CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION:

AN OVERVIEW OF INDO-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS

This chapter briefly highlights the history of Indo-Egyptian relations till 1964. Both are ancient civilizations which have enriched humankind culture with their invaluable contributions to the sciences and the arts, as well as to philosophical thought from the third millennium BC.

India’s recorded interaction with Egypt started since the third millennium before Jesus Christ. The two countries enjoyed a close trade relations. Around 1500 BC, the famous Egyptian Queen Hatshepsut sent a naval expedition of five ships with mariners, rowers and steersmen to Punt. These ancient sailors brought back to Egypt from the land of Punt all goodly fragrant woods, heaps of myrrh, resin, ebony, pure ivory, green gold of Emu and cinnamon wood. The mariners also brought fragrant plants for the temple of the Queen. Some historians suggest that the Queen also sent a mission to India seeking to establish commercial and diplomatic ties. This initiative led to the direct sea contact several centuries before Christ, as it also demonstrated the ability of Egyptian sailors to navigate the Red Sea and Arabian Sea.

The ancient period even saw deep social and cultural interaction between the two nations. As pointed by AK Pasha,

Many Bengali words belong to the old Egyptian language or have come through Egyptian sources. There are apparently many old Egyptian words still used in colloquial Bengali ... Many of Bengal Gods, villages and towns are bearing Egyptian names or have been derived from that great language. Many of the Bengali family titles are of Egyptian origin and many caste names have been formed according

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to their original home towns in Egypt or from Egyptian caste system. About 200 words used by Bengalis look and sound absolutely Egyptian. All these similarities have led historians to conclude that there was a conquest of Bengal by the heretic kings of Egypt of the XVIII dynasty who were driven out of Egypt by the orthodox school of Amon worshippers sometime between 1358 and 1355 B.C.  

The ancient empires brought parts of India and Egypt together under the same rule which allowed more interaction between them. During the reign of the Persian king, Darius I (520-480 BC), a convoy of ships was commissioned first to explore the mouth of the Indus River and, thereafter, the possibilities in the Red Sea in Egypt. The same period witnessed the completion of a canal, started about a century earlier, with the aim of linking the north-western tip of that sea with the Nile.

The huge geographical distance separating India and Egypt appears not to have deterred the forging of relations between them. In the second century BC, an Indian sailor lay abandoned on the seashore of the Red Sea; was taken to the state authorities in Alexandria. In return of permission to go back safely to his native land, he volunteered to guide Egyptians to the direct sea route to India. Thus, a tremendous exchange of trade through sea started to cement the bonds between the two civilizations. From time immemorial Egyptian and Indian ports have fallen within the scope of the chief caravan routes leading to the important harbors of the Near and West Asia. Starting from the last decades of the sixth century BC, however, attempts of a more defined nature to link the coasts of the two countries were heard. Though, these efforts obviously fitted within a much broader policy of territorial expansion on the part of the Persian and the Macedonian monarchs, their significance should not be lost. For, they singled out the geographical and historical position of both Egypt and India as the two main, if not indeed indispensable ports on the trade routes linking the West with the Far East. However, the first definitive steps towards enhancing trade relations between Egypt and India were taken during the Hellenistic age. The kings of

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Egyptian-Indian Trade Routes in Hellenistic and Roman Times

Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt further cemented the ties between India and Egypt through geographical discoveries.³

It was in this period (300 BC) when emperor Ashok sent a Buddhist mission to Alexandria. Alexandria became the major economic and cultural centre of old world. It attracted huge number of scholars like Plato, Pythagoras and other Greek intellectuals. Several historians believe that Indian intellectuals or scholars influenced by Indian thought flourished in Alexandria. The Indian scholars were either Buddhist or Buddhist influenced and there appears to have been broad scholarly contacts between Greek, Egyptian and Indian philosophers.⁴

From the Egyptian port of Berenike on Red Sea, Egypt conducted trade with Africa, Arabia and India. The biggest ships sailed to and from India to satisfy the overwhelming demands for spices in the Mediterranean world. Alexandrian traders, who wanted to increase their shares in Indian trade, realised that they must by themselves have sail directly across the Indian Ocean to get access to the Indian markets to bring cargos of demand back to Egypt. Ptolemy VIII – an Egyptian Pharaoh and a great friend of Rome was the biggest patron for the Alexandrian traders to undertake this risky venture through the pirate-frequented Indian Ocean. Soon an important office of administration was created to facilitate this maritime trade with India. The office was named ‘Commander of the Red and Indian Seas’, under Ptolemy XII, nicknamed Auletes (80 – 51 B.C.). This perhaps increased Egypt’s commercial interaction with India.⁵

Islamic Era

During medieval times, there were considerable diplomatic, commercial and cultural contacts which articulated itself in the concept, design, and iconography of several artifacts from both countries. Such mutual interchange extended to the design of

³ For more details on the multi-faceted rapport, which linked Egypt with India in ancient times, see Saryu Doshi and Mostafa El Abbadi, India and Egypt: Influences and Interactions, (New Delhi: 1993), p.53.
⁴ K.M.Panikkar, “India and Egypt”, In the Embassy of India, Al Hind wal Sharq Al Awsat [India and Middle East], (Cairo: n.d), p.19; Pasha, n.1, pp.274-5.
Egyptian mosque minarets which were inspired by Indian architecture as also to the presence of Egyptian pictorial plans in Indian miniature painting. An intellectual transmission of ideas and theories in the fields of astronomy and astrology inspired research and discovery.

The quest for knowledge was equally keen; each tradition-locked land was eager to take out the best other had to offer. The travel of Indian scientists to Egypt to settle and sometimes hold positions in the state and vice versa was a common practice. Much later, there was a separate wing called “al-Rewaq al-Hindi” for Indian students who studied in al-Azhar as it is shown in the Egyptian records of Ottoman era. An Indian merchant from Calicut (Kerala), called Khuja Anbr owned a commercial fleet in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean, which used to trade on a regular basis between the Egyptian and the Indian ports. The commercial houses of Calicut and other Indian trade centers used to have branches in Cairo and Alexandria.

Geniza documents of the Egyptian Jewish community show how Fustat during Fatimid era (909-1171) was the nerve-centre for a global trade network which linked the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean: the merchandise that flowed through its bazaars came from as far afield as East Africa, southern Europe, the western Sahara, India, China and Indonesia. Interestingly, one member of the Egyptian Jewish community was considered to have been one of the finest minds of the Middle Ages: the great doctor, scholar and philosopher Musa bin Maimun, known as Maimonides. Like so many others in his community, he too had close familial links with Indian trade.

