1986

Egypt and the Soviet Union, 1953-1970

John W. Copp
Portland State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/open_access_etds

Part of the [African Studies Commons](#), [History Commons](#), [International Relations Commons](#), and the [Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies Commons](#)

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Copp, John W., "Egypt and the Soviet Union, 1953-1970" (1986). *Dissertations and Theses*. Paper 3797.
<https://doi.org/10.15760/etd.5681>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations and Theses by an authorized administrator of PDXScholar. Please contact us if we can make this document more accessible: pdxscholar@pdx.edu.

AN ABSTRACT OF THE thesis of John W. Copp for the Master of Arts
in History presented April 7, 1986.

Title: Egypt and the Soviet Union, 1953-1970

APPROVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE THESIS COMMITTEE

[REDACTED]

Basil Dmytryshyn, Chairman
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The purpose of this study is to describe and analyze in detail the many aspects of the Soviet-Egyptian friendship as it developed from 1953 to 1970. The relationship between the two is extremely important because it provides insight into the roles of both Egypt and the Soviet Union in both the history of the Middle East and in world politics. The period from 1953 to 1970 is key in understanding the relationship between the two states because it is the period of the genesis of the relationship and a period in which both nations went through marked changes in both internal policy and their external relations.

Data used in this study varies widely. It includes material from sources as diverse as diplomatic memoirs, press

accounts in both English and Russian, statistical collections of both a military and an economic nature, and chronicles of cultural interaction. These sources were consulted in various research libraries throughout the United States.

On the basis of the available sources it is possible to state that Egypt and the Soviet Union developed a broad relationship that included integration in the military, economic aid and trade, diplomatic cooperation, and cultural exchange. Both derived important but distinct benefits from their friendship. This study attempts to show what those benefits were, how the friendship developed, and why it developed as it did.

EGYPT AND THE SOVIET UNION, 1953-1970

by

JOHN W. COPP

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS
in
HISTORY

Portland State University

1986

TO THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH:

The members of the Committee approve the thesis of John W. Copp
presented May 15, 1986.

Basil Dmytryshyn, Chairman

Gordon B. Dodds

Elliot Benowitz

Grant Farr

APPROVED:

Bernard V. Burke, Head, Department of History

Bernard Ross, Dean of Graduate Studies and Research

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A number of scholars and students had a great deal of influence on this manuscript at various stages during its preparation. Special thanks go to my advisor, Basil Dmytryshyn for his direction of my work and the cogent commentary with which he provided me. In addition, I wish to thank professors Seweryn Bialer, Leopold Haimson, and Robert Paxton of Columbia University who widened my understanding of history and the Soviet Union with their insights. I would also like to thank the large number of fellow graduate students who helped in the preparation of this work by commenting upon various portions of the manuscript and through our discussions of Soviet and Middle Eastern politics. Particular mention should be made of Gary M. Garrettson, Anne E. Stein, Joan Elliot, and Cynthia Roberts, each of whom made particularly important contributions. Finally, I would like to thank two people without whom the preparation and production of this manuscript would have been much more difficult, Evgenii Beshenkovsky, whose bibliographic assistance was invaluable, and Patricia M. Copp, whose typing and editing made the final form of this manuscript possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
CHAPTER	
I THE QUIET NILE	1
II THE CZECH ARMS DEAL AND BEYOND: THE SOVIET- EGYPTIAN MILITARY RELATIONSHIP	31
III NOT BY ARMS ALONE: SOVIET-EGYPTIAN DIPLOMACY	71
IV THE SOVIET-EGYPTIAN ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP: HOW THE TIES WERE FORGED	188
V EGYPT AND THE SOVIET UNION: THE CULTURAL DIMENSION	221
VI THE LEVER AND THE FULCRUM: CONCLUSIONS	251
APPENDIX A: FIGURES 1-10	275
APPENDIX B: MAPS 1-4	285
BIBLIOGRAPHY	289

CHAPTER I

THE QUIET NILE

Historically there has been relatively little contact between Russia and Egypt. The period following the military coup in Egypt in 1952 and continuing until the death of Gamel Abdel Nasser in 1970 is an exception to this general rule. This interlude was a time of comparatively feverish interaction between the Soviet government in Russia and the Arab Socialist Union government of Nasser in Egypt. Relations on all levels between the two countries were tremendously broadened. An intimate diplomatic relationship developed that bound the fortunes of the United Arab Republic (Egypt) and the Soviet Union tightly together. Economic interaction increased to such an extent that the total commerce between the two nations was multiplied by a factor of more than twenty between 1951 and 1970. Soviet imports from Egypt increased by almost 4500 percent during that same period. Exports showed a somewhat slower rate of increase but still rose from 21.8 million rubles in 1951 to 326.9 million rubles in 1970. Cultural contacts between the two nations also became frequent during this period. Interaction in the cultural sphere ranged from contact between the Islamic elements in Soviet Central Asia and the Egyptian clergy to the exchange of films and cultural

centers. Even a cursory glimpse at the increased contact between the Soviet Union and Egypt shows how dramatic the change in relationship between the two was. The extremity of this change makes the relationship between the Egyptians and the Soviets an important target for an investigation into its new nature in order to try to discover the factors that precipitated it and to try to fathom its full extent.

There are many plausible reasons for the Soviet Union to be interested in developing a closer relationship with Egypt. These range from Egypt's strategic importance to its cultural prominence - especially in the Arab world. Many of the factors that kindled Soviet interest in Egypt during this period were age old. Others developed from the growing conflict for power and influence between the Soviets and the United States that was going on at the time.

The location of Egypt is of major import in any discussions of its influence in world affairs. Egypt is the geographic center of the Arab world;² to the west and south of Egypt are located the Arab-speaking nations of Africa: Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, the Sudan and Tunisia; to the north and east are the Arab nations of Asia: Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, the United Arab Emirates and the two Yemens. Because of its location at the conjunction of Asia and Africa, Egypt plays an important role in the affairs of two of the major seas of the world. Egypt has excellent ports on both its Medit-

erranean and Red Sea coasts. Because of its access to two of the most strategically important bodies of water in the Middle East, Egypt necessarily must play an important role (either as an independent actor or as a pawn) in the affairs of the area that has been termed the "Crossroads of the World."

Another important facet of the strategic importance of Egypt is its control of the mouth of the Nile, the longest river in the world. By controlling its mouth, Egypt dominates the entire drainage basin of the Nile. This, in turn, allows Egypt an important voice in the affairs of the Sudan, Ethiopia and, at times, even Uganda.

A third body of water that plays an important role in making Egypt one of the most strategically important nations of the world is the man-made Suez canal. The Suez canal, built by Egyptian labor under British and French direction in 1869, directly connects the Red and Mediterranean Seas. By providing a connection between the two, the Suez drastically shortens the sea route from Asia to Europe. The elimination of the need for ships going in either direction to circumnavigate Africa makes the Canal one of the world's busiest shipping routes.

Beyond its intrinsic strategic importance as the center of the Middle East, Egypt is strategically important because of its position in relation to the Soviet Union. Cairo and

Alexandria are located approximately 1000 miles directly to the south of Odessa, the Soviet Union's main Black Sea port. The region directly south of its borders has been of interest to the governments of Russia from the days of the Tsars until the present. Whether this interest is a result of a traditional Russian obsession for a warm water port, or simply because of the traditional significance of the area in world affairs, or possibly even because of ideological considerations is open to question. Whatever the case, the Russian interest in the area is unquestionable. Egypt's geopolitical importance alone would be enough to interest any nation desirous of expanding its influence. However, there are other factors that have drawn Soviet interest to Egypt.

"Egypt has for more than a century been the bellwether of Arab attitudes, the symbol of Arab values, the embodiment of Arab polarities.³" It is this position of preeminence that makes Egypt the most culturally important of all of the Arab nations. This situation exists, and has existed, despite the fact that Egypt is without a doubt the least ethnically Arab of all of the Arabic-speaking nations of the Middle East. Egypt has gained its preeminent role in the Arab world not so much through its ethnic makeup as through its role as the pioneering leader of the Arab world. It was the first of the Arab nations to modernize politically, intellectually, and economically. Modernization is one of

the factors that has made Egypt the key to the Arab world.

Egypt began its march toward modernization in 1805 when Muhammed Ali destroyed the old Mamluk dynasty and established his own rule. Ali established a dynasty in Egypt which was committed to the intellectual and economic modernization of that country's institutions within an Islamic context and with as little Western influence on the culture of the country as possible. Ali began the modernization of Egypt with an idea: Autocracy is contrary to the Islamic doctrines of equality and humility. He and his successors promoted the communication of ideas through print. To this end, they founded the first major printing center in the Arab world in Cairo. They established a network of primary and secondary schools in which children were indoctrinated⁴ in the application of pure Islamic ideals to Egyptian life. The intellectual climate of Egypt was further enhanced by sending many Egyptians to study in European colleges and universities, and by the opening of several foreign missionary schools in Egypt itself. The renewal of intellectual activity helped to revive the Arabic language, and, as a result, Cairo gradually became the intellectual focal point of the nineteenth century Arab world.

It also became the center of revolutionary economic and political impulses within the Turk-controlled Arab world. (Turkish control was nominal in most cases, including Egypt's.) This was so despite the tendency of the Ali

dynasty to brutally repress any and all ideas which came into sharp conflict with Islamic ideals. Ali was determined to maintain Islam as the central basis of all of the aspects of the life of Egypt and its inhabitants and any breaches of Islamic law or tradition were drastically punished. Despite its harsh measures, the Ali dynasty was unable to prevent the heightened intellectual activity in the country from producing and developing nonorthodox political and economic ideas and gradually merging these ideas into the cultural milieu of Egypt and, by extension, the entire Arab world.

The Ali dynasty was responsible for considerable increases in the material well-being of the Egyptian economy, as well as for stimulating increased intellectual activity. The Egyptian economy was revolutionized by the introduction of widespread cultivation of cotton for export. A modern system of irrigation was developed which helped to extend the amount of cultivatable land in the Nile valley. The Suez canal was built thanks to the encouragement of foreign investment capital by the Alis. Railroads were laid, modern shipping ports built, and neophyte waterworks, sewer systems, electric lighting networks, and mass transit facilities were all introduced by the Ali dynasty and its administration. The military was revamped. European banking methods replaced the ancient methods that had theretofore been in common use. These achievements came about as a result of the Ali dynasty's desire to foster the modernization of

Egypt and its institutions.

The modernization of Egypt's economic, political and intellectual life by the Ali dynasty made it the first of the nations of the Arab world to take such a step. It became more than simply an intellectual center for the Arab world (although the educational and intellectual role of such institutions as the Islamic college, Al-Azhar, were very important to the development of the Arab world, as was Cairo's role as the publishing center of the Arab-speaking world, and should not be downplayed), it became a role model, a nation to be emulated in the development of the Arab nations. It maintained this mystique for the other Arab nations despite its nominally colonial role under the Ottoman Empire throughout the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth and its later position as a de facto colony of Great Britain from the 1880's until 1952.

