemy; victory was sure and they should prepare to welcome their brave soldiers when they return home 'after obliterating the State of Israel'. (44)

During the previous month's fighting, the press in Egypt and other Arab countries had created a world of fantasy by daily reporting an unbroken succession of victories. As a result, the public, especially in Egypt, were surprised and annoyed at the conclusion of the armistice, when everyday the press (and the radio) was describing more and more glorious success. The Politicians were criticised for agreeing to the truce, and accordingly decided to terminate it, regardless of whether such a course would, or would not, lead to ultimate victory. (45)

43. Tom Little, op.cit., p. 103. See also Christina Phelps Harris, Nationalism and Revolution in Egypt (London, 1954), pp. 177-94.

44. Nasser's biographer, Robert St. John whose authenticity and accuracy of information has been confirmed by President Nasser himself and scores of other Egyptian officials, scholars and prominent journalists, tells us that Nasser was exasperated that the people were being told lies about the state of war. He records how Nasser felt when he heard that King Faruk had ordered the construction of a new boulevard between Cairo and Helipolis down which the victory parade would pass on the day the Egyptian Army returned home. This was misleading the people. The soldiers were nowhere near victory. The Boss, pp. 70, 73-74.

Though the second round of the fighting had begun, it was no longer possible for the Government to persuade its people to have hope about its outcome and about its own competence to handle the problems of war and improve administration at home. Despite emergency regulation being in force, the opposition organized protest rallies, shouting slogans against the Government and against the West. During June and July a series of riots and attacks on foreigners and Jews occurred in Cairo and Alexandria. There was considerable loss of life and property. In one case on 20 June several Englishmen and Jews were killed when some houses were blown up. Among buildings and property destroyed by explosions were the premises of the two British and French newspapers on 12 November. The authorities had long known that the Moslem Brotherhood was playing a leading part in this, and on 20 November, when they discovered a large store of arms and explosives together with literature belonging to that body, they had in their hands ample evidence to prove its complicity. Matters were brought to a head by the death of the Police Commandant in serious riots in Cairo on 4 December, (46) and the Prime Minister, who now had proof of the Brotherhood's responsi-

46. Selim Zaki Pasha, Commandant of the Cairo City Police, was killed on 4 December 1948 when police were despatched to the King Fuad University to quell violent demonstrations by medical students, said to have been fomented by the Moslem Brotherhood. The students had been on strike for several days in protest against the refusal of the Governor-General of the Sudan to admit a party of Egyptian Lawyers into the Sudan, and following the expulsion of some of the students' leaders by the University authorities, professors' rooms had been wrecked, laboratories destroyed, and anti-Government demonstrations staged. The police called in to restore order, were met with grenades, one of which killed Zaki Pasha. Al-Ahram, 5 December 1948.
bility for the outrage, dissolved it by proclamation on 8 December and ordered the confiscation of all its property. He justified this in a statement declaring that it had been training youths for terrorist activities, extorting money by violence or threats, and inciting irresponsible elements of the population to create disturbances. Its definite avowed aim, as shown by the evidence in his hands, was the overthrow of the Government. (47)

Following his order of dissolution Nokrashi Pasha sealed its offices, arrested its prominent members and supporters and banned students' participation in political demonstrations. (48)

The Ikhwans already had an account to settle with the Prime Minister who publicly accused them of responsibility for his predecessor's murder and had been their 'staunchest enemy' since then. Now these repressive measures were, in their view, too much to go unanswered. Their answer came twenty days after the dissolution of their organization was announced. One of their student members, disguised as a police officer, shot and killed him as he was going up to his office in the Ministry of Interior. (49)

47. Annual Register 1948, p. 299. See also Vatikiotis, op. cit., p. 366; also Information Paper No. 19, op. cit., p. 117.
His successor, Ibrahim Abdul Hadi, also belonging to the Saadist Party, however, did not allow the extremists and other trouble-makers to influence or to determine Egypt's domestic and foreign policy issues. He had assumed the office of the Prime Minister at a very critical moment in his country's political history. On the Palestinian front, his armies had suffered serious losses and the conclusion of a cease-fire for an unspecified period was imminent; in the Sudan the demand for self-government and an end of the Condominium was becoming violent and widespread; on the issue of the Treaty revision, though he was firm on evacuation, but he also realized the difficulties in securing it immediately because of the new international power-alliance; the suggestions to raise Egypt's status in the Suez Canal managing board, were reasonably attractive, but they needed personal boldness and the King's support.