Mohammad bin Tughluq Shah (who was known as the Sultan of India but also of Sind, Makran, Mogadishu and Sri Lanka) sent a ship to the Egyptian Mamluk Sultan Al

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6 For more details on the historical ties between Egypt and India, see Doshi and El Abbadi, n.3; and Ahmed, S. Maqbul, Indo—Arab Relations with the Arab World from Ancient up to Modern Times, (Bombay:1969); Giridhari Prasad Das, India-West Asia Trade in Ancient Times: 6th Century BC to 3rd Century AD (New Delhi: 2006).
7 Panikkar, n.4, p.21.
Naser ibn Qalaun full of precious presents and diamond but it could not reach Cairo as the King of Yemen looted it.9

**Indo-Egyptian Cooperation against European Colonialism**

These old-age flourishing commercial relations between Egypt and India came under attack from the new emerging European colonialism during the early years of 16th century. The rise of Portuguese power in the Indian Ocean was an extension of long and complicated conflicts between Muslims and Europeans. Arabs conquered Spain in 710 and established their state. On the East, the Islamic empire was extending North in Minor Asia and reaching the European borders of Byzantine Empire. Christians in Spain exploited the disintegration of Muslim State there by launching war against Muslims. On the Eastern front, Europe sent eight crusades to capture holy lands near Jerusalem as also Syria and Egypt between eleventh century and thirteenth century. They made initial success but the rulers of Egypt and Syria ended their presence completely in 1309. Saladin, a Kurd, put an end to crusaders. The Ottomans captured Constantinople on 29 May 1453 and added Bosnia to their territories in 1482. While the East of Europe became in defense, the western wing of Islamic world was also in defense against the armies of Queen Isabella I of Castile and King Ferdinand II of Aragon who ended the rule of Muslims at Spain in 1492. Portuguese wanted to reach India and ally with the Christian kingdom of Ethiopia to encircle Islamic world. In facing this danger, the Mamluks of Egypt had three allies: the city states of Italy such as Venice which benefited greatly from the Indian spice trade with Mamluks; Indian rulers who enjoyed peaceful and profitable commercial relations with Mamluks and wanted to guard their sovereignty; and to some degree Ottomans who were already engaged in wars with Europe.

It was in this context that Egyptians and Indians fought together against Portuguese invaders in Goa and Diu. Mahmud Begarsha, the ruler of Gujarat allied with the Sultan of Egypt Qanswah Al Ghouri to prevent Portuguese navy taking over the Indian seas. Egypt sent its first campaign under the leadership of Prince Hussein Al Kurdi in 1505. The naval campaign consisted of 13 ships. The number of soldiers is

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not known but most of them were Moroccan and the sons of Mamluks.10 The Egyptian fleet won a partial victory against Portuguese at Diu. The Egyptian fleet and Gujarati fleet under the leadership of Malik Ayaz sailed to Calicut to join Al Samri’s fleet in destroying the Portuguese presence at Malabar Coast. While they were on their way, they faced a Portuguese fleet under the command of Dom Lourenco, son of the Portuguese viceroy Francesco de Almeida, near Chaul port, South of Bombay.11 The combined Indo-Egyptian forces defeated this Portuguese squadron in 1508.12 This victory angered the Portuguese viceroy Francesco de Almeida who pursued an attack against the Indo-Egyptian fleet and concentrated their combat action against Egyptian ships because it was equipped with modern arms and neutralizing it will secure him a victory. Portuguese strategy proved to be a success and the combined Indo-Egyptian fleet was destroyed at Diu in 1509.13 Mamluks prepared a second fleet with the help of Ottomans and under the pressure of many Indian rulers who were insisting on the Sultan of Egypt to support their struggle against the Portuguese.14 The general command of the Egyptian fleet was given to Prince Hosain Al Kurdi. Sulyman Al Romi, known also as “Sulyman Al Rais” led extra fleet to support Al Kurdi.15 Later, Ottoman Egypt sent another campaign in 1538 under the leadership of Sulyman Pasha Al Khadem. However, the Indo-Egyptian alliance failed to stop the European invasion and the trade routes between the two countries started to suffer.16

The Colonial Era

The British East India Company gradually extended its dominance over India since the last powerful Indian ruler to resist the British was Tipu Sultan who was killed in 1799. India became a British colony by 1857. The British with the help of Indian soldiers occupied Egypt in 1882 to capture Suez Canal and to secure their way to India. Interestingly the common experience of British occupation created the first

10 Egyptians called the sons of Mamluks “Awlad Al Nas” that means literally “The Sons of people”. They are using the same term to refer to the high class.
12 Pasha, n.1, p.280.
13 Al Malki, n.11, pp.19-21.
14 Sultan Bayezid II (1481–1512) ordered the supply of all Egyptian needs of wood and weapons. He also sent Sulyman Al Romi along with 2000 Ottoman Sailors to help Egyptian fleet. ibid, pp.21-2.
15 ibid.
16 Panikkar, n.4, p.22-23.
bonds of friendship between India and Egypt in the modern era. Indian National Congress (INC), which led India’s national struggle for freedom, adopted resolutions opposing the dispatch of Indian troops to the Arab territories including Egypt.

During the period of the Egyptian and Indian national struggles for independence, there were numerous instances of fruitful contacts between the political leaders of the two countries. In 1927, Jawaharlal Nehru, who headed the Foreign Relations committee of INC, participated in the Conference of Oppressed Nationalities in Brussels which left a deep impression on him and brought him into personal contacts with the leaders of the freedom struggles in various countries including Egypt. In his report to the INC on the Conference, Nehru proposed that India establish direct contacts with the nationalist organizations in Asia. The Congress welcomed the proposal and decided to hold a session of a Pan-Asiatic Federation in India in 1930. It also invited the leaders of the Egyptian nationalist movement to participate at the INC annual conference. In response to this invitation, Mustafa Pasha Al Nahas sent a delegation to represent the Wafd party at the Tripura session of the INC in 1939. Mr. Mahmoud Basyouni led this delegation. Subhas Chandra Bose, President of INC, welcomed the Egyptian delegation and stated that “India is proud to welcome our Egyptian brothers whose presence symbolizes the solidarity between the two liberation movements in Egypt and India... We should do our best to fail the imperial plans”. In his speech to welcome the Egyptian delegation, Nehru referred to the unique relationship which link Egypt with India:

It has been a great privilege for us to welcome in India the distinguished members of the Wafd Party in Egypt, who have come here to represent their great national organisation as well as the Egyptian people. We welcomed them as our distinguished guests, but there was something more to our welcome, for they came to us as emblems of the spirit of nationalism and freedom from Egypt. We, in India, who have ourselves been imbued by this spirit and have built up a great organisation to embody that spirit and the struggle against a dominating imperialism for the freedom of our people, found ourselves completely in tune with alike sentiment in Egypt. Our peoples had much in common with close intercourse from the dawn of history, the exchange, even in remote ages past, of ideas and cultures and

merchandise, and then, in the modern period of history, a common struggle for freedom against a common imperialism.  