It was this role as the spiritual (but not religious), cultural, and intellectual leader of the Arab world that, along with other factors, made Egypt so important in the eyes of the post-Stalin Soviet Union. A strong, positive relationship with Egypt should give the Soviet Union a dominant role in the politics of the entire Arab world and greatly enhance its position vis-a-vis the West throughout the world reasoned Soviet leaders.

A third major factor in Egypt's importance to the Soviet Union is its population. With over forty million inhabitants, Egypt has more than twice the population of any other Arab nation. In fact, the people of Egypt comprise over 25% of the entire population of the Arabic-speaking world. With its large population, Egypt must play a major, if not a dominant, role in the politics of the Middle East.

The combination of Egypt's intrinsic strategic importance, its geographic relationship to the Soviet Union, and its cultural preeminence in the Arab world, make it one of the most important of the "developing" nations of the world in Soviet eyes. As a result, there is little wonder that when the Soviet Union became capable of extending its interests and influence throughout the world after World War II, one of its choices in which to attempt to insert itself was Egypt. It was a logical choice given the considerations outlined above. However, for the Soviets to be successful the Egyptians had to be willing to accept their overtures.

After their successful coup in 1952 reasons began to develop for Egypt's revolutionary leaders to become interested in Soviet overtures. Egypt needed an alternative to the United States to push forward its internal and external plans for advancement. It needed a nation that had sufficient economic resources to be able to bankroll a large portion of these plans as an ally. It needed a country that could provide it with the technical know-how to modernize.

It needed a country that could resist American diplomatic and, especially, economic pressure. Above all, what Egypt needed was a country that was willing to supply its needs without immediate returns other than Egypt's friendship.

There were few if any nations that could meet all of these requirements. Most European nations were unable to help because they were still struggling to recover from a debilitating war. Even if they had been able to help, it is unlikely that they would have been willing to do so in opposition to American wishes. Britain was in the same predicament as most of Europe. It was rapidly divesting itself of its colonial empire and trying to rebuild from four years of intensive German bombing. However, the British may have been able to help the Egyptians. They did, in fact, offer the Egyptians aid in conjunction with an American offer. As later events were to prove, their position regarding Egypt and its role in foreign affairs was nearly identical to the American position, and they would not pursue a policy counter to American wishes regarding Egypt.

Most of the rest of the nations of the world were unable to help. They were trying to modernize and develop their own resources. India, Japan, and the African nations all had their own crises to meet. China probably would have been willing to help despite its own financial needs. The Chinese, however, like the Egyptians, were trying to develop

a war-ravaged nation with little industry. As a result, all they were capable of offering was the nebulous boon of moral support. They could offer nothing concrete in the way of financial assistance. Egypt's Arab brethren were also unable to help. They still had not received the tremendous wealth that their underground oil reserves would later bring them.

The Soviet Union was just about the only place to which the Egyptian government, dissatisfied with American offers, could turn. Although it, too, had been ravaged by World War II, the Soviet Union had managed a relatively rapid recovery. The Soviets had an economy which was sufficiently sound to absorb the losses endemic in aiding Egypt in her far-reaching internal and external schemes. The Soviets were capable of providing the technical knowledge required in the modernization of Egypt. They were capable of withstanding American pressure to the bitter end. They had been doing so since World War II concluded. The Soviet Union also met the most important requirement in aiding the Egyptians - it was willing to help. It was to demonstrate its willingness to support the Egyptians in 1955 when the two nations consummated the historic Czech Arms Deal.⁶

The spectre of American resistance to the modernization of Egypt has repeatedly arisen in the foregoing pages. However, the Americans were not unalterably opposed to Egypt's development of its resources. They were quite

willing to aid Egypt's modernization if this aid was delivered on American terms and the modernization proceeded on an American timetable. They were not willing to aid the Egyptians on Egyptian terms.⁷

In fact, the Egyptians were offered economic aid by the United States. However, as the following will hopefully demonstrate, the Egyptians could not readily accept the economic and political conditions that the United States attached to its loan. However, despite several conditions which were hard for the Egyptians to swallow, they did accept the terms. For reasons which will hopefully become clear as this study progresses, the United States withdrew its offer of aid. The Egyptians then began searching for an alternative source of the aid, which the Americans had proven unwilling to provide.

They found that alternative in the Soviet Union and an offer which it had made before the Americans had tendered theirs. The Egyptian-Soviet rapprochement seemed to be a marriage made in heaven. Both sides were fulfilling their goals. The Egyptians were getting the financial aid that they needed, and on their own terms (or at least so it seemed at the time). The Soviets were improving their global strategic position vis-a-vis the United States by gaining Egypt, at the very least as an ally, if not a complete financial dependent.

As mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, the developments that allowed the Soviet Union to drastically upgrade its presence in the Middle East have their roots imbedded in the fabric of history. A look at the historical record of Russian involvement shows that this involvement has come along two main lines: 1) Economic intercourse; and 2) diplomatic/political contact. The economic intercourse between Russia and Egypt had been exclusively through the medium of traditional international commerce prior to the aforementioned Czech Arms Deal.

Although there had been some commerce between the Tsarist government and Egypt before the Soviet revolution, commerce between the Soviet regime and Egypt did not begin until the early 1920's. At that time, it began to develop along the lines that had been drawn during the Tsarist period. The Egyptians supplied the Soviet Union with cotton and rice. In turn, the Soviets supplied them with lumber, wheat and various other items from the Soviet Union. The trade between the two was never large, however. The maximum flow of commercial goods between the two during their pre-friendship period was during the fiscal year of 1927/28 when 146.7 million rubles (evaluated in 1950 A.D. rubles) worth of goods changed hands. By 1930 this commerce had almost completely ceased. It totally stopped by 1941 when World War II intervened in the trade process. During the years prior to World War II, Egypt nearly always had a trade

surplus in its trade with the Soviet Union. The only exceptions to this general rule were the 1923/24 fiscal year and the year of 1932.⁸

The reasons for the drastic decrease between the U.S.S.R. and Egypt at that time are unclear. It is quite possible that it was due to the negative reaction of Great Britain to the publishing of the program of action of the Egyptian Communist Party in 1931.⁹ This probably combined with a general worsening of internal conditions in Russia due to the drive for collectivization being pushed by Josef Stalin to put a damper on Soviet-Egyptian commerce. A look at the political contacts between the Soviet Union and Egypt prior to the Egyptian revolution is the next step which must be taken in understanding the nature of the relationship that was to develop between the Soviet Union and Egypt in the 1950's.

The Egyptian Communist Party has already been mentioned. Although it was quite small and proscribed by the Egyptian government, it was developing under the tutelage of the Comintern. Contact between the Egyptians and the Comintern had been established long before the Egyptian program of action of the Communist Party was published. After the Soviet Union settled down following its own revolutions in 1917, the first major political event in Russian foreign policy that was to have any significant effect upon Egypt was the Conference of the Peoples of the East held in

Baku in the Soviet Republic of Azerbaidzhan. The Baku conference, as it came to be known, was an attempt by Lenin and the Comintern to promote revolution in the countries of Asia and Africa. It was aimed at both those countries that had recently become independent and those that were still European colonies. Egypt was one of the countries whose left-wing sent a delegate to the conference. As a matter of fact, the Egyptians had been closely connected with the conference even before it took its final form.

The initial idea for a meeting along the lines of the Baku conference came from a prominent Crimean Tatar member of the Communist Party of the then Tsarist Empire. His idea was for a conference of Muslim peoples to be held in Cairo in 1908. He passed his idea on to Grigori Zinoviev (who was to become the head of the Comintern). Zinoviev carried through with the idea and it resulted in the conference at Baku. The appeal made by Lenin and the Comintern at Baku was directed toward the nascent working classes of Asia and Africa. It was aimed at inspiring them to join with the bourgeoisie in their countries and to throw out their foreign oppressors and join with Russia in the (Marxist) march of history.

The conference at Baku was a child of the Comintern. The Comintern was destined to become one of the, if not the, most important instruments of Soviet foreign policy from its founding following the Russian revolution of November 1917

until its dismantlement as a concession to the Western allies of the Soviet Union during World War II.¹¹ It was founded in 1919 as an aid to the world socialist movement. From its inception until its demise, the Comintern was comprised mostly of Soviet citizens. It remained mostly Russian in character and became the unofficial arm of Soviet foreign policy in the rest of the world. It was heavily involved in the creation of Communist parties throughout the world. It helped to devise the tactics of the various Communist parties around the globe. It played a major role in the development of the platform of the Egyptian Communist Party as evidenced by the text of that party's program of action as published in Arabic in 1931 and Russian in 1932. In that program of action, the Egyptian Party declared that it must make an "alliance with the U.S.S.R., with the international revolutionary proletariat, and the toilers struggling in the colonies" in order to promote the establishment of "a Soviet regime"¹² in Egypt. This type of rhetoric was a standard component of Comintern influenced programs of action throughout the Third World.¹³

Most of the contact between Egypt and the Soviet Union was on the unofficial level heretofore mentioned. There was little direct contact between the Soviet government and that of Egypt. There was some trade between the two nations, but that was ostensibly handled through intermediaries. Despite the lack of direct contact between the Soviet government and

its Egyptian counterpart, there was no lack of interest on the part of the Soviet Union in Egypt. They continued to have the same interests in the strategic and cultural impact on the Eastern Mediterranean basin that good relations with Egypt could have. They were interested in obtaining supplies of Egyptian cotton (which was one of the world's finest strains) as well.

There was a strong deterrent to the spread of Soviet influence at the time, however. The rise of Fascism throughout the world drastically slowed the spread of left-wing ideologies and their manifestations in all of their forms. Fascism, despite whatever characteristics it might or might not have, was undeniably the most effective force in the 1930's in halting the spread of Communism throughout Europe and the European colonies. It was the reaction of the middle classes to the growing unrest and disorder that was occurring in Europe at that time. This malaise was often attributed to the spread of Communism.¹⁴ With this rise of Fascism in the west (especially in Germany), and the expansionistic imperialism of Japan in the east, the Soviet Union became a land threatened on both frontiers. As a result, it resorted to a policy of gaining non-aggression pacts with its neighbors to protect itself from these growing threats. This type of diplomacy combined with the Soviets' own internal difficulties to leave little room for Soviet maneuver in a British sphere of influence like Egypt.

Due to British perceptions of the Soviets' policies (which they gained from the type of propaganda the Comintern was spreading) and Great Britain's own long-standing interests in the Eastern Mediterranean, the British quite successfully kept the Soviet bear and its influence out of Egypt. They had no trouble at all in counteracting the weak and sporadic attempts of the Egyptian Communist Party to stir up revolution between 1931 and the Second World War.