In all these matters, Premier Hadi took some of the most determined steps. He first paid attention to the question of law and order without which stability of administration was not guaranteed. Continuation of ban on extremist groups and extension of the Martial Law were approved by the Parliament on 3 May. (50) This enabled him to deal firmly with all persons and parties involved in subversive activities. The Brotherhood, for example, ostensibly founded in 1930 for the propagation of religious and

50. The Egyptian Parliament, in view of the public order and security conditions in the country, approved on 15 May 1949 the government's request for the extension of Martial Law for another year. Al-Ahram, 4 May 1949; The Egyptian Gazette, 4, 5 May 1949.
social ideals, had become an organization whose real aim was the seizure of political power by removing the unpopular King and the existing so-called western-oriented secular leadership. They desired to establish an orthodox order based on the teachings of Islam in their original sense. (51)

The Communists collaborated with them only to exploit the state of chaos and uneasiness to their advantage. Neither of the two extremist parties, however, suited the Egyptian temper and political climate. Their most immediate need was a stable and honest government, not the search for an ideological basis.

51. The real power of the Brotherhood ideology lay in its criticism of Egyptian society. Western influence was attacked. The corruption in Parliamentary life and the palace was ridiculed. The society called for a new sense of unity based on Islamic principles and designed to rid the country of Western rule and influence. There was considered social content in the programme of the Brotherhood, for they favoured cooperative organizations, the founding of local industries, the better division of wealth, and education for the mass of population.

Their programme, on the whole, was a mixture of reactionary and progressive elements. Their ultimate goal was the creation of an Islamic order dominated by the religious law, pure of its impure elements. Hasan al-Banna, the founder, regarded class antagonism as a sign of the breakdown of Islamic unity. He favoured the abolition of usury, nationalization of natural resources, expulsion of foreign capital, and promotion of harmonious labour-management relations within an Islamic framework. On other important issues of modernity, such as the status of women, the use of Arabic in schools in place of European languages, and the teaching of Western sciences, the Moslem Brotherhood tended to be more conservative than others.

Ibrahim Abdul Hadi's action against both the extreme leftists and the extreme rightists was the necessity of the time. He tightened the policy of suppression and swooped the Ikhwans and the Communists behind the bars. (52) There is, however, no conclusive evidence that his stringent and repressive policy included the murder of the Ikhwan's chief, Sheik Hasan al-Banna (53) on 13 February 1949. Nevertheless it appeared to be a state murder through the machination of the counter-terrorist movement organized by the Palace. (54)

52. Al-Ahram, 21 March 1949.
53. Hasan al-Banna, founder of the Moslem Brotherhood, was a devout Muslim who had been educated in Muslim schools and then at Dar-al-Ulum, the teachers' training school, for Arabic and Islamic subjects only. In a certain sense he was the spokesman of those like him who had little or no specialized Western training but who were eager to recapture their place of prestige in a changing Egyptian society. He disliked Western influence in Egypt. He was specially appalled at the degree of Westernization of Cairo and the decline of Islamic values among its educated citizens. Urban centres like Cairo and Alexandria, where Western influence was so strong, were always special objects of attack by the Moslem Brothers.

At Ismailia, where he worked as a teacher he felt the full force of Europe's position in Egypt. Being a Canal city, there was a large number of British soldiers and officers, their money and pleasure-seeking habits had largely spoiled the life of that city and which affected al-Bana's mind and thoughts.

54. Tom Little, op.cit., p. 178. See also St. John, op.cit., p. 89.

It is quite understandable that the King who was so anxious to get rid of his enemies, had patronized the activities of such an organization of professional bad characters.
Thus, by resorting to repressive methods, Hadi, though temporarily successful in restoring tranquility in the country, he could not completely suppress the opposition. They acquired new names and adopted new methods of opposing the Government. Financial difficulties, initially caused by the Palestine war expenditure and borrowing from abroad, led to deficit budgeting. His proposals for new taxes were opposed by the landed aristocracy (55) which dominated the two houses of the Parliament. Spiralling up of prices of essential commodities like wheat and paraffin added to the dissatisfaction of the people with the Government.