Prominent leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru and others maintained a line of personal communication with the leaders of the Egyptian nationalist movement like Saad Zaghlul Pasha and Nahas Pasha. Gandhi considered Saad Zaghlul father of Egyptians. In the 30's and 40's of the 20th century, when Egypt passed through great upheavals and the Egyptian nationalist movement was faced with a corrupt monarchy on the one hand and a decadent and self-seeking political leadership on the other, leaders of the INC never failed to adopt a sympathetic attitude to Egypt’s urge to free itself from colonial domination and exploitation of all kinds by their supporters in Egypt. Both countries were bound by their common urge to free themselves from British tutelage, as exemplified by the visit of Wafdist delegation to Mahatma Gandhi aboard the ship S.S. Rajputana on his way to London through Suez Canal for the Second Round Table Conference in 1931. The Indian leader also received telegrams welcoming him to Egypt from Wafd Party leader Mustafa El-Nahhas and Safiyya Zaghlul, wife of the late Egyptian nationalist leader Saad Zaghlul Pasha. The gifts the Egyptian reception committee presented to the Indian leader were like on a state visit. In his message to the Egyptian people, Mahatma Gandhi addressed them through *al-Ahram* newspaper:

> You, like us, are an ancient people. I pray that you do not blindly imitate everything Western. If I have properly understood what has happened to your country you must persist in your endeavours to realise true freedom. And, if I may hazard a modest opinion, it is that Egypt will attain its liberty very quickly if India obtains its true freedom within the next 12 months. I firmly believe that if India gains its freedom through sincere perseverance and without violence this will have a great effect on the world and certainly for all the nations of the East.

In December 1931, Gandhi on his way back to India from London via Port Said was prevented by the British authorities to visit Cairo as it would have empowered

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20 Sawet Al Sharq, noA, 1 August 1949.

21 Bhargava, n.17, pp.4-6.

22 *AlAhram Weekly*, 19 - 25 December 2002
Egyptian national struggle against them. Gandhi expressed his admiration for Saad Pasha in a meeting with an Egyptian official at London when he told him "I followed up the life of this respected personality since 1919 till today. I consider him [Saad Pasha] a model and teacher for me. I would like to repeat once again that Saad Zaghlul is not yours only but ours all". On the eve of World War II, Mustafa Pasha Al Nahas, the leader of the Egyptian Wafd party, invited Nehru to attend a meeting with the party leadership in Alexandria where the latter discussed with Egyptian leaders the situation of their common struggle for freedom. Also an additional issue that brought the Egyptian people and Indians together was their common affinity towards the issue of Khilafat.

**Cooperation between Women Movements**

Another example of friendship between India and Egypt was the cooperation between feminist movements in both countries. In 1930, Hoda Sharawi, the president of Egyptian Women Union (EWU), sent Seza Nabrawi on behalf of EWU to welcome Mahatma Gandhi when he was passing by Port Said on his way back to India after attending the round table conference at London. In his message to Egyptian women, Gandhi expressed his hope that "the Egyptian sisters will play the same part that their Indian sisters are playing in the liberation movement of their respective lands".

In 1935, women leaders met at the International Women Conference held at Istanbul and discussed their common struggle for freedom and the role of women in achieving this goal. The Indian delegation comprised of Hamdana Sultan Kamaluddin and Sharifa Hamid Ali. The Egyptian delegation was headed by Hoda Sharawi among

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23 ibid.
25 Khan, n.18, p.86.
26 Hoda Sharawi was born on 23 June 1879. She is the daughter of Mohammed Sultan Pasha, who was the chairperson of the first Egyptian parliament. On 16 March 1919, Hoda started her political activities when she led a demonstration of 300 women that demanded British to release Saad Pasha Zahgoul and his colleagues. She established the Egyptian Women Union in 1923 and the Arab Women Union in 1944. Among causes that she defended were gender equality, the right of women in high education and labour. She also helped in establishing the first Egyptian national bank called "the Bank of Mesr". "Hoda Sahrawi fee Sotor" [Hoda Sharawi in lines], http://www.hodasharawi.com/hoda.htm. Accessed on 5 October 2008.
27 Sawet Al Sharq, Special issue no.5, February 1953.
others. Sharifa Hamid Ali later visited Egypt in 1937. In 1939, the Indian delegation supported the position of the Egyptian delegation during the 13th Women Conference for Peace and Freedom that was held at Copenhagen on 12 July 1939.

The intention of EWU in organizing a conference for Arab women in December 1944 was highly appreciated by Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya who telegrammed Hoda Sharawi expressing her support for the idea. She wrote,

I was very happy to know about the conference that the women of Arabism are thinking to hold it. I would like to send my special greetings and the greetings of Indian women to the representatives of Arab countries who are going to participate at this conference. Many developments happened since our pleasant meeting at Copenhagen. For long time, we felt that the Eastern women need to tie up together, especially that this need was not urgent as it is today because vital national and international issues are in debate. I wish that you will mention during your debate the struggle of India and its contribution for the sake of East as a whole.

On the invitation of their Indian counterpart, EWU delegated Hawaa Idris and Karima Al Said to participate at the first Afro-Asian conference that was held in 1947 at New Delhi. In 1948, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya visited Egypt. On 31 December 1952, EWU organized a reception to honor the sister of India’s first Prime Minister Vijaya

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28 ibid.
29 ibid.
30 Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya was born in 1903 in a wealthy Saraswat family of South Karnataka. She had her education at a Catholic Convent and St. Mary’s College, Mangalore, and later at Bedford College and London School of Economics. She was a front rank leader in women’s movement in India. She has played great role in the growth of All India women’s conference. She was a member of the All India Congress Committee, and of the working committee, organising secretary, president and vice-president. All India Women’s conference, President, Indian cooperative union; and chairman, All India Handicrafts Board, chairman, All India Design Centre and vice-president, World Crafts Council. Amongst the galaxy of Indian women who participated in the long-drawn political struggle against colonial rule, the contribution by Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya is indeed unique in the annals of Indian history. She was a Gandhian, a reformer, an orator and an author who always cherished for upliftment of the socio-economic standard of women.

For more details see S.R. Bakshi, Kamala Devi Chattopadhyaya: Role for Women’s Welfare, (Faridabad: 2000).
31 Sawet Al Sharq, Special issue no.5, February 1953.
Laxmi Pandit at Cairo. During her visit, she met Mahmoud Fawzi, the Foreign Minister of Egypt and visited Cairo University where she was welcomed by the Vice-Chancellor. She also met journalists at their Syndicate and urged Egyptians and the people of North Africa to continue their struggle. Laxami became a regular visitor to Egypt.