World War II, although it constituted a major threat to the existence of the Soviet Union, was fraught with opportunities for Soviet diplomacy in what had been hitherto inaccessible regions. The alliance between the Soviet Union and the Western powers, especially Great Britain, opened up many new vistas in which the Soviets could attempt to establish themselves as a factor. The former British colonies of Asia and Africa, including Egypt, now became acceptable nations with which the Soviets could attempt to establish diplomatic contacts without the opposition of the British or any of the other Allied powers.

The first step in Soviet diplomatic penetration into Egypt came in 1943. At that time the Soviets and the Farouk monarchy of Egypt exchanged diplomatic personnel. The second step in the further exploitation in this breach of the diplomatic wall around the old British sphere of influence in Egypt came in 1948 when the Soviets concluded a barter agreement with the Egyptian government on February

25. The last significant diplomatic contact between the Soviet Union and the Egyptian monarchy came in March of 1952 on the eve of the Egyptian revolution. At that time the Farouk government and the Soviet Union concluded a second barter agreement. Three months later, the Farouk monarchy was to fall.

* * * * *

As the year 1952 opened, Egypt was still ruled by its hereditary monarch. King Farouk I was the titular head of the Egyptian constitutional monarchy. The governmental system of Egypt was loosely based on that of Great Britain. Under the provisions of the Egyptian constitution which had chartered the monarchy, the King had the power to appoint two-fifths of the Egyptian senate and to disband the cabinets of the country. King Farouk often exercised his prerogative of cabinet dismissal and, as a result, during his reign Egypt was a victim of constant governmental turnover. This kept Egypt in a constant state of internal political instability. During Farouk's reign, the civil government changed hands no less than fifteen times. Martial law was declared on three separate occasions, in 1939, 1948 and 1952. One measure of the unstable character of Egyptian politics during this period is the fact that Mustafa el-Nahas was prime minister three times and Ali Maher twice (excluding his caretaker role between the death of Farouk's father and Farouk's assumption of the throne) while Farouk was king. During Farouk's reign, the government of Egypt changed an

average of once a year despite the six years of martial law when no governmental changes took place. In 1952 martial law was declared for the last time during Farouk's reign. After it was suspended, three different governments were formed before the July revolution eliminated the monarchy. The continual governmental upheavals were a direct cause of the revolution. They led to dissatisfaction in the Egyptian officer corps and finally led the officers to feel constrained to make a governmental change of their own.

External factors were also a contributing factor to Egypt's instability under King Farouk. Two of the periods during which martial law was in force were periods during which Egypt was at war. The first of these came two years after Farouk succeeded his father to the throne. At that time World War II interrupted the flow of Egyptian politics. During the war Egypt was the site of battles between British/American forces and their German opponents. Parts of Egypt were occupied for a time by the Germans during the war. It served as a base for both the Germans and the British Eighth Army at different times during the course of the war.

The second war which interrupted Egyptian political life was to occur in 1947. At that time Egypt and its Arab allies attacked the fledgling state of Israel. Their resulting defeat increased the popular dissatisfaction with the policies of the governments under Farouk. An especially

important facet of this dissatisfaction was the disgruntlement of the Egyptian officer corps. One of the officers who became discontented with the government was Captain Gamel Abdel Nasser. Nasser had been actively anti-British since he organized student riots protesting the constitution of 1936. Following the first Arab debacle at the hands of the Israelis, Nasser became increasingly anti-Farouk. He also developed a hatred for the Israelis that was to help eliminate any chance of peace in the Middle East in the years to come. The Israeli-Arab conflict was to erupt into open war sporadically (in 1956, 1967, and again in 1973). The conflict between the Arabs and Israelis is still smoldering to the present day and quite probably will never be settled without drastic changes of attitude on the part of both sides. Because of the constant external flux that Egypt was subject to, the internal situation became more and more uncertain. Egypt was involved in wars from 1939 to 1945 and again in 1947 and 1948. It suffered through the invasions of hostile powers and defeat from its enemies. It was used as a base and a retreat route by both its enemies and its allies. It is little wonder that internal discontent rose dramatically during the reign of King Farouk.

The army was the base for one of the many nationalistic movements that developed during Farouk's reign. This group, the most important of all of the revolutionary groups in Egypt, was to become known as the Free Officers clique. The

Free Officers clique had been formed in 1942 by a young lieutenant named Anwar el-Sadat. It was dedicated to the removal of foreign influence from Egypt - especially the influence of Great Britain. To accomplish its goal, the Free Officers clique conspired to help Germany against the Allies during World War II. Sadat and General Aziz el-Masry became involved in a plot to aid German general Erwin Rommel. Sadat arranged for contact between Masry and Rommel. Masry was to help the Germans by convincing Egyptian troops to desert the British. Masry's efforts in this regard were far-reaching. Masry disseminated pro-German propaganda among his fellow officers in the Egyptian Army, and the Moslem Brotherhood took to the streets of Cairo proclaiming themselves "Rommel's soldiers". Masry's career as a subversive was shortlived, however. He was arrested by the British late in 1942 when he was preparing to fly to Rommel's headquarters in Libya so he could broadcast¹⁷ anti-British radio messages to the Egyptian troops. With the arrest of Masry, Sadat became the prime motivating force in the Free Officers clique. In time, the movement was to grow and others (such as Nasser) were to join him at its fore.

Although it attempted to aid the German cause in World War II, the Free Officers clique was in no sense pro-Nazi. Rather, they were determined to rid Egypt of, what they were certain was, the stultifying effect of British influence on

their national development. In 1942 aiding Rommel must have seemed an excellent opportunity to accomplish their goal. The Free Officers clique was primarily anti-British in character - rather than anti-monarchy - until the very end of Farouk's reign. At that time, when it began to become more apparent to the leaders of the Free Officers that Farouk's tutelege was leading Egypt upon a course of disaster, the clique began to take on a much more definitely anti-Farouk character.

A word or two about the British role in Egyptian politics is needed at this point. The British had played a dominant role in Egyptian political affairs since their intervention there in 1841. After the British intervention in Egypt at that time, Egypt had nominally remained an integral portion of the decadent, sickly, and slowly deteriorating area of Ottoman dominion, but in actuality, the British played the dominant role in Egyptian politics until the coup in 1952.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the British domination of Egypt's politics spurred the rise of nationalistic movements in Egypt. These groups were dedicated to the removal of foreign influence from Egyptian soil. This movement toward national independence in all aspects of policy was culminated in 1952 when the Free Officer's clique (which included Sadat, Lt. Colonel Gamel Abdel Nasser, and Lt. General Mohammed Neguib) led a successful revolt that

forced King Farouk to abdicate and placed Egypt at least temporarily among the ranks of the world's multi-party democracies.

When the Egyptian revolution occurred in 1952, the Soviet Union was led by Josef Stalin. Stalin held the reins of power in the Soviet Union firmly in his personal grasp. He maintained autocratic control of all of the aspects of the internal and foreign policies of the Soviet government and the Communist Party. Stalin had a rather simplistic view of world affairs that has been labeled the Two Camp View of world politics. Simply stated, in Stalin's view the world was divided into two camps: Those who followed the Soviet line of foreign policy; and those who didn't. Those who didn't toe the Soviet mark were obviously enemies. There was no middle ground for any nation that preferred to chart its own course rather than follow either the Soviet line or the opposing 'Western' line. The results of this policy as it applied to Egypt were quite predictable. The Soviets alienated the emerging Third World nations - including Egypt - by criticizing them. The Soviet press attacked Egypt and the other Arab nations by labeling the newly formed Arab League "a tool of British imperialism." It further antagonized the new-born Egyptian regime by calling Nasser, as it had India's Nehru and Syria's Shishakli, a
18
"lackey of imperialism." Needless to say, this did not lead to immediately harmonious relations between the new Egyptian

government and the Soviet Union.

The Two Camp view undoubtedly cost the Soviet Union a large amount of the influence that was becoming available in the new nations of the Third World. These nations, including Egypt, wanted to determine their own course in policy matters and a little encouragement along those lines would have gone a long way in weaning them away from their traditional ties to the West. They had no desire to have their policies determined by bureaucrats in Moscow, London, or Washington, who often had little or no understanding of the needs and desires of the nations and cultures of the emergent Third World. Unfortunately, this was what both sides expected them to put up with. As a result of the desire for independence in the governments of the underdeveloped nations, Stalin's Two Camp view was counterproductive (so, too, was the same approach by John Foster Dulles). There was soon to be a shift in the pattern of Soviet foreign policy however.

With the death of Stalin in 1953, a power struggle began in Moscow between his former lieutenants. At first Georgi Malenkov assumed the mantle of Stalin's successor. He held the two most important positions in the hierarchy of the Soviet Union, those of First Secretary of the Communist party and Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the All-Union Government. He relinquished his position as First Secretary within two weeks of gaining it, presumably as a result of pressure from the Politburo. The head of the

Soviet secret police was also a major factor in the power struggle that followed Stalin's death. Lavrenti Beria, the head of the NKVD, had the authority and physical power to control the party to a large extent. He had been given this power by Stalin in order to help Stalin maintain his position of autocratic leadership by uncovering any plots directed at undermining Stalin's authority and eliminating their perpetrators. Following Stalin's death, Beria attempted to place himself in Stalin's position as dictator. For the next three months, Beria battled the other members of the Politburo in his attempts to gain the power which he sought. He was ultimately unsuccessful and the other Soviet leaders finally eliminated him from the calculations of power in June of 1953. At that time, Beria was executed, probably with the help of the Soviet army. Another key figure in the period immediately following Stalin's death was Vyacheslav Molotov, an Old Bolshevik who had the main responsibility for foreign policy. Molotov and Malenkov held the two top roles in Soviet politics until September of 1953, when Nikita S. Khrushchev was designated First Secretary of the Communist Party.

The rise of Khrushchev heralded a major new struggle for primacy in the Soviet Union between Malenkov and Khrushchev. Molotov played a less significant role in the struggle than did these other two because his role as Foreign Minister was inherently less important in Soviet

internal politics than were their positions. All three of these figures were members of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party, or Politburo, and it was to be the stage on which the struggle for power was to again take place.

For two years the struggle at the top between Krushchev and Malenkov was to rage quietly. Khrushchev slowly gained the upper hand and, finally on February 8, 1955, he succeeded in forcing Malenkov to resign his post of Premier. Malenkov was replaced as premier by Nikolai Bulganin. Eventually, Bulganin himself was to struggle with Krushchev for power. He and the rest of the so-called "Anti-Party" group were defeated two years later following a nearly successful attempt to oust Khrushchev that occurred while Khrushchev was absent from Moscow. In fact, the attempt was successful in the Politburo, but Khrushchev returned and was able to convince the Central Committee to override the decision of the Politburo.

During the years following Stalin's death, the power in the Soviet Union was in the hands of what appears to have been, and what the Soviets called, a collective leadership. In the collective leadership some, like Khrushchev and Malenkov, were more equal than others, but all played a role in the decisions that were reached. The collective leadership had a shifting membership, but the most important of its members were probably Malenkov, Molotov, Lazar Kaganovich, Khrushchev, Bulganin, Klimenty Voroshilov and Anastas

Mikoyan. All of these men affected Soviet policy considerably at various times during the years following the death of Stalin. As the alignments of these men shifted, so did the policies of the Party and the Soviet government.