The King was also now becoming apprehensive of his Prime Minister's intention to look into the matters of the Palace and the people closely connected with the King. (56)

The Wafd, which had during this intervening period consolidated its strength, organization and contacts with the people, now felt particularly confident of its prospects of winning the polls. The ban on Brotherhood and the Communists further

55. Prior to the land reforms undertaken by the revolutionary government of Abdel Nasser (Egypt had not become a republic till then), there was a wealthy landowning class, privileged, under-taxed, dominating the two Houses of Parliament, was, with their professional and official associates and hangers-on, owned nearly all the wealth and exercised nearly all the influence and patronage in the country. There was a small class of industrialists and financiers, mostly of foreign extraction, wealthy but less influential politically and socially than the landowners. See, Marlowe, op.cit., p.354.

bettered her chances of success. Nahas Pasha, therefore, demanded that a new government should be formed to lead the country to solve its major national and international matters, a government that enjoyed people's support and commanded wider respect. (57)

In the army, a certain group of young officers, all between late twenties and early thirties, who called themselves Free Officers, also entertained serious doubts about the fair management of public affairs and particularly the conduct of war by the politicians, wished to a change in their country's political life and destiny. But they were working and aspiring to play a political role in the transformation of their country, secretly. The Prime Minister had some doubts about certain officers' underground activities but he could not extort any information even from a direct and personal interrogation of the key person of the Free Officers' Organization, Major Abdel Nasser. (58)


58. In May 1949, the Prime Minister sent for Major Nasser for questioning as he suspected some relationship between the Moslem Brotherhood and the clandestine movement in the army. Nasser's biographer, Robert St. John (p.91) describes the scene of interview as follows:

The Chief of Secret Police who sat beside the Prime Minister:

"We have information that you have formed a secret society".

Nasser shook his head: "We know that you are training your members for armed rebellion."

"How can possibly be true", Nasser asked. "I went to Palestine more than a year ago. I have been back for only a few weeks."

(contd. on next page)
After this historic interview, the Free Officers became more cautious and more secretive, but they continued their campaign against corruption and highhandedness in the administration of civil and military affairs by publishing and circulating pamphlets secretly. (59)

Ruling with a firm hand nonetheless enabled Prime Minister Hadi to restore the authority of the Government. Suppression of the Brotherhood and the Young Egypt Society considerably ended disorders in the country for a good many months "a fact which justified the view that they were behind most of the troubles in the post-war period." (58) (contd. from back page)

"Do you know Mahmoud Labbib?"

Nasser hesitated. Labbib was an officer of the Brotherhood who had charge of initiating Free Officers desiring to take the Brotherhood vows.

"Yes".

"How do you know him?"

"We worked together organizing the Arabs of Palestine".

"Who introduced you to him?"

Nasser hesitated again. It was Sadar or Raouf. But rather than mention the names of any Free Officers, he said, "Captain Anwar el Seyani".

"His address?"

"You will have to ask Allah. He died during the war."

The Prime Minister lost his temper while Gamal remained calmly smiling. "You are making a fun of me. I could hand you over to the Police. Do you understand what I mean by Police?"

"Yes, I know, I know very well."

But the Prime Minister had no proof whatever.


He had undertaken no social reforms, but he had restored conditions in which the introduction of social reforms became possible. His methods had not been in accordance with the recognized methods of democracy, but he made the practice of democracy possible for his successors. (60)

EGYPT’S ENHANCED POSITION IN THE SUEZ CANAL BOARD

In the calm won by repression, and before his exit from the turbulent scene of national politics, Ibrahim Abdul Hadi Pasha had successfully concluded in March an agreement with the Suez Canal Company making Egypt a "privileged partner". The new agreement which brought some benefits to Egypt in fact represented a compromise between the provisions of Egyptian law regarding the Egyptian share in the management of the Company and its distributed profits and the views of the Board. Following were its main provisions:

1. The Egyptian Government will receive 7 per cent of the annual gross profits of the Company, with a guaranteed minimum of £E 350,000 annually.

2. Egypt is granted 5 additional seats on the Board of Directors bringing her total to seven. (Total members being 32).

3. Foreign employees will be replaced by Egyptians according to the proportion prescribed by the Egyptian Law.

4. Foreign pilots will be gradually replaced by Egyptian nationals who have graduated from the Egyptian Naval School.

5. The Company will appoint 50 Egyptian experts and civil servants; will establish a proportion of 4 Egyptians to 1 foreigner on its technical staff and of 9 Egyptians to 1 foreigner as regards its administrative personnel; and engage 20 more Egyptian pilots. There will be no dismissal or hinderance to promotion of present personnel.

6. All vessels displacing under 300 tonnes will be exempted from Canal dues (benefiting essential local Egyptian traffic in small vessels).

7. Large-scale construction schemes will be undertaken by the Company, £E 4,500,000 being earmarked for this purpose. A 6-mile Canal will be constructed parallel to the main canal, a workers' centre will be built.

8. A municipality will be established at Ismailia by the Egyptian Government, will take over the Abbasiya Canal, supplying drinkable water to the town.