Transition and Independence

Egypt became a popular destination to be visited by Indian leaders before and after its independence. Among the earliest Indian leaders who visited Egypt was Dwarkanath Tagore in 1845. His grandson Gurdev Rabindranath Tagore, the Nobel Laureate, also passed often through Egypt and King Fuad presented him with a set of valuable Arabic manuscripts for the Islamic Department of the Visva-Bharati. In March 1947, Nawab Muhammed Khan Bahadur, the Prince of Palanpur (Bombay) visited Egypt. He was received by King Farouq at the Airport of Rod Al Faraj, Cairo. Muhammed Farooqi, INC Secretary for West Asia and Palestine Committee visited Egypt in December 1947 to acquaint himself with the situation in West Asia. On October 1948, the Nawab of Bhopal visited Egypt at the invitation of the General Secretary of the Arab League. He was welcomed by King Farooq, Ahmed Helmi

32 Vijaya Laxmi Pandit is the sister of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. She took part in the freedom movement. She was elected to Uttar Pradesh Assembly in 1936 and in 1946. She was the first woman in India to hold a ministerial position. She was jailed thrice for taking part in the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1932 and 1942. After Independence, she sustained her efforts to provide her services to India. She was the first woman to become president of the United Nations General Assembly. Raj Kumar, 'Women and India's Independence Movement', New Delhi, n.d. http://www.aicc.org.in/women_and_india%E2%80%99s_independence_movement.php. Accessed on 5 October 2008.
33 Sawet Al Sharq, no.4, January 1953.
34 ibid.
37 Al Ahram, 16 April 1947.
38 Al Ahram, 28 December 1947.
39 Hamidullah Khan (9 September 1894-4 February 1960) was the last ruling Nawab of Bhopal, prior to its merger with the state of Madhya Pradesh in 1956. He ruled from 1926 when his mother, Begum Kaikhusrau Jahan Begum, abdicated in his favor, until his death in 1960. A delegate to the Round Table Conference in London, he served as Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes from 1931-1932 and from 1944-1947, when India became independent. At his death, he left no sons and so was succeeded by his second daughter, Sajida Sultan, Begum of Bhopal. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamidullah_Khan. Accessed on 1 October 2008.
Pasha, Gamal Al Heusaini, and Haj Amin Al Husaini, the Mufti of Palestine. His visit was highly publicized and appreciated by Egypt. The Nawab was impressed by the warm welcome given to him by the Egyptian King, Government and people. Egypt also participated at two Asian conferences that were held at Delhi in 1947 and 1949 to address Asian problems and the Indonesian question respectively. Egyptian journalists covered the conferences and were impressed with the efficiency of the Indian Information Ministry and the absence of communal discrimination in the administration.

A Revolution Inside and Outside

After 1952, it became a common practice that Indian officials who were flying via Cairo in both direction, would spend some time interacting with their Egyptian counterparts. One example of this practice was the meeting between General Naguib and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the VP of India, in October 1952. Radhakrishnan was in his way to Paris to attend the UNESCO conference. His stay in Cairo continued for four days where he met the new leadership, the Sheikh of Al Azhar as also the Pope of Alexandria. He also visited some scientific institutes and expressed his hope that close cooperation between India and Egypt will take place not only on diplomatic and economic spheres but also on the cultural sphere. He justified India’s interest in Egypt and West Asia as an outcome of the intensive Indo-Arab –Asian cooperation in world affairs and U.N. Another example was Nehru himself when he stopped at Cairo for three days on his way back from London during June 1953. He spent three days having talks with President Naguib and other leaders of the new regime. Nehru stopped again at Cairo on 29 January 1955 on his way to attend the Commonwealth conference at London. He was received by the governor of Cairo, Indian ambassador and the deputy of

40 Al Ahram, 27, 28, 31 October, 1948.
42 Sawet Al Hind, 15 September, 15 October 1952.
43 Sawet Al Hind, 15 October 1952, Sawet Al Sharq, no.1, October 1952.
44 Sawet Al Hind, 26 January 1954
Sudan. He had a meeting with Nasser. In the five-month period that followed this meeting, Nehru and Nasser visited one another eight times. Moreover, “Whenever Nehru was flying to Europe or America he always stopped in Cairo and even when he had no time to come into the city he would hold his plane for several hours at the airport while Nasser drove out to talk with him”

Indian Community in Egypt

Interaction between India and Egypt was not limited only to official visits but a large Indian community resided in Egypt. Indian forces under the British saw action in Egypt during the Second World War. On 15 March 1947, India’s Defense Minister declared that his government will withdraw its forces from Egypt as soon as possible. During the early years of India’s independence, the Indian trade community in Egypt was strong and organized under the leadership of Sayyid Hussein who was called by Egyptians as “Al Sharif Al Hindi.” He used to meet the members of Egyptian government including the Prime Minister. By 1952, Indian community in Egypt established its association. Mr. Riazzuddin Faruqi as general secretary of the Indian Association was in close touch with Nehru.

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45 Quoted in Bahgat Korany, Social Change, Charisma and International Behavior: Towards Theory of Foreign Policy-Making in the Third World (Geneva: 1976), pp.320-1; Sawet Al Hind, 29 January 1955. Other Indian officials and public figures stopped at Cairo like Krishna Menon, Dr.Zakir Hosain, Asaf Ali Fyze, Dr. Homi J Bhabha, Indira Ghandi, D.Deshmukh, Prakash Narain as well as many journalists and Members of Parliament. In 1955, the delegation of 13 Indian journalists visited Egypt where they spent ten days. They visited Suez zone, the governorate of Al Tahrir and other new projects. They had a meeting with President Nasser. D.F. Tomas, one of the Indian journalists, noticed that both Egypt and India face similar problems. T.D.Deshmukh, The Health Minister of Indian government visited Egypt in his way back from the conference of the World Bank. He had a meeting with the members of the National Production Council and delivers a lecture among his members. Mrs.Deshmuk, the president of All India Society for Social Work, visited the Egyptian Society of Health Care and had discussions with its members. Prakash Narain, the leader of Indian Communist Party visited Egypt in December 1960. President Nasser received him at the presidential office. For details on these visits See Sawet Al Hind, 10 April 1954, 15 July 1955, 22 May 1955, 22 May 1955, 1 August 1955, 7 November 1954; Sawet Al Sharq, no.88, January 1960; Al Ahram, 2 January 1955.

46 Al Ahram, 16 March 1947.
47 It means the Indian Sharif. Al Sharif or El Sayed is a birth-given title to distinguish the decedents of the Prophet of Islam from other Muslims.
48 Al Ahram, 4 October 1948.
49 Sawet Al Hind, 15 June 1952; See the correspondence of Faruqi in F.N.7 (35)-AWT-I/49, The National Archive of India, Janpath, New Delhi. Indian community in Egypt celebrated the birthday of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru by organizing a party at the headquarters of National School for Girls. Khaled, Abdel Hakim and Abdel Hamid, the sons of President Nasser, attended the function. See Sawet Al Sharq, no.86, November 1959.
Moreover, Indian traders were an important link with Egyptians as far as developments in India are concerned, especially when information was scarce. There is a case when an Indian trader, who requested *Al Ahram* to keep his name anonymous, gave an interesting account of the situation in India. He said the communal riots in India were temporary and natural phenomena on the eve of partition as many Hindus immigrated to India and many Muslims immigrated to Pakistan. He pointed out that India was eager to strengthen its relations with Islamic world through selecting Indian Muslims as ambassadors to represent it in the Muslim countries. He argued that the merger of Hyderabad was justified taking into consideration its geographical location in the heart of India as also the fact that the state consisted of 87% Hindus. He also blamed the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir for the Kashmir crisis.  

**Egypt and Indian Diplomacy**

Egypt and India established their diplomatic relations on August 1947. Ismail Kamel Bey became the first Egyptian ambassador to India. He told *Al Ahram* that he expected India’s support in his efforts to strengthen friendly relations besides highlighting the ancient relations. India’s ambassadors to Egypt also expressed the same desire of having strong relations with Egypt.