The viewpoints of the various factions in the political infighting in the Soviet Union can be seen in the rapid oscillations taken in the state controlled press on many policy issues. During the period immediately following Stalin's demise when Malenkov, Molotov, and Beria were the main figures in Soviet policy, the policy of the Soviets shifted slightly from its anti-Arab bent to one that was slightly more favorable. (It was, however, still harshly critical of Egyptian policies at times. A case in point was the bitter Soviet condemnation of the Anglo-Egyptian treaty signed in 1954.) It was not until Khrushchev ousted Malenkov in 1955 from the Soviet premiership that there was a strong and definitely pro-Arab policy emanating from Moscow.

The interests of the U.S.S.R. had long been directed toward Egypt. With the rise of Arab nationalism as embodied by Nassar and the Egyptian revolution and the rise in the U.S.S.R. of Khrushchev, the stage was now set for the Soviet Union and Egypt to become partners and, eventually, close allies. The Czech Arms Deal in 1955 was the start of a friendship that was to last as long as Nasser lived.

Notes (Chapter I)

- 1) See Appendix A.
- 2) See Map #1.
- 3) Thomas Kiernan gives a fairly good account of the cultural background of the Arabs in Thomas Kiernan, The Arabs (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1975). This citation comes from page 258 of that study.
- 4) Ibid, p. 259.
- 5) A description of Muhammed Ali's motives and achievements can be found in Phillip K. Hitti, History of the Arabs (London: MacMillan, 1970), on pp. 722-724 and briefly in Kiernan, *ibid*, p. 197.
- 6) The Czech Arms Deal was the first transfer of arms between the Soviet Union and any nation in the Middle East. It involved second-line weapons (weapons which were obsolete or nearly so in Soviet and East European armed forces) worth nearly \$250 million which were traded for Egyptian rice and cotton. The deal was handled for the Soviets by Czech intermediaries and was the first major incursion by the Soviets into the Middle East.
- 7) The Americans attached several stringent economic conditions to their offer of aid in building the Aswan Dam. The Egyptians eventually accepted these conditions despite their belief that they were mortgaging their nation's economy for the loans. Despite the concessions by the Egyptians, the Americans withdrew their offer. For a look at this process and the reasons behind it, see Chapter III. Also see Kennett Love, Suez: The Twice Fought War (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969).
- 8) For a statistical summary of Soviet-Egyptian trade from 1923 until 1970, see Appendix A.
- 9) The British had had control of the Egyptian economy and its foreign relations for nearly a century. As a result, much of the text of the ECP program was directed against British imperialism. The English text of this program appears in Ivar Spector, The Soviet Union and the Muslim World, 1917-1958 (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1959), pp. 141-156. It was originally published in Arabic in "Ila al-Aman", the organ of the Communist party of Palestine in 1931. For a look at Anglo-Egyptian relations see John Marlowe, A History of Modern Egypt and Anglo-Egyptian Foreign Relations

(Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965).

- 10) The conference was held at Baku, the capital of the Soviet Union's southernmost republic under the auspices of the Communist International, an organization which was to become, for a time, one of the chief tools of Soviet foreign policy. The republic, Azerbaidzhan, was not coincidentally populated mainly by Muslims. For a look at the location of Baku and Azerbaidzhan and their geographical relationship to Egypt see Map #1.
- 11) For a look at the role of the Comintern in Soviet policy, see for example Jane DeGras, Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy (London: Oxford University, 1951-1953), three volumes, and Jane DeGras, The Communist International 1919-1943 (London: Oxford University, 1956-1965), three volumes.
- 12) Spector, op cit, pp. 150-151.
- 13) The texts of several documents of the same type are included in Spector's book.
- 14) Ibid, p. 182. This was supposed to be particularly true of Germany, a nation which had gone through several abortive attempts at Communist revolution. However, it seems more likely that the explanation lies not in the reaction of the middle class to Communist tactics, but rather in the common reaction of both the working class and the so-called "intellectual workers" to the economic disfunction of the economies of their nations. The makeup of the Nazi party in Germany was largely clerks, teachers, secretaries, and other members of the service industries of that nation. While the Nazi party was growing, membership in the German Communist party was also on the rise. For more on the phenomena of class consciousness and Nazism see David Lockwood, The Black Coated Worker: A Study in Class Consciousness (London: Allen & Unwin, 1958).
- 15) Middle East Journal, Vol. #2 (April, 1948), p. 200. For the terms of the agreement and its supplemental protocol, see Robert Slusser and Jan Triska, A Calendar of Soviet Treaties, 1917-1957 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959).
- 16) German occupation of most of Egypt came in the early phases of World War II - 1940-1942 - when the German Afrika Korps under Field Marshal Erwin Rommel was achieving victory after victory in North Africa. The British victory at El Alamein in October 1942 started the exodus of the Germans. With their departure, Egypt came once more under British suzerainty. For a brief

description of Egypt's role in World War II, see John Marlowe, op cit, pp. 310-320.

- 17) Anthony Nutting, Nasser (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1972), p. 20.
- 18) Robert O. Freedman, Soviet Foreign Policy in the Middle East Since 1970 (New York: Praeger, 1975), p. 10.

CHAPTER II

THE CZECH ARMS DEAL AND BEYOND: THE SOVIET-EGYPTIAN MILITARY RELATIONSHIP

The military relationship between the Soviet Union and Egypt was the key which allowed the Soviets to enter the political arena of the Middle East and to escape the encirclement attempts of the West in that area by completely bypassing the Northern Tier of nations of the region. As well as being the medium for the first important breakthrough between the Soviets and the Arabs, the military aspect of the relationship between the U.S.S.R. and Egypt was in many ways its most important facet. It was the one element which was really crucial for Egypt over the long term.

The military relationship was crucial for Egypt for a number of reasons, but what made it vital for both the Soviets and the Egyptians was that it was the long aspect of the relationship between the nations in which it was nearly impossible for the Egyptians to replace the Soviets and their support with Western aid while still maintaining their avowed foreign policy goals vis-a-vis their archenemy, Israel. Without Soviet arms and military support, the Egyptians could not avenge their defeats at the hands of Israel and assuage their wounded pride. They could not help their Palestinian "brothers" achieve a "just" solution to the

problems which the creation of the state of Israel had engendered. With these goals - and with the prestige that championing them had gained for Nasser and Egypt, it was unlikely that they would change them as long as Nasser was alive - Soviet military support was vital if the Egyptians hoped to accomplish the tasks which they had set for themselves.

The military relationship between the Nasser regime and the Soviet Union clearly started with the so-called Czech Arms Deal between the two countries in which Czechoslovakia acted as the transshipper of Soviet equipment to Egypt and the supplier of record of the arms thus provided. The pact between the Soviet Union and Egypt provided the Egyptians with substantial numbers of relatively modern types of military equipment, including MiG-15 fighters, IL-28 light bombers, naval destroyers, submarines, IS-III (Stalin) heavy tanks, T-34 medium tanks, and light arms of all types. All in all, the arms credit provided in the deal by the Soviets to the Egyptians totalled between ninety and two hundred and fifty million dollars in value.¹ All of the Soviet weaponry which was supplied by the Soviet Union to Egypt through Czechoslovakia was, from the Soviet point of view, outmoded. From the Egyptian point of view, however, the weaponry was as good or better than anything it had received from the West,² and was certainly supplied in much greater quantities.

The arms credits were offered by the Soviet Union to

Egypt in exchange for Egyptian cotton and rice shipments which were to be sent to the Soviet Union over a twelve-year period. Under the terms of the agreement, Egypt was allowed to purchase weaponry with a high market value without drastically depleting its then-existing holdings in foreign currency.

The Soviet arms deliveries to Egypt upset an arms balance which had existed in the Middle East since 1950. This balance had been maintained by the Near Eastern Arms Coordinating Commission (a Western-dominated body which had been set up under the terms of the Tripartite Declaration in 1950) which had controlled the supply of Western arms to all of the nations of the Middle East. The Czech Arms Deal destroyed the Western monopoly on arms supply to the Middle East and with it, the ability of the N.E.A.C.C. to maintain an arms balance in the region. It also marked the entrance of the Soviet Union into the political and military life of the Middle East as a significant factor.

The entrance of the Soviet Union into the politics of the region by aiding Egypt was clearly motivated almost completely by political considerations on the part of both involved nations. From the Soviet point of view, the Arms Deal demonstrated the Soviet Union's ability to tamper with local balances of power set up by the West and to offer solid inducements to its prospective partners. In terms of Middle Eastern politics, this meant that the Western-dominated

status quo was no longer inviolable, and the ruling regimes of the region's nations no longer needed to bow to Western pressures for political accords or changes in order to maintain a reliable military posture vis-a-vis their neighbors. As a result, the Czech Arms Deal effectively sabotaged the Baghdad pact³ which was in the process of being organized by Great Britain and the United States under their joint policy of the containment of the Soviet Union. It also provided the Soviet Union with several new prospective allies.

The undermining of the Baghdad pact was also something quite close to Nasser's heart. Whether he and Egypt had stayed out of the pact on principle because it curtailed Arab independence too far (as the Egyptians have contended), or it was simply a case of the Egyptians having been politically outmaneuvered by Iraq's president, Nuri a-Said (as has been suggested elsewhere),⁴ Nasser was determined to destroy the Baghdad pact because it could well have thrust Iraq into Egypt's place at the forefront of the Arab world. Egypt needed some sort of a bold political stroke to maintain its position. The Czech Arms Deal provided just such a gambit. With the Arms Deal, Egypt could offer military assistance to other Arab countries and organize a counter-alliance which would negate the Iraqi attempt to improve their political position in, and perhaps even gain hegemony over, the Arab world. Secondly, the signing of an arms accord with the Soviet Union made Egypt much more capable of

charting its own political course instead of being forced to accept the policy dictates of either the West or the Soviet Union.

It has been argued, particularly by the Egyptian side, that the Czech Arms Deal was a needed step to ensure the security of Egypt. The Egyptians claim that Israel had already made a secret agreement with France which would have supplied the Israelis with significant amounts of advanced armaments (including Mystere IV jets and AMX-13 tanks) before the Soviet-Egyptian pact was signed and that that pact⁵ was needed to offset those arms deliveries. This argument is dubious at best. Israel had requested Mysteres from France in 1954, but it had requested the less sophisticated Mystere II. Soon thereafter, the French authorities agreed to supply Israel with a dozen Mystere II's. The shipment of these planes was held up for quite some time because of misgivings which were voiced in N.E.A.C.C. meetings. During the interim the Mystere II had become obsolete and the French agreed to replace the Mystere II's with Mystere IV's. The change in aircraft caused further delays in N.E.A.C.C. approval, and it was not until April 12, 1956 that the first of eight Mysteres arrived in Israel.