9. The Company will waive repayment of a loan of £E 100,000 granted to the Port Said Municipality for city development. (61)

The terms of the agreement were not only of considerable immediate advantage to Egypt, but that also greatly helped President Gamal Abdul Nasser in making his bold and epochmaking decision to completely take over the Canal in July 1956. If the number of Egyptian technicians, pilots and administrative personnel had not been what it was provided under the 7 March 1949 Agreement, Nasser in all probability, would not have thought of taking such a challenging step and risk his own political career and the continuance of the revolutionary regime. In the intervening period of nearly seven years the Egyptians had become quite sufficient to handle the canal affairs satisfactorily.

The British Government accepted Egypt's enhanced position in the Suez Canal Company mainly for two reasons. Firstly, because "the terms of the agreement in no way prejudiced the interests of His Majesty's Government either as the largest share-

61. The Agreement with the Suez Canal Company was ratified by King Faruk of Egypt on 19 August 1949 following its passage by the Egyptian Parliament. See The Egyptian Gazette, 20 August 1949.
holder in the Company or as the largest user of the Canal."

(62) Secondly, the British Government hoped that by encouraging the Egyptians in their aspirations would help create a better, somewhat more congenial atmosphere for negotiations on more significant and urgent issue of Egypt's participation in a Western sponsored defence alliance to replace the existing Treaty. Earlier, the Cairo correspondent of The Times had reported that Egypt was in a mood to respond to Britain's gestures of goodwill and amity towards her. In his 25th January despatch he said:

The Egyptians desire for settlement of Anglo-Egyptian differences is now growingly apparent. The Palestine futility is restoring the innate sanity of the Egyptian people where Britain is concerned. ... The extremists have been listened to in the past, and Egypt has paid heavily in men and money. A revulsion is starting, and the wind is setting fair for settlement. The remaining obstacles are what they have long been. ... 

Egypt's willingness to improve her relations with Britain was further reciprocated by the UK Government by signing with her a financial agreement on 31 March. It provided for an immediate release of £12 million from Egypt's pre-July 1947 sterling balances and for further releases, up to £18 million, as might be necessary to maintain the total of Egypt's balances on No. 1 account at £45 million. Britain was also to provide Egypt with £5 million in dollars, and it was agreed that the level of UK exports to Egypt might be £47 million in value or even higher.

After almost two weeks Egypt signed another agreement with Great Britain of which certain provisions were of great political significance in later developments of relations between the two countries. On 17 April the Governments of Egypt and the United Kingdom agreed upon Egypt's participation in the construction of a dam and hydro-electric Power station at Oswan Falls in Uganda, the outflow of the river Nile from Lake Victoria as part of a twenty-five schemes for the regulation of the White Nile. The project in which Egypt's initial contribution—an investment indeed, was to be £E 4½ million, was of great importance for the future development and prosperity of Egypt, the Sudan and Uganda as a whole. (63)

The British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin felt happy to inform the House of Commons that the Sudan would be a partner in the implementation of the project. Speaking on this aspect of the agreement, Bevin said:

I am happy to inform that the Egyptian Government have announced that they would welcome the participation of the Sudan in these projects for the control of the Hill which are now under consideration. The participation of the Sudan in these projects will be the subject of technical discussions between Egypt and the Sudan, the results of which will be embodied in agreements to be concluded in connection with these projects. (64)

Members of HM Government and the Opposition welcomed the statement as it suggested implied recognition of the Sudan's own identity. (65)

63. Al-Ahram, 11, 12 February 1949, also 20 April 1949.
65. Ibid.
It was in this atmosphere of accommodation and better understanding, exhibited by Ibrahim Hadi's Government that Britain's Chief of Imperial General Staff, Field Marshal Sir William Slim, and Sir William Strang, Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, separately visited Cairo to explore the chances of bringing Egypt into the network of military arrangements ostensibly for the containment of Communist advances into the Orient. (66) They, however, found despite Egypt's present Government's friendly gestures, it was not advisable to deal with an unpopular government with little chances of success in the forthcoming general elections in January 1950.

As a result of his too rigid legalistic mannerism, his strict rather harsh administrative methods, his forcible suppression of opposition, his policies of reforms and additional taxation and his determination to cleanse the Palace of corruption and the moral corruptors, made him the most unwanted man in every quarter of Egyptian society. His was not obviously the government which could speak for the country as a whole in any negotiations with Great Britain. Nevertheless, both Egypt and Great Britain were anxious to find a satisfactory formula for their continuing relations. Only a government in Egypt which could speak for all the major parties could probably enter confidently into long-term treaty commitments. (67) But such a

66. The Egyptian Gazette, 19 March 1949.
67. Cmd. 8419, p. 3. See Appendix No.
Government had not existed since King Faruk summarily ousted the Wafdist - almost certainly the strongest political group in the country in October 1944.¹ (68)

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