The first two Indian ambassadors were successful in laying strong foundations for Indo-Egyptian friendship. An evidence for this success was the decision of the Egyptian Government to conduct a military funeral for the Indian ambassador Sayed

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50 ‘What about India’, *Al Ahram*, 7 October 1948. This was confirmed by India’s decision to send three Muslim ambassadors to Egypt. They are Dr. Sayed Hosain, Asaf Ali Fyzee and Ali Yavar Jung.

51 Ismail Kamel concluded that it will be in the welfare of the two peoples that their leaderships should cooperate together for public interest that will serve both India and Egypt. *Al Ahram*, 11 October 1948.

52 For example, R.N. Kumar, India’s ambassador to UAR told Egyptian journalists at Cairo that, “We [Indians] have a strong desire to strengthen the ties of friendship with Arab people because our problems and interests are the same ones if we look to it from the point view of history or international peace. My priority will be to do my best in order to develop friendship and cooperation between our countries” Sawet Al Sharg, no.69, June 1958.
Hussein who passed away in Egypt. It also decided to name the street that leads to the tomb of ambassador Sayed Hosain upon his name in recognition of his contribution to Indo-Egyptian relations. Fyzee became the next Indian ambassador till September 1951.

The July 23, 1952 Egyptian Revolution was a landmark in the history of the region; with far reaching implications which affected the very basis of the West Asian politics. It reshaped the Egyptian society by introducing agrarian reforms and industrialization. It asserted the political independence of Egypt by adopting the non-aligned policy. It encouraged other Arab countries to adopt the same policy and called them for unity in facing external threats. Soon, the revolutionary Egypt became a model to be followed by many Arab and Afro-Asian countries.

KM Panikkar became India’s third ambassador to Egypt. Being great intellectual, he was close to Nehru. The new leadership after the revolution was basically secular and anti-colonial. This new milieu cemented Indo-Egyptian ties and also helped India pursue its interests in the Arab world. Panikkar brilliantly succeeded in establishing a network of friends inside the new leadership that made it easy for him to bring the two leaderships much closer. Panikkar considered Egypt as the heart of the Arab world.

53 The success of Dr. Sayed Heussein was reflected also on his celebration of the first anniversary of India’s independence in Egypt. The celebration was attended by Ahmed Kashba Pasha, Egypt’s Foreign Minister, Badawi Khalifa Pasha, Alexandria’s Governor, General Hamdi Al Daib Pasha, the commander of North military zone and other Egyptian dignitaries. Al Ahram, 16 August 1948.

54 Sawet Al Hind, 15 June 1949. Interestingly, Nehru took keen interest in bringing back the personal belongings of Dr. Sayed Hosain and delivers it to his inheritors: Khurshed Begum, Syed’s sister who stayed at Calcutta, and Begum Ikramulla, Syed’s niece and the wife of Mr. Ikramulla, Foreign Secretary, Government of Pakistan. See Letter No. F.444/50 from the embassy of India, Washington D.C. to Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Delhi, 28 June 1950, File No. 7(29)-AWT-I/49, National Archive of India, Janpath, Delhi. Moreover, Nehru ordered the construction of the tomb of Syed Hosain in Cairo on the same model of Taj Mahal. See Most Immediate Letter from MEA to Mr. Kirpal, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Education, New Delhi, 7 November 1950, File No. 7(35)-AWT-I/49, National Archive of India, Janpath, Delhi.

55 Asaf Ali Fyzee (1899-1981). A Gujarati Isma’ili Shi’a, Fyzee was educated at Cambridge and was an internationally known expert on Islamic law. Al Ahram, 1 September 1949; Sawet Al Hind, 15 September 1949, 1 August 1949, 15 September 1952


57 Panikkar enjoyed close friendship with President Naguib. He was aware from the beginning of the importance of Egypt for India’s interests in West Asia. While submitting his credentials to the Egyptian King on 16 November 1952, he expressed his confidence that he will receive the support of Egyptian government in his efforts to strengthen friendly relations between Indians and Arab world. He added that there is no doubt that this support will have a great value because Egypt is “the heart of Arab world”. Sawet Al Hind, 1 October 1952; Sawet Al Sharg, December 1952; Sawet Al Sharg, no.70, July 1958.
Nawab Ali Yavar Jung became on 18 March 1954 the fourth Indian ambassador to Egypt. Ratan Nehru Kumar became India’s next ambassador to Egypt since June 1958, which in February 1958 had become the United Arab Republic with the merger of Syria. As mentioned earlier Egypt appointed Ismail Kamel Bey as the first Egyptian ambassador to India. He was highly respected by Nehru and enjoyed his personal friendship. Kamel was a leader of the Nationalist Party and worked hard to strengthen Egypt’s relations with India. He also was an admirer of Nehru. In July 1952, he declared in Cairo that “Nehru is the King of Asia. His policy reflects the spirit of Asia and gave it a respected position in international forum.” Mustafa Kamel became Egypt’s second ambassador on 22 October 1955. He served in India during the Suez Crisis and succeeded to great extent in mobilizing India’s support in favor of Egypt. He enjoyed the friendship of Nehru and many Indian diplomats (More in Chapter IV).

The Indian Impact on Egyptian Politics

Egyptians were not only happy at India becoming independent but soon the new revolutionary regime saw India as a model to be emulated. The fact that India was an important country in world politics and moving confidently on its economic development was an inspiring model. This will explain why many Egyptians spoke so much on the similarity between the Egyptian case and the Indian case. This became evident in the several visits of Nasser and his personal assessment of the major developmental projects along with Nehru. Other members of the Free Officers group visited India. Soon, Egypt started its own economic planning followed the Indian

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58 While Jung was submitting his credentials to President Nasser, both of them expressed their desire to push the cordial Indo-Egyptian relations ahead. Sawet Al Hind, 10 April 1954; Sawet Al Sharq, no.70, July 1958.
59 Sawet Al Hind, 1 August 1952.
60 On 4 September 1955, Gamal Salem, the Deputy Prime Minister of Egypt and one of “the Free Officers” visited India where he spent two weeks in visiting different Indian major projects like Konar Dam, Kasturba Gandhi Hospital and Chittaranjan Locomotive Works. Such visits of top Egyptian officials convinced Egyptian leadership to adopt the Indian example of development. See Sawet Al Hind, 22 September 1955.
model of development, especially in the field of agrarian reforms, industrial developments.\textsuperscript{61}

Indian leaders committed themselves at an early stage of their independence to the ideal and practice of following a non-aligned foreign policy in the post second world war period, especially in the wake of the cold war. Egyptian freedom movement was also against any Egyptian involvement in the Second World War and later opposed all British and Western defence projects in the West Asian region. Egypt refused to participate in the Western defence system proposed in 1951. In 1953, it refused the attempts of Turkey and Pakistan to convince it to join a military alliance. Moreover, Egypt opposed their cooperation along with Iraq in forming Middle East Defence Organization (MEDO), better known as the Baghdad pact, in 1954. While Iraq and Pakistan were inching militarily closer to each other and the Western powers, Egypt and India were inching closer together in philosophy and diplomacy, heading towards non-alignment and positive neutralism. Indian non-aligned policy made considerable impact on Egypt and the many meetings between Nehru and Nasser convinced the latter that positive neutralism is the best option to be followed in foreign policy.\textsuperscript{62}