On the other hand, the Soviets had nearly completed the arms deliveries contracted for under the terms of the Czech Arms Deal with Egypt before the Israelis received their small quantity of Mystere IV's. Clearly, Egypt was the first

nation to receive a massive boost in its level of arms supplies, not Israel as the Egyptians have claimed. It is also just as apparent that the shattering of the delicate arms balance in the Middle East could well have been avoided by more adroit handling of Egyptian arms requests by the United States and Great Britain in 1954 and 1955.⁶

A second argument put forward by the Egyptians regarding the military necessity of their agreement with the Soviets is that their planes were inoperative and that they needed new aircraft to replace them. They claim that less than ten of their planes were airworthy at the time of the arms deal.⁷ Again, this contention does not seem to hold water when it is carefully examined. In late July of 1955, approximately fifty of Egypt's eighty fighters were capable of participating in an aerobatic exhibition at Egypt's annual military parade. This would seem to contradict the Egyptian claims of aircraft disabilities. Certainly any nation that could make its jets operational for a military parade could make them operational for a military emergency.

After the initial ties of the Czech Arms Deal, the next step in the deepening of the Soviet-Egyptian military relationship came quite soon. Immediately prior to the beginning of the Suez Canal War between Great Britain, France and Israel on the one side, and Egypt on the other, the Soviet Union and Egypt came to terms on a second arms pact which provided the Egyptians with an identical amount of credit to

that provided by the initial deal. The weaponry provided by this second agreement was not delivered until after the war. As a result, it did much to supply Egypt with replacements for its heavy losses during the futile military phase of its battle with its opponents.

The Suez Canal War between Egypt and its Franco-Anglo-Israeli opponents provided an opportunity for the Soviet Union to show its support for its newfound ally by providing Egypt with direct military support. Such support was not forthcoming. The Soviet Union was reluctant to provide any such support for a variety of reasons. It was probably quite wise in making this decision since its involvement certainly would have drawn the U.S. into the conflict in support of its NATO allies and quite possibly would have led to a nuclear conflagration in which the Soviets and much of Europe would have been annihilated.

After the military phase of the Suez War had been concluded, the Soviets did threaten direct military involvement in the conflict. They warned that both Soviet "volunteers" and Soviet rocket forces were prepared to defend Egypt from the "capitalist aggressors." Generally, these statements by the leaders of the Soviet Union were considered idle threats. The military round of the conflict was effectively over so there was little point in sending Soviet "volunteers" to Egypt. The rocket threat was even less credible. In 1956 the Soviets had not yet deployed rockets capable of reaching

more than 450 miles on any scale of note, although they were close to developing a rocket that could¹⁰. This put all of Great Britain and Israel out of Soviet missile range, and a large portion of France (including Paris) as well.

The weaponry supplied to Egypt by the Soviets played a role that was little greater than that of the Soviets themselves during the combat phase of the Suez War. Neither participated much. President Nasser called for the complete cessation of all air activities when Britain and France began their bombardment of Egypt, presumably because of overwhelming Anglo-French-Israeli airpower. This effectively took the newly-supplied Soviet jets out of the fray. The Egyptians tried to withdraw their new IL-28's at that time along with their Soviet and Czech advisors and technicians. However, according to one British general, Franco-British bombers caught 60 percent of the Egyptian IL-28's on the ground and destroyed them. The MiG-15's were little more effective. Less than thirty of them were operational at the onset of the Israeli invasion of the Sinai. Of these four were shot down and the rest were withdrawn with the entry of the British and French into the conflict. Despite this attempt to withdraw the bulk of their air force, most of the Egyptians' newly-supplied aircraft were, like the IL-28's,¹¹ destroyed on the ground by the Anglo-French bombing.

The Soviet-supplied ground equipment apparently did perform well in the uses to which it was put. Unfortunately,

the Egyptians relied upon static defensive positions which negated the value of their tanks' mobility. As a result, the Israeli army simply bypassed the Egyptian positions and roared almost unchecked to the Suez Canal. With the withdrawal of the Egyptian air forces, the fate of the bypassed Egyptian ground positions was sealed. The U.S. cease-fire of November 7th came, therefore, as a great benison to the beleaguered Egyptians.

The third of the arms deals between the Soviet Union and Egypt came in the wake of the Suez Canal War. Under the terms of the agreement, the Soviets agreed to replace all of Egypt's wartime losses and to add a large quantity of weapons above and beyond those required as replacements.¹² This pact was the origin of all the post-Suez agreements between the two nations and set a pattern for future accords. Under the terms of the 1957 agreement, the Soviets were to provide Egypt with over one hundred and fifty million dollars worth of hardware. The weaponry included 200 MiG-17 fighter-bombers and more naval vessels. The MiG-17 was a more modern version of the MiG-15 which had been provided under the terms of the Czech Arms Deal and would upgrade the Egyptian air forces. Soviet and Czech trainers and advisors were also sent again to Egypt to instruct that country's pilots in the use of the newly purchased aircraft. The combination of the 1957 arms agreement between Egypt and the Soviet Union and the two previous accords prompted one

Egyptian spokesman to claim that the strength of the Egyptian Air Force had doubled between the beginning of The Suez Canal War and September of 1957.¹³

The next arms agreement between Egypt and the Soviet Union came two years later in the midst of the tension between the two countries which had arisen over Nasser's repression of the Egyptian Communist Party.¹⁴ Slightly smaller than the previous agreements had been, the 1959 accord nevertheless was valued at approximately one hundred and twenty million dollars. It included 120 MiG-19 interceptors and also included the construction of some new elements in the Egyptian military infra-structure such as five new airfields and a submarine base which was built at Aboukir on the Mediterranean coast.

Thereafter, arms agreements between the Soviet Union and Egypt seemed to come at the pace of approximately one every two years. The next agreement between the two nations was concluded on schedule in 1961. Valued at one hundred and seventy million dollars, the 1961 agreement provided enough equipment to fully equip six Egyptian infantry and armored divisions. The Soviets also dispatched over 1300 Soviet and Warsaw Pact advisors (900 of whom were Soviets)¹⁵ to reorganize the Egyptian military along Soviet lines.

The next agreement between the two nations was of far greater value. Estimates of its total monetary worth vary

from two hundred and twenty million dollars to five hundred million dollars.¹⁶ Even if one accepts the low estimate as valid, the 1963 accord was of far greater value than any of the previous agreements had been. Concluded in June of that year, it was undoubtedly the most significant pact of all of those concluded between Egypt and the Soviet Union in the interim between the Czech Arms Deal and the Six-Day War in 1967. For the first time, the Soviets had agreed to provide Nasser's government with first-line weapons.

The reasons for the change in the quantity and quality of the arms with which the Soviets provided Egypt are numerous. One important factor was the Egyptian intervention in the Yemeni civil war on the side of the "progressive" republican government which had been set up in opposition to the Yemeni monarchy.

The Egyptian intervention in the Yemeni civil war was exactly the type of action which the Soviet Union had hoped¹⁷ for from its Middle Eastern allies. In the view of the Soviet leaders, such actions could only broaden their own base of support by polarizing the Middle East and increasing the necessity for the more radical of the Arab regimes to rely on the Soviet Union and its allies for military and political support against their Western-supplied foes.

The Soviet hopes in this regard were undoubtedly fueled by the short-lived Tripartite Pact concluded between Egypt,

18

Syria and Iraq in April of 1963. The pact between the Arab radicals had as one of its stated goals the creation of a military alliance which would "be able to free the Palestine Arab homeland from the Zionist danger."¹⁹ The pact must have brought the pleasant spectre of an anti-Western Arab alliance hovering before the eyes of Soviet leaders. Such a possibility (which never came about) undoubtedly encouraged the Soviet Union to supply the Egyptians with better weapons in the hopes of cementing the newly-formed Arab alliance which was aimed at Israel and through it the West.

The 1963 agreement provided Egypt with the same T-54b medium tanks that were still standard for both Soviet and Warsaw Pact armored forces at that time. The Egyptians received enough of the new tanks to completely equip two armored divisions. The quality of the Egyptian Air Force was also improved markedly by the weaponry provided under the terms of the pact. The Egyptians received at least 50 MiG-21 supersonic interceptors, a first-line fighter with which they augmented their forces. They also received several TU-16 medium bombers which could carry a much heavier payload than that of the aircraft which had hitherto been provided to them. These aircraft may well have been the most important of all of the equipment which was supplied to Egypt under the terms of the 1963 arms deal. They provided Egypt with a really significant offensive threat with which it could extensively damage the Israeli heartland

for the first time. The agreement called for more IL-28 light bombers, MiG-17 and MiG-19 fighters, AN-12 troop transport planes and IL-16 paratroop carriers to aid in the resupply and support of the Egyptian forces in Yemen, as well as MI-2 helicopters and (probably) SAM-2 ground-to-air missiles. The Egyptian navy was by no means neglected. It received 36 guided missile gunboats, two destroyers, and two submarines.

The 1963 arms deal marked a breakthrough in the relationship between Egypt and the Soviet Union and was in many ways a new breakthrough in the military balance in the Middle East. It was the first time in modern history when any of the Middle Eastern nations were supplied with state-of-the-art weaponry in significant quantities for all three major branches of the military: land, sea and air; and the first time that the Soviets had supplied a nation with an avowedly anti-Communist leader with frontline military equipment. It also signalled the beginning of an arms race for both quantity and quality between Israel and the Arabs that was to rapidly escalate and it was eventually to serve as a proving ground for the new weapons systems of both the Soviet Union and the West.

There was one more Soviet-Egyptian arms pact prior to the Six-Day War between Egypt and Israel in 1967. Concluded in August of 1965, the agreement provided Egypt with approximately three hundred and ten million dollars worth of

equipment. It significantly increased the Egyptian stock-piles of land, sea and air armament, but it did not qualitatively improve their armed forces as had previous deals because no new weapons types were supplied to the Egyptians.²⁰

At the onset of the Six-Day War, the Soviet Union had over the years supplied Egypt with an immense amount of armament (See Figure 2). They had completely revamped the structure of the Egyptian armed forces and had trained those forces in the uses of the weaponry that they had been provided. They had helped to improve the infrastructure of the Egyptian military by helping to construct new air and naval bases for its use. The total value of the armaments and services with which the Soviet Union had provided Egypt before the Six-Day War has been estimated at anywhere from one to two billion dollars. The equipment was both a step up in both quantity and quality and provided Egypt with something beyond military might; something in the long run which has undoubtedly proved far more valuable to Egypt: It had maintained and even enhanced Egypt's position as the preeminent political and cultural force in the Arab world. It had helped to maintain Egypt's role as the innovator of the Middle Eastern Arab nations and as the most physically powerful of those nations. These effects combined to place the value of the Soviet Union's military aid to Egypt far beyond even the two billion dollar upper limit that has been placed upon it. With such advances in both physical and emotional

power, the Egyptians and Soviets must have expected a far better showing than the Egyptians had given in the Suez Canal War in any future conflict. They were to be rudely disappointed very soon.

The Six-Day War between Israel on the one side and an Arab combination of nations that included Egypt, Syria and Jordan on the other, marked a new watershed in Soviet-Egyptian relations. The Soviet military presence in the Arab world, particularly in Egypt, increased dramatically after the Arab debacle. Not only did the Soviets replace Arab equipment losses and drastically increase the quality of the armaments which were provided to the Arab forces (particularly in terms of air defense equipment), but they also occupied air and naval bases in Egypt and eventually began to fly fighter sorties over Egypt and man surface-to-air installations in Egypt's defense.

On the morning of June 5, 1967, the Israeli armed forces initiated a "preemptive" attack on the Arab nations of Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Iraq. Their attack was a complete success and achieved the devastation of the air forces and airfields of the Arabs in a very short time. Egypt and Syria had been singled out by the Israelis as their primary foes. Within three hours of the launching of the Israeli attack, their planes had destroyed nearly 60 percent of the Egyptian air force in attacks on Egyptian
21
airfields throughout Eastern Egypt. During the brief

course of the war, another 40 Egyptian aircraft were downed
by Israeli pilots.²²

The quick devastation of Egypt's air force and those of the other Arab nations assured that the battle on the ground would be equally devastating to the armies of the Arab nations. The Israeli air force dominated the skies. In the open desert warfare which followed the initial Israeli air strike, this meant that Arab military formations were completely vulnerable to ground support attacks from Israeli aircraft. This combined with Israeli tank and tank crew superiority to result in the rout of the Egyptian tank forces and in the destruction of at least 500 Egyptian tanks in battle.²³

By the end of the brief conflict, the Israelis had advanced from their pre-war borders to the Suez Canal in the West. They had made similar gains in other regions. They had demonstrated land and air superiority over their foes and the navies of both sides had been no more than negligible factors in the conflagration. A great deal of the Soviet equipment supplied to the Arabs had proven to be almost completely ineffective against the armed forces of the Israelis.²⁴

Unlike the hesitance which the Soviets showed following the Suez attacks, they reacted immediately to the Israeli attack. They condemned the Israelis, declared their un-

conditional support for the Arabs, and began to pressure for an immediate cease-fire when the extent of the Arab debacle became clear. By June 9, the Arabs had all decided that a cease-fire was essential. The Israelis, however, demurred. They continued their advances into Arab territory and were, for example, nearing Syria's capital, Damascus. The Soviets, perhaps fearing the downfall of the rather radical Syrian regime, immediately broke off diplomatic relations with Israel and threatened other sanctions including direct unilateral military intervention.²⁵

Eventually, the combination of Soviet threats and American pressure and the Israelis' achievement of most of their goals resulted in the end of the Six-Day War. The war had resulted in the complete humiliation of the Arabs and in the destruction of the bulk of their armed forces. It also left them shorn of large amounts of valuable territory. The two most important outcomes of the war as far as the Soviets and the Egyptians were concerned were undoubtedly the evidence that Soviet military supplies to Egypt and the other Arab nations were completely inadequate for their needs and, perhaps even more importantly, the realization that the Egyptians were now even more reliant on the Soviet Union - at least in terms of military support - than they had ever been in the years prior to the war.

The performance of Egypt's armed forces during the Six-Day War gave the Soviets extensive information on what

was needed in any future wars that might conceivably be fought between Egypt and Israel. The most pressing of Egypt's needs was clearly some sort of an effective air defense. The Egyptian pilots had proven themselves to be no match for their Israeli counterparts. The SAM-2 anti-aircraft missiles with which the Soviets had provided the Egyptians before the war proved to be no more effective in reducing Israeli air superiority. The SAM-2 missiles had a very slow rate of acceleration and were rather ineffective at low levels. Since most of the Israeli sorties were flown at low levels, the Israeli planes easily evaded the missiles which the Egyptians fired at them.²⁶

To offset the problems in Egypt's air defense, the Soviet Union provided Egypt with an air defense package that was designed to overcome the failings of the Egyptian pilots and the SAM-2. This was the Soviet alternative to an Egyptian proposal that the Russians take complete command of Egyptian air defense and the Egyptian air forces.²⁷ The Soviets began by replacing the massive aircraft losses that the Egyptians had suffered from the Israelis' surprise pre-emptive bombing raids on Egypt's airfields at the outset of the Six-Day War. Egypt's losses were staggering: They lost all 30 of their TU-16 medium bombers, two-thirds (27) of their IL-28 light bombers, 12 SU-7 ground attack fighters, 90 MiG-21 interceptors, 20 MiG-19 fighters, 75 MiG-17 fighter-bombers, and 32 transport planes or helicopters. All

in all, they lost approximately 300 of their 500 aircraft, nearly all of their strategic bomber force, and the majority of their most advanced interceptors. By the end of June of 1967, the Soviets had replaced 200 MiG's. By October of that year, they had supplied Egypt with an additional 100 MiG-21s, 50 MiG-19's, 50 to 60 SU-7's, and 20 IL-28's.²⁸ As a result of the speed of the massive Soviet airlift to resupply them, the Egyptians had by late fall more than replaced nearly every element in their air force. The only two exceptions were their strategic bombing force and their troop transport planes.

The Soviets also slowly rebuilt Egypt's anti-aircraft system. Initially the Soviets shipped Egypt an improved version of the SAM-2, along with radar guided 57mm anti-aircraft guns. Along with the weapons, there came Soviet controlling technicians to oversee the use of the weapons. Eventually the Soviets also supplied Egypt with SAM-3 missiles which were manned by Soviet technicians and placed around the Aswan dam. The bulk of the new anti-aircraft missiles was placed in a rectangular formation between the Suez and the Egyptian heartland along the Nile. The so-called "missile box" was a key element in the new Egyptian air defense plan and was intended to protect Cairo and the rest of the upper Nile Valley from deep interdiction by Israeli bombers. Initially, it was relatively unsuccessful; neither the missiles nor their technicians had

been sufficiently improved to slow the Israeli pilots who crossed the Suez to raid strategic targets within Egypt.

The Soviets also rapidly replaced the tanks that the Egyptians had lost in the Sinai during the Six-Day War. The pace of this segment of the Soviet resupply of Egypt's military was somewhat slower than was the replacement of aircraft, but, nevertheless, by February of 1968, the Soviets had provided the Egyptians with replacements for 60 percent of the 700-800 Egyptian tanks which had been captured or destroyed. In some ways the Egyptians were better off on land than they had been prior to the debacle in June. Many of the tanks that they had lost in the Sinai were older models such as the IS-III heavy tank and the T-34 medium tank. All of the replacements that they received were the much more modern and effective T-55 medium tanks.

The massive resupply of Egypt's military by the Soviet Union after the Six-Day War was undertaken on terms that practically amounted to an outright gift. According to Nasser on July 28, 1968, "We (Egypt) have so far paid not one millieme for the arms we obtained from the Soviet Union. We have no money to buy arms." Indeed they did not. By 1968 the Egyptians had completely depleted their reserves of foreign currency of 1955 and were heavily in debt.

By October 1968, the Soviet Union had replaced over 80 percent of Egypt's material losses from the Six-Day

War. That month also marked an inspection of the Egyptian defenses along the Suez Canal by the Soviet Chief of Staff, Marshal Ivan I. Iakobovskii. He returned to Moscow and reported his findings, and then immediately returned to Egypt.³² At that time, the Soviets proposed that Egypt and the other Arab nations to which the Soviet Union was selling arms join together in a defense organization along with the nations of the Warsaw Pact Organization.³³ This would have put the arms that the Soviet Union was selling more directly under Soviet supervision and tightened the military and political relationship between Egypt and the other Arab countries and the Soviet Union. Nasser and the other Arab leaders were skeptical of the idea for many of the same reasons that had caused them to reject the Anglo-American sponsored Baghdad Pact in the mid-fifties. As a result, the idea never came to fruition and quickly disappeared.

By early 1969, the Egyptians were beginning to become familiar with their newly-acquired Soviet weaponry. They had been instructed in its use by their Soviet advisors until they were proficient enough for these advisors to become unnecessary. As a consequence, the Soviet advisors were steadily withdrawn until less than two thousand were left in Egypt. As the number of Soviet advisors dwindled, so, too, did the influx of Soviet arms to Egypt. Spare parts soon became in short supply and the Egyptians consequently did not have the hardware to fight any war save a defensive

one for more than two or three days. By cutting off the supply lines to Egypt, the Soviet Union's leaders had effectively eliminated the possibility of Egypt launching an attack on Israel and placed Egypt's impatient military under limited control.

The Soviet control of Egypt's military possibilities was not to last long, however. The junior officers in Egypt's military were impatient and would brook little, if any, delay in going into combat with the Israelis. They disliked the diffidence of their Soviet advisors and chafed under the restraints which had been placed upon them. In February of 1969, their discontent was assuaged. After a visit to the front, President Nasser gave permission for Egypt's artillery to resume its shelling of the Israeli positions across the Suez. Thus began the so-called "war of attrition" between Egypt and Israel. It quickly escalated.

Initially the Soviet role in the "war of attrition" was minimal. In fact, in the political arena the Soviet Union's leaders agitated for a cessation of the hostilities for the first several months of the conflict. Nasser was, however, adamant in his resolve to pursue his policy of a mini-war against the Israelis. After a time the Soviet Union acceded to his wishes and went along, albeit reluctantly, with the Egyptian desire for conflict.

The Soviet role in the conflict developed slowly. At

first, it was limited to the supply of copious quantities of artillery shells and presumably advice on tactics from the Soviet advisors in Egypt to the Egyptian commanders of the fire-control centers at which they were stationed. The Egyptian artillery barrages directed at the Bar-Lev line of Israel naturally provoked an Israeli response. The Israelis were clearly outgunned in any sort of an artillery battle with the Egyptians. The Egyptians had more and better artillery and less frontier to cover. To offset their disadvantage, the Israelis resorted to commando and air raids and an occasional armored sortie across the Canal. By November their tactics had completely obliterated Egypt's missile box and had given them free access to Egypt's heartland. They were bombing when and where they chose. Egypt's air force was unable to stop the Israeli air incursions and was effectively banished from the air by the Israeli superiority in that medium.³⁶

The Israeli air superiority over the Egyptians was an embarrassment of sorts to the Soviet Union. It made a mockery of the Soviet attempt to rebuild Egypt's defenses and, thus, indirectly jeopardized the Soviet's ties with all of their Arab allies. This was particularly true if Egypt's vulnerability was linked to the Soviet Union. Again the desires of the Soviet Union and the Nasser regime had come into congruence. In December 1969, this congruence brought the Soviet Union more directly into the "war of

attrition."

The heightened Soviet involvement began in mid-December when Anwar Sadat went to the Soviet Union to request more help. His visit was a success. The Soviets agreed to take "active measures in strengthening the defense capability of the U.A.R. (Egypt) and the other Arab states." ³⁷ The most important element of the agreement that Sadat and the Egyptian delegation had worked out with the Soviet leadership was their agreement to send the SAM-3 surface-to-air missile to Egypt. The SAM-3 was a sophisticated weapon that even North Vietnam, which was suffering from incessant U.S. bombing, had as yet not received from the Soviets. The missile was effective at low altitudes and so could go a long way in helping the Egyptians to effectively combat the Israeli air force and its low-flying tactics.