Nasser expressed his concern on the Indian experiment when he told an Indian journalist on 21 March 1955 that “In Egypt, we are observing the progress of India in all aspects including economic, social and industrial arenas. We study the policies of India to copy it. The cooperation between our countries will help Egypt achieving its goals as soon as possible”.\textsuperscript{63}


\textsuperscript{63} Sawet Al Hind, 22 March 1955. In his message to the Indian workers, Nasser asserted the similarities between the situation in Egypt and India and the need for cooperation between the two countries. According to Nasser, “Egypt considers India her biggest friend. There are huge similarities between situation in Egypt and that of India. Egypt bears perfumed memories of Mahatma Gandhi because he was a real spiritual leader whose deeds were for the well-being of the whole humanity... Mr. Nehru is one of the loved personalities in Egypt and all East. Our aim of cooperation with India and other friendly countries is to take humanity to the extent of good that we wish for it.”\textsuperscript{63} George Voucher argued that the meetings between Nasser and Nehru influenced the policies of Nasser by convincing him to adopt the policies of neutrality and non-alignment, industrialization, and the role of state in handling the national economy in similar way for what India did.\textsuperscript{63} See Maslahat Al Ista’lamat, \textit{Tasrahath Al Ra’ais Gamal Abdel Nasser} [The Statements of President Gamal Abdel Nasser], (Cairo: n.d), pp.103-4; Voucher, n.61, p.135.
Nehru described, in his letter to the Chief Ministers on 23 February 1955, the interest of the Egyptian leadership in the Indian model of development:

On my return from England, I spent two days in Cairo and had long talks with Prime Minister Nasser and other ministers of the Egyptian Government. These talks disclosed a similarity of outlook in many matters. That similarity was no doubt partly the result of the Egyptian reaction to the Turco-Iraq Pact. But it was something more than that. Egypt's leaders had undoubtedly matured since I saw them last, 19 months earlier. Colonel Gamal Nasser, the Prime Minister, creates an impression of integrity and sincerity, as well as of greater maturity. He and his colleagues talked to me much more about planning and economic matters than of politics. That itself shows a certain growth in their thinking as well as greater stability in the country. They were much attracted to our planning in India and the progress we had made, and wanted me to tell them all about it. It is likely that the Deputy Prime Minister of Egypt will visit India soon to study our planning and governmental structure. He was also interested to find out something about our party structure.

Palestine: No from both for Partition

Since the inception of Palestine issue, top INC leaders like Nehru, Ghandi, Azad and Indian masses supported the Palestinian cause. Nehru articulated his stand; "Palestine is an Arab country, Arab interests must prevail there." He expressed his deep disappointment over British attempts to crush the Palestinians and was also critical of the role of Zionism at the UN, and he "spoke with anger and contempt of the way in which the Palestine vote had been lined up. The Zionists had tried to bribe India with

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the promise of millions and at the same time his [Nehru’s] sister Vijayalaxami Pandit] had received daily warnings that her life was in danger unless she voted right”.

India and Egypt along with other friendly countries voted against the UN General Assembly partition resolution 181 on the issue of partition of Palestine in November 1947. India’s position on Palestine was extremely popular in Egypt and wider Arab/Islamic world. The Palestine issue forged strong bond between India and Egypt.

Growing Friendship between Nehru and Nasser

Jawaharlal Nehru and Gamal Abdel Nasser became close friends, sharing a common outlook and a burning passion for freedom and progress and also opposition to oppression and colonial exploitation. Nasser was familiar with Nehru’s ideas during his study and service in the military, along with the heroic struggle of the Indian people against the British under the leadership of Nehru and Gandhi.

Nehru met Nasser (Black Wolf) at Cairo for the first time in June 1953. Since then, it became a regular practice for the two leaders to meet every year in India or Egypt or third country. For instance in 1955 alone the two leaders met four times. Those
communications and consultations were continuous. In their July 1955 meeting, they emphasized common identical views on Palestine, other West Asian issues, and the urgent need for international peace. They defended their opposition to military pacts which increased tension in the region harming peace and disarmament efforts.\footnote{Joint Indo-Egyptian Communique, 12 July 1955, Cairo. , see the Arabic text on \textit{Sawet Al Hind}, 1 August 1955.}

Below are some instances of friendship and affection between Nehru and Nasser. Boutros Rafael described this friendship as “spiritual relationship” based on mutual understanding that turned into affection and admiration. Nasser described his feeling towards Nehru on 21 March 1955. Thus: “I met him for the first time last year when he came to visit us but I used to follow his writings and views since many years and whenever, I meet him I admired him more... we want to inform the people of India that African nations observe their progress closely”.\footnote{Voucher, n.61, p.30.}

Nehru was deeply impressed by the degree of warm reception whenever he visited Egypt.\footnote{Botres Rafael, \textit{Al Hind WA Kanat Al Suez} [India and Suez Canal], (Cairo: 1957), p.14.} \textit{Al Ahram} for example described how Nehru was received warmly in 1958.\footnote{This reception could be compared with the way Nasser refused to meet the USA State Secretary who had to turn his way back from the airport. The reception that was prepared to welcome Nehru was the outcome of India's stand by Egypt during the crisis. Egyptian considered India as their partner in the victory.}

\textbf{India’s Defence Minister Krishna Menon described that friendship thus:}

\begin{quote}
It has been my privilege to be acquainted with and to know the late President (Nasser) very closely during all the eighteen years of his regime. It has also been my privilege to be involved with him in common causes and policies. My friendship with him, developed in the days of common endeavor, was maintained without reserve. President Nasser extended his affection to those who were involved in common causes. His personal relations were not temporary or
\end{quote}

\textit{Al Ahram} described the reception: “... before the specified time of the arrival of Nehru's plane. Four Egyptian MiG Jets received Nehru's plane on the borders and accompanied it till its landing at the airport. 21-gun salute was fired by battery of artillery pieces to honour Jawaharlal Nehru. Both Nehru and Nasser were saluted by the Honour Guard. The military band played the music of both Indian and Egyptian national anthems. Nasser and Nehru shake hands with the officials who came to receive Nehru. The representative of Indian community presented floral wreath to Nehru. The great guest walked hand in hand with the president to the VIP lounge at the airport where they spent little time having beverages. Later, they picked up an open car to the Presidency where they were received by the wonderful salute of masses and enthusiastic slogans of the life of the two leaders and their friendly countries. The road from Almaza [the airport] till Ramsis street and Gounhoryia Street were decorated with triumphal arches and both Indian and Egyptian flags”. \textit{Al Ahram}, 11 June 1958.
superficial. I have had the privilege of the President’s friendship even after I was no longer a representative or part of our Government.\footnote{Al Arab (New Delhi), October-November 1970.}

**Solidarity due to Non-Alignment**

Besides secularism, which created a mutuality of interests and nourished Indo-Egyptian relations, was the issue of non-aligned foreign policy and opposition of both countries to military pacts.\footnote{Sardar K.M.Panikkar (1895-1963) was educated in Madras and Oxford. He was a scholar of Christ Church and was later called to the Bar (Middle Temple). He represented India at the 1947 sessions of the U.N. General Assembly. In 1948, he was appointed India’s Ambassador to China. He went as envoy to Egypt in 1952. Then he was appointed a member of the (Indian) States Reorganisation Commission in 1953. In 1956, he was the Indian Ambassador in France. At the time of his death he was Vice Chancellor, Mysore University URL <http://www.tamilnation.org/books/Politics/Panikkar.htm>}

Thus, Egypt became a major Afro-Asian country adhering to the policy of non-alignment and opposition to the creation of military pacts in West Asia which cemented the bond of friendship between Egypt and India. The Bandung Conference of April 1955 was the high point of Indo-Egyptian relations. Nasser and Nehru played active role in the Bandung Conference, which witnessed political battles between Pro-west and Pro-Afro-Asian solidarity, and had it not been for the efforts of Nasser, Nehru and Chou-En-Lai, it would have collapsed. The Indo-Egyptian participation in the conference was an indication that both could play a positive role in world affairs and it could also set an example for the fellow third world countries. On his homeward journey Nasser stopped in Delhi and said:

Nasser had high regard for Nehru’s diplomatic skills and experience and soon, along with President Tito of Yugoslavia, became the leading figures in the Non-aligned Movement. In 1956, the three leaders met in Birioni Island, Yugoslavia, to discuss the world situation, the future of Non-aligned movement, and their trilateral relations. The two leaders met each other about 19 times within in a decade all over the world.

A major issue as seen earlier, which brought both together, was their common opposition to the military pacts. Such pacts were a challenge for the non-aligned foreign policy of both countries because it was an attempt to drag both the regions into the cold war. Both had their own reasons to oppose the Baghdad pact. Both believed that such military alliances increase the tension between the Western and Soviet blocs. Moreover, they viewed such pacts as undermining the economic and political independence of the Afro-Asian states by subordinating it to serve the interests either of the blocs as well as shifting the focus from development to war. The membership of Pakistan was complicating its conflict with India over Kashmir and bringing the cold war to India’s doorsteps. Nehru criticized the Baghdad Pact and said it “has in fact created in West Asia far greater tension and conflict than ever before. It has certainly put one country against another among countries that were friendly to one another”. 78 On another occasion, Nehru articulated his views on India’s non-aligned policy and opposition to military pacts soon after the Suez crisis was over. He said: “India will follow the non-aligned policy regardless the results. It will not join any military pact and it will not abandon its independent thinking. Our foreign policy is based on the principals of our freedom struggle that India went through the last fifty years”79

Nasser and Nehru saw hidden agenda behind the creation of that pact. This secret agenda had three aims: (1) to impose the Western hegemony upon West Asia; (2) to fight and destroy the Arab collective axis of Cairo-Riyadh –Damascus; and (3) to impose a settlement of Arab –Israeli conflict in favour of Israel and secure full normalization of its relations with Arabs.

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78 AK Pasha, India and West Asia, n.56, (Delhi:1999), p.26
79 Sawet Al Hind, 7 August 1957.
India and Egypt had grave misgivings over Britain’s proposal to establish joint military bases on Iraq’s borders with Jordan and Syria and to use them against opponents of Baghdad pact. Trained military units from UK, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq and Turkey were also to operate from these bases. In addition the British used the pact to divide the Arabs as evidenced by the British Foreign Secretary’s memorandum which he sent to the PM of Iraq requesting him that the members of Baghdad Pact should destroy the morale of the current governments in Syria, Jordan and Egypt; and to conduct a joint propaganda in order to reduce the preparedness of public opinion from accepting the Arab unity at present. Soon, the members of Baghdad pact decided at their meeting at Ankara in January 1957 that Egypt, Syria and Jordan should be persuaded to change their policy or other measures would be taken to change these governments. A substantial amount was sanctioned to support the Pact’s plans against the above mentioned countries. Another proposal was to set up a supreme council on political police; intelligence and the military commanders of the pact members to implement the above policy.

India’s Support to Arab Freedom Struggle

India participated in a conference at Cairo as early as in 1952 to mobilize support for Arab struggle in North Africa against French colonialism and the struggle of Palestinian people to gain their legitimate rights. Mr. Al Shazli Maki, member of the North Africa Liberation Board and well-know intellectual based in Egypt acted as the political spokesman of North African struggle for freedom. In March 1951, Maki visited India where he met Nehru, MPs, journalists and other politicians. He was very...

80 See the enclosures of Top Secret Efada no.228 from Tawfiq Ismail, the Egyptian Ambassador in Baghdad to Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Cairo, 1 June 1956, Mahfaza no.1404, File 38/27/17, The Archive of MFA Seri Gadid (AMFASG).

81 Top Secret Efada from Ahmed Helmi, Charge d’Affairs, Egyptian Embassy (Baghdad), to MFA, 18 January 1957, File 38/27/17 vol.5, Mahfaza no.1406, AMFASG, Cairo.

82 An amount of 15,000,000.00 Dinar was sanctioned for this purpose, see Top Secret Efada from Ahmed Helmi, Charge d’Affairs, Egyptian Embassy (Baghdad), to MFA, 25 January 1957, File 38/27/17 vol.5, Mahfaza no.1406, AMFASG, Cairo. For details on India’s apprehension against Baghdad Pact see Qamar Agha, “Indo-Arab Relations: The Pakistan Factor”, In Anwar Alam, India and West Asia in the era of Globalization (New Delhi: 2008), pp.107-123.

83 On 4 March 1946, Aga Khan III told the Egyptian General Consul at Bombay that he extremely hated the French colonialism because it is the most horrible kind of colonialism. Khan expressed his confidence that Syria will succeed in throwing the foreign armies out of its territories. He also hoped that Lebanon can do the same soon. See Report from the Egyptian General Consul (Bombay) to MFA, 5 March 1946, File no.196/7/1 vol.3, Mahfaza no.839, AMFASG, Cairo. Mohamed Anis, Al Moatamer Al Asyawi Al Africy [Asian-Afro Conference], (Cairo: 1957), p.16.
successful in attracting the support of India. Nehru told the Egyptian ambassador in Delhi that Maki left a very deep impression upon him, especially after explaining the situation in North Africa and specifying the moral and political support that the freedom fighters there needed from India as the leader of liberation movement in Asia. Maki used to keep close relations with the Indian ambassadors for follow up action in Cairo. In 1952, he was among the key figures who received ambassador Panikkar on his arrival to Cairo.\textsuperscript{84} In this context, Krishna Menon declared on 30 August 1955 at Madras that India supports completely the struggle of North African countries for their freedom and wished that these countries will get its independence very soon.\textsuperscript{85} Nehru also added his voice when he described the situation in North Africa as a tragedy. Furthermore, since Nasser was supporting Arab liberation movements in North Africa (materially also), France in order to punish Egypt supplied weapons to Israel. Both France and Israel maintained close relations which became evident subsequently during the Suez crisis. In this context, India’s support to North African liberation movements further boosted Nasser’s position as also sending a message to both Israel and France.