Despite its value, it appeared that the supply of the SAM-3 to Egypt would turn out to be too little too late. In January of 1970, the Israelis announced that "all of Egypt ³⁸ is our battlefield" and extended their raids to the thitherto unbombed areas west of the Nile where the bulk of Egypt's population dwelled. Nasser hurried secretly to the Soviet Union to arrange for more aid. His journey accomplished two things, one of which would be of tremendous significance for Soviet-Egyptian relations and both of which would be instrumental in stemming the tide of the Israeli air assault.

The first of the two things which Nasser accomplished

during the course of his talks with the Soviet leadership was of obvious importance. He succeeded in convincing the Soviets to speed up their arms deliveries. As a result, by mid-March the SAM-3 missiles were already arriving in Egypt along with Soviet technicians to man them.

The dispatch of Soviet technicians to man the SAM-3's was the second, and in many ways more important, of Nasser's accomplishments on his trip to Moscow. Nasser had convinced the Soviet leadership to commit their technicians and also their fighter pilots to an active role in the defense of Egypt.

The commitment of Soviet personnel to an active role in combat to defend Egypt was another major breakthrough in the Soviet-Egyptian military relationship. No similar course of action had ever been taken by the Soviet Union in support of a non-Communist nation. The genesis of the change in their relationship had begun with the Six-Day War. In that conflict Egypt had shown an inability to defend itself and its Soviet weaponry adequately from Israeli attacks. This inability had been underscored by the results of the first phase of the "war of attrition." The Soviet Union was committed to Egypt as its ally. Egypt was unable to defend itself and unwilling to suspend hostilities. The logic of the situation demanded that the Soviets either commit their own troops or even more sophisticated weaponry (such as the MiG-23[25]) to Egypt's defense. Both courses

of action had their drawbacks. Committing their troops risked both the lives of the troops and steadily escalating involvement. Committing their best weaponry risked its falling into the hands of their enemies. As it turned out, the Soviet Union chose to adopt a compromise between the two courses of action.

Initially, the Soviet role remained quite limited. The new SAM-3 missiles and their Soviet crews were committed only to halt Israel's deep penetration raids against the Egyptian heartland when first emplaced on March 15,³⁹ 1970. They were therefore placed exclusively around Cairo, Alexandria and the Aswan Dam. The Soviet fighter pilots and their planes officially patrolled only the areas around the SAM-3 sites in order to protect them from Israeli attacks in early April. They also were committed to protect the airbases which Nasser had given over to Soviet control⁴⁰ under the terms of the January 1970 agreement. The limited involvement of the Soviet Union was shortlived. For a variety of political and military reasons, the scope of their activities would soon widen.

In early April 1970, the Israelis ceased their deep penetration raids over Egypt. The new SAM-3 sites and the Soviet air missions over them had been effective in deterring the Israelis from their assaults on the Egyptian heartland. Those sites and air missions had now become, however, effectively pointless to continue. The Soviet

leadership was now faced with another decision regarding its role in the Egyptian-Israeli conflict; either withdraw their forces and perhaps see a resumption of the Israeli raids, or increase their involvement by widening the scope of their military support of Egypt. Flushed with success, they chose the latter.

On January 1, 1970, there were only 2500-4000 Soviet advisors in Egypt. None were pilots and none were members of missile crews. The Soviets manned no SAM sites or aircraft, nor did they control any airfields. By March 31, there were 6500 to 8000 Soviet military personnel in Egypt. Sixty to eighty of the Soviets were pilots and approximately 4,000 were members of missile crews. The Soviets were manning twenty-two SAM sites and may have controlled one airfield. By June 30, the number of Soviets had escalated to between 100 and 150 pilots and 8,000 missile crew members. They manned 45 to 55 SAM sites and were flying 120 combat aircraft as well as controlling six airfields on Egyptian soil.⁴¹ The pilots had also extended their range of operations from the limited sphere of April to now include flights up to the edge of the Suez Canal Zone. Additionally, in May the Egyptians had deployed Soviet crews and SAM-3 missiles in the Canal air defenses and had rebuilt their missile box with the improved equipment and improved firing techniques,⁴² which were probably suggested by the Soviets.

The tide of the war of attrition had now turned.

Soviet weapons, Soviet personnel and Soviet tactics had put Egypt back into a feasible defensive position almost overnight. The Israelis, while not defeated, were now being held in check. For Egypt it was a military victory. For the Soviets it was something more. It was a vindication of their air defense plans for Egypt and an earnest of the lengths to which they would go in support of their allies. It could not do anything but good for their political role in the Arab world.

The war of attrition continued into July. On the 30th of that month, something happened in the skies over Egypt which could well have changed the complexion of events in the Middle East for some time to come. Four Soviet-piloted Mig-21's were lured into an Israeli trap and shot down in a dogfight that took less than one minute.⁴³ It was the first documented case of the loss of Soviet pilots during the conflict. The incident might well have been disastrous for the peace process that was underway in the Middle East. The American-proposed Rogers Plan had been accepted by the Egyptians on July 23rd.⁴⁴ The Israeli Knesset was set to debate the issue on July 31st. Flushed by the success of their pilots against the Soviets, the Israelis might well have chosen to reject the peace initiative in hopes of earning a more favorable offer. The direct military involvement of the Soviet Union had turned the tide of the "war of attrition" but the Israelis had now proven themselves

capable of defeating even the Soviets in air combat. With proof of their own vulnerability, perhaps the Soviet Union would be less willing to support Egypt quite so forcefully. Some argued along these lines in the Knesset in the hope that in the continuation of conflict, Israel would improve its bargaining position. Cooler heads prevailed, however, and the Knesset approved the Rogers proposal on July 31.⁴⁵ A cease-fire came into effect one week later.

The cease-fire did not slow the renewed influx of Soviet-made arms and Soviet personnel into Egypt. When Nasser died on September 28, 1970, there were 150 Soviet pilots manning a like number of planes and over 10,000 Soviets manning more than 70 SAM sites.⁴⁶

Nasser's death marked the beginning of the end of an era in Soviet-Egyptian military relations and Soviet-Egyptian relations as a whole. When he had come to power, following the coup of the Free Officers in 1953, the Soviet Union and Egypt had had little government-to-government contact for many years. The Czech Arms Deal that Nasser had initiated changed that.

The Czech Arms Deal was the military key that opened the door for Egypt's relationship with the Soviet Union to grow and flourish. It released Egypt and with it the rest of the Arab world from its dependence upon the West for arms, and with that, from political dependence as well. It

brought the Soviet Union into a region of the globe that it had thitherto been, economically, militarily and politically, almost completely excluded from by the hegemony of the West. It shattered the delicate military and political balances that had been maintained in the region and, with one bold stroke, made a connection between the Soviet Union and Egypt that was to endure for more than two decades.

From the point of view of the Soviet Union, the Czech Arms Deal both strengthened Egypt's ability to break free of the West and withstand its pressures and appealed to the professional interests of the upper echelons of the Nasser regime. It also was the beginning of what the Soviet leadership hoped would be a broader based anti-imperialist coalition than they had been able to forge previously. The Soviet attempt to forge such a coalition may well have been a policy counterweight to its efforts to ease tensions with the West, efforts which were embodied by the Austrian State Treaty and the generation of the so-called "Spirit of ⁴⁷ Geneva." Like most major qualitative changes in Soviet-Egyptian relations, the Czech Arms Deal came at a time when the relationship between the Soviet Union and the West was relatively positive (See Figure 3). Whether this was because the Soviets had a conscious policy line under the auspices of which they counterbalanced positive direct relations with the West by minor indirect provocation and the encouragement of "national independence" movements, or

simply a result of coincidence, it is remarkable in its consistency as a pattern.⁴⁸ The single exception to the rule was the commitment of Soviet air defense personnel to Egypt in 1970.

The qualitative changes in Soviet-Egyptian relations also coincided with almost every improvement in Soviet-Western relations. Again, there was a single exception to the pattern: the period of relative tension between the Soviets and Egyptians which existed in 1970. At that time, Soviet relations with the West were at a positive peak due⁴⁹ to the "Spirit of Camp David," however, there were no major changes in Soviet-Egyptian relations, a circumstance that was almost certainly due to Nasser's avid anti-Communist campaigns in Egypt and Syria.

From the Egyptian point of view, the benefits of Soviet arms patronage were obvious. It provided them with independence from the West. It provided them with a much greater stock of weaponry than they could possibly have obtained elsewhere. Most importantly, it helped to preserve Egypt's standing as the cultural and political innovator and leader of the Arab world.

From the Czech Arms Deal until Nasser's death, the Soviet-Egyptian military relationship improved greatly. The improvement came in fits and starts, but it always came despite occasional Soviet reservations or Egypt's periodic

determination to demonstrate that it was as independent of the Soviet Union as it was of the West. Egypt's consistent defeats at the hands of Israel forced it to depend more and more upon the Soviet Union for military support. The more it relied upon the Soviet Union for its military hardware, the more permanent that reliance became. By the time of Nasser's death, the militaries of the two countries had become so inexorably intertwined that Egypt was depending on Soviet personnel manning Soviet weaponry for its air defense since it was unable to defend itself from Israeli depredations.

However, the more the Egyptians relied upon the Soviets, the more the Soviets were forced to bolster Egypt's defense to maintain the viability of the Nasser regime with which it was so intimately connected. And, despite the almost complete reliance of the Egyptians upon it for military hardware and support and for the training of many of its officers,⁵⁰ both in the U.S.S.R. and in Egypt, the Soviet Union still had no control of Egypt's actions. Egypt continually acted in a bellicose manner, a manner that cost the Soviets progressively more money and eventually cost them lives.

Clearly, the military relationship over the years between Egypt and the Soviet Union had both positive and negative repercussions for both sides. Egypt was provided with military weaponry, training, and support which gave it the

ability, or at least what it perceived as the ability, to pursue an aggressive foreign policy line toward Israel. As a result, Nasser and Egypt gained a great deal of political prestige in the Arab world. But what had been gained also extracted costs that were nearly as great in terms of political independence. It also had both positive and negative effects on Egypt's economy. While the relationship did modernize Egypt's military and thus, at least to some extent, the rest of the economy through a "trickle down" process, the militarization of Egyptian society drained away resources from the civilian sector of the economy and led to periodic wars which destroyed much of the economic progress that had been made, especially that which had been made in the Sinai Peninsula.