Nehru described the situation in Algeria as “a sad tragedy”\textsuperscript{86} Hailing the brave people of Algeria; Nehru made an emotional statement in Parliament on 19 March 1962:

\begin{quote}
I doubt if we can easily find in the records of history a struggle as intensive as that waged by the Algerian people during the past several years and more, attended by such intense sufferings, and such a large number of casualties and killings. No one can deny that if a price had to be paid for freedom, the Algerian people have paid much more than any price that could have been laid down…. I hope that the Algerian people after having paid such a heavy price for their independence…. will progress rapidly and become a bulwark of peace and cooperation in the world\textsuperscript{87}
\end{quote}
India went to the extent of asking for UN intervention to stop the killing of Algerian people in 1960. India continued to support the freedom struggle of other Arab countries at the UN and other forums.

**Egypt’s Support to India on Goa**

Developments in the region like the formation of UAR in February 1958, the overthrow of monarchy in Iraq in July 1958, the civil war in Lebanon (1958) and the American military intervention in Lebanon under the “Eisenhower Doctrine” were not only major challenges to Egyptian diplomacy but Nehru also was equally concerned with these grave developments involving the cold war partners particularly Pakistan. These and other developments brought India and Egypt much closer. Egypt without forgetting India’s support during Suez crisis seized the opportunity in 1961 to support India in the Goa issue. It must be mentioned that since 1947, India tried to convince Portugal to withdraw from the Indian territories of Goa, Diu and Daman but Lisbon refused India’s demands and claimed the territories as an integral part of Portugal. It is pertinent to note that the Goa issue had became a source of tension in Portuguese-Egyptian relations also since 1954 when Cairo started looking after Indian interests in Goa, Daman and Diu diplomatically.

After failing to solve the Goa issue by peaceful means, India decided to liberate Goa from Portuguese colonialism on 18th December 1961 by using military means. Egypt endorsed the Indian viewpoint without any reservations. The Portuguese government, in a last desperate attempt to retain its control over Goa planned to rush naval ships, loaded with arms and ammunition, towards Goa via Suez Canal but the Egyptian authorities promptly seized the Portuguese naval vessels. Egypt mobilized the Arab

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91 Najma Heptulla, n.65, p.189.
League to support India’s military action in Goa.92 Arab League asserted that India's action in Goa was in conformity with the U.N. resolution of December 14, 1960 and its 'resolution of November 20, 1961 regarding the necessity of the liquidation of colonialism.'93

**India-China 1962 Conflict**

Soon after the Goa crisis, India faced its biggest challenge when China attacked it. The Chinese aggression was a direct challenge for Bandung’s spirit and principals. Nasser was shocked by the Indo-Chinese conflict and sought Nehru’s advice on Egypt’s mediation in the conflict. Nehru promptly welcomed the suggestion. Presumably, a similar suggestion was made to Beijing and with identical result. Nasser sent his special envoy Ali Sabri to mediate between India and China in order to settle the dispute peacefully. Egyptian efforts, along with other non-aligned countries succeeded in bringing the conflict to an end. Nevertheless, the Chinese leadership was not pleased with the Egyptian role and considered the Egyptian mediation as pro-India. 94 For instance, the United Arab Republic press had extended whole hearted support to the Indian stand against Chinese aggression. *Al Goumohriya* applied the term “aggressor” to China, Ihsan ’Abdul-Quddus, the editor of *Rose el Yusif*, criticized the Soviet Union for continuing its arms supplies to China and holding the shipment of MIG aircraft to India. Haykal wrote in *Al Ahram* that what concerned the UAR was that “this fight should stop at once and each side return to the positions occupied before the fighting started. This would open the door for sound negotiations between

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92 For example Clovis Maksoud, Representative of the League of Arab States in India, wrote in his message to the Secretary of All India Political Science Association conference that, “Indian Government’s action in liberating Goa has given an impetus to the liberation movement in Africa and is a positive contribution to the quick process of decolonization in that continent. The liberation of Goa has smashed forever the attempts of certain interested powers to infuse disruption among the Arabs, Indians and Africans thinking that they can flatter our various egos and adroitly play upon them. We might be economically underdeveloped but not intellectually so and the imperialists (sic) tacticians will fail in sowing disruption among us”. See Al Arab, 1 January 1962.

93 Al Arab, 1 February 1962.

the two countries."

Inspite of its role as a mediator, Egypt asserted that the aggressor should not be allowed to enjoy the fruits of its aggression. The rest of the Arab world supported India in its crisis time. The Iraqi newspaper “Al Mowatin” condemned the unprecedented and unreasonable Chinese aggression. The Lebanon Socialist Party declared its support for “the struggle of Indian friends to preserve their liberty and sovereignty”. The Amir of Kuwait declared in his message to Nehru that the people of Kuwait “are wholeheartedly behind you in your struggle”.

The End of an Era

Nehru, who was deeply affected by the Chinese aggression, never fully recovered and finally, he passed away in 1964. In the death of Nehru, the architect of India’s foreign policy, Nasser lost a dear friend. Both had established solid foundations for Indo-Egyptian relations, which remained the basis of India’s West Asia Policy for the coming decades. However, the nature of Indo-Egyptian relations changed dramatically after 1964 and lost its intimacy and uniqueness. Soon the non-aligned bloc with the loss of its key spokesperson (Nehru) became weak. Moreover, Israeli invasion and defeat of three Arab countries in 1967 war also badly affected Nasser’s standing in the Arab world and NAM. Due to US and Western support, Israel not only defeated three Arab countries but occupied Arab lands and refused to withdraw. Those developments considerably weakened Nasser’s position in the Arab region. For all practical purposes, the 1967 war also destroyed Egypt’s commitment to non-aligned policy as it aligned to the USSR in order to secure its arms needs, rebuild its army, and prepare for a liberation war. The sad death of Jawaharlal Nehru in 1964 and Nasser in 1970 ended the positive role that the personal friendship between the two leaderships contributed to the warm nature of Indo-Egyptian relations. This was the end of the “golden era” of modern Indo-Egyptian relations.

95 Ibid, Haykal was a friend and an advisor for Nasser as well as being a very prominent journalist.
96 According to Krishna Menon, three countries only were on the side of China. Those were Albania, Vietnam and North Korea while more than 60 countries have proclaimed themselves in support of India in varying ways and degrees. See V.K. Krishna Menon, India and the Chinese Invasion, (Bombay:1963), pp.42-3; K.R.Singh, “India, the Middle East and the Chinese Aggression” United Asia, vol.15, no.11, November 1963, pp.759-764.
97 Gopal, n.90, pp.360-367.
98 See Pasha, n.1, p.22.