The military relationship between the two nations had both an up side and a down side for the Soviet Union as well. It gave the Soviets bases in Egypt and unlimited access to the Suez Canal - when it was open - which provided them with an improved military posture and presence in the Mediterranean and in the Indian Ocean, and it made Egypt dependent upon the Soviets for military hardware and support. They also gained an excellent testing ground for their weaponry in the Arab-Israeli wars (although there were often instances when their weapons fell into the hands of the Western intelligence agencies as a result of its having been committed in Egypt). On the other hand, the relation-

ship also cost them a great deal of military hardware and capital and gave them an ally which was both unpredictable and uncontrollable and which often acted in a manner that was contrary to Soviet goals and aspirations.

Overall, it is impossible to make an overreaching judgment of the value of the Soviet-Egyptian military relationship which is not at least to some degree debatable. The value of the relationship to each nation involved was different in both form and content. The goals of the two nations were too dissimilar for it to be otherwise. As a result, some differences were unavoidable. These differences may well have led to a situation in 1970 where the burdens of Soviet help - while still necessary for a few more years - were beginning to outweigh the benefits for the Egyptians. Sadat's increasingly negative attitude toward the Soviet Union in the years after he took power in Egypt may be evidence of this. For the Soviets, on the other hand, their presence in Egypt still probably held too much value for them than any costs which arose from it could negate.

Notes (Chapter II)

- 1) The figures given for this vary from source to source. The high figure of \$250 million comes from the U.S. Congress, Subcommittee on Foreign Economic Policy of the Joint Committee, New Directions in the Soviet Economy, 89th Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, 1966), p. 965. The low figure comes from Jon Glassman, Arms for the Arabs (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), p. 10.
- 2) There are several different estimates of exactly how many of each of the various types of weapons were supplied to Egypt, but even the low estimates indicate that the crucial level of tank and jet aircraft supplies were increased by 50 percent and 100 percent respectively. For a more detailed discussion of this point, see Glassman, *ibid*, p. 11.
- 3) The name by which the treaty is commonly known, the Baghdad Pact, suggests the coup which a-Said had pulled. He had successfully convinced the British and the Americans to base the treaty organization in his capital, thereby increasing the prestige and importance of Iraq vis-a-vis Egypt with the West and the Arab world. The suggestion that Nasser was trying to offset this perceived advantage appears in Anthony Eden's memoirs, Anthony Eden, Full Circle (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960), and in Kennett Love, Suez: The Twice Fought War (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969).
- 4) Love, *ibid*, p. 101. This suggestion also appears in Jon Glassman, *op cit*, pp. 9-10. Anthony Nutting says Nasser told the British that it was because of an Israeli raid on Gaza earlier in the year. Nutting, Nasser (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1972), p. 116.
- 5) See Chapter 3, pp. 57-64.
- 6) Love, *op cit*, p. 244, quoting Salah Salem, the Egyptian Minister of both National Guidance and Sudan Affairs.
- 7) The two pacts taken together involved over \$300 million worth of Soviet arms. Glassman, *op cit*, p. 10.
- 8) The Soviets' "offstage thunder" is detailed by Love on pages 610-624 of Suez. Mohammed Heikal discusses the importance of Soviet diplomatic support for Egypt during the Suez crisis and the manner in which it came about on pages 68 through 72 of The Sphinx and the Commissar. Heikal, The Sphinx and the Commissar (New York: Harper & Row, 1978).

- 9) The Sputnik launch in 1957 demonstrated the Soviet capability of reaching anywhere in the world with their missiles. However, capability and deployment were two different matters. Soviet missiles were incapable of reaching Western Europe in any numbers until much later.
- 10) Kennett Love quoting General Sir Charles Keightley. Love, op cit, pp. 528 and 574. This information is confirmed by Anthony Nutting in his biography of Nasser where he also says that the British and French destroyed 18 of the 30 Egyptian IL-28's at Lukor, but states further that the Anglo-French forces destroyed more IL-28's further north. Anthony Nutting, op cit, p. 170.
- 11) In fact, Mohammed Heikal asserts that for all intents and purposes, the Egyptian air force was destroyed during the first day of the Anglo-French bombing. Mohammed Heikal, The Cairo Documents (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1973), p. 109.
- 12) Jon Glassman, op cit, p. 24. Information on the content of the arms accord is also provided by George Lenczowski, Soviet Advances in the Middle East (Washington: American Enterprise Institute for Policy Research, 1972), pp. 146-149.
- 13) Middle East Journal (Autumn 1957), p. 418.
- 14) Nasser's persistent suppression of the Egyptian Communist party was a frequent source of difficulties between the Soviets and the Egyptians. See Volume XI of the Current Digest of the Soviet Press, #33, p. 14; #38, pp. 21-22; and #43, p. 32 for a look at the problems in 1958.
- 15) Glassman, op cit, p. 24.
- 16) Glassman, ibid, p. 24. Lenczowski says that the value was \$220 million in terms of Soviet official prices, but the purchase may well have been worth \$500 million (presumably on the open market). Lenczowski, op cit, p. 148.
- 17) The Yemeni civil war was fought between royalist elements and the left. The Egyptians intervened on the side of the leftists and supplied them with both troops and Soviet weaponry. This action seemed to both the Soviets and the rest of the world to be a step toward the radicalization of the Arab world. Certainly it was, at the very least, another step in expanding the influence of Egypt, the Soviet Union's ally, in the Arab world.

- 18) An account of the 24 days of negotiation which led to this accord is provided by Anthony Nutting. Nutting, Nasser, pp. 326-335. The Union never really got off the ground and shattered before it was completed.
- 19) Glassman, op cit, p. 25.
- 20) Glassman, ibid, p. 26. Lenczowski, op cit, p. 148.
- 21) This meant that nearly 300 Egyptian planes were put out of action before they even had a chance to get off the ground. See Glassman, Arms for the Arabs, p. 40 for a detailed account of the Egyptian losses and those of the other Arab combatants.
- 22) Edgar O'Ballance gives this figure as a part of his information on the ineptitude of the Arab pilots during the war. O'Ballance, The Third Arab-Israeli War (London: Faber, 1972), p. 82. It is also presented in Israeli Ministry of Defense, The Six-Day War (Tel Aviv: Israeli Ministry of Defense Publishing, 1967), p. 40 and Glassman, ibid, p. 47.
- 23) O'Ballance, ibid, p. 168; Glassman, ibid, p. 48.
- 24) This included SAM-2 anti-aircraft missiles, Shmel anti-tank missiles, T54/55 tanks and even the MiG-21 fighter. In part this was due to the Arabs' ineptitude with the weapons, but it was also due to technical shortcomings of the weapons themselves. The weaknesses of the weapons were amply demonstrated during the war. See Glassman, ibid, pp. 45-49; O'Ballance, ibid, pp. 168-171; as well as Nadav Safran, From War to War: The Arab-Israeli Confrontation, 1948-1967 (New York: Pegasus, 1969), pp. 322-324.
- 25) Karen Dawisha, Soviet Foreign Policy Towards Egypt (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), pp. 42-43.
- 26) A short description of the capabilities of the SAM-2 is provided by Glassman, ibid, on p. 47. An even more detailed account is provided by Edgar O'Ballance, The Electronic War in the Middle East, 1968-1970 (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1974), on page 77.
- 27) This information is drawn from Alvin Z. Rubinstein, Red Star on the Nile (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 29. Rubinstein provides the most detailed list of the items involved in the Soviet re-supply of the Egyptian air force in 1967. Also see A. Y. Yodfat, "Arms and Influence in Egypt - the Record of Soviet Military Assistance since June 1967", New Middle East, #10 (July 1969), pp. 27-32.

- 28) Glassman, op cit, quoting Anwar Sadat, p. 67 note.
- 29) This was partially due to the extreme length of the training period for a tank crew of over twenty months. There was little point in rushing tanks to Egypt which would then simply sit idle until crews could be trained to man them.
- 30) In contrast in October of 1967, the Egyptians had already received more planes from the Soviets than they had lost during the Six-Day War.
- 31) BBC/ME/2830/A/9 (July 25, 1968) cited in Alvin Rubinstein, Red Star Over the Nile (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 29.
- 32) These visits are reported in O'Ballance, The Electronic War . . . , pp. 51-52.
- 33) Ibid, p. 52. The Arabs were less than thrilled by the idea.
- 34) The "war of attrition" consisted of periodic shelling, commando raids, aerial combat, and bombing between the Israelis and the Egyptians. The Egyptians used the artillery duels and commando raids to help rebuild their own self-respect which had been badly damaged by their miserable military performance during the war. The Israelis responded in kind as well as through aerial assaults. At one point, the aerial raids grew to be so destructive that they threatened to completely destroy Egypt's industrial centers. For a full account of the "war of attrition" see O'Ballance, The Electronic War
- 35) Mohammed Heikal characterized the Soviet's behavior as "begging." Heikal, The Sphinx and the Commissar, p. 193.
- 36) Glassman, quoting the New York Times of November 11, 1969. Glassman, op cit, p. 71.
- 37) Alexei Kosygin in Pravda, 11 December 1969.
- 38) O'Ballance, The Electronic War . . . , p. 105. O'Ballance is quoting Moshe Dyan. A slightly different version of this quote is provided by Glassman. Glassman, ibid, p. 75.
- 39) This information is given by Rubinstein who is citing a speech made by Anwar Sadat. Rubinstein, op cit, p. 113ff.

- 40) The secret agreement was negotiated by Nasser near the end of January. Soviet planes and pilots began to arrive at their new Egyptian bases in early April. The details of the visit appear in Glassman, op cit, p. 74. Also see O'Ballance, The Electronic War . . ., p. 114.
- 41) These figures are drawn from Strategic Survey 1970, (London: The Institute, 1975). They are also cited by Glassman on page 75 of Arms for the Arabs.
- 42) Soviet personnel were manning Egypt's so-called "missile box" and they were directing the placement and utilization of the SAM-3's. It stands to reason that the Soviets as experts were the ones who suggested the new firing techniques. For more on this see O'Ballance, op cit, p. 113-122.
- 43) The loss was never mentioned by the Soviet press in any way. The New York Times reported the incident on August 12. Alvin Rubinstein cites the same incident, but claims that five Soviet planes were downed. He also quotes an "informed Cairene" as saying that "there were 'drunken parties' at Egyptian bases when the Soviet pilots were shot down." Rubinstein, op cit, p. 120ff.
- 44) The Rogers Plan was a proposal developed by the Americans and put forward by their Secretary of State, William Rogers, in December 1969, which called for Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories in return for "a permanent peace based on a binding agreement." The final details of the agreement were to be worked out with the aid of Gunnar Jarring, a U.N. mediator. Nasser announced his willingness to accept the proposal before the Congress of the ASU on July 23. Mohammed Heikal claims that this was met with "surprise and consternation" on the part of many Arabs. For his account see p. 198 of The Sphinx and the Commissar.
- 45) Yaacov R'oi and Ilana Dimant-Kass directly link the Israeli acquiescence to the downing of the Soviet pilots. R'oi and Dimant-Kass, The Soviet Military Involvement in Egypt, January 1970 - July 1972 (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Research Paper #6, 1974), p. 18.
- 46) Strategic Survey 1970, p. 47, and Glassman, op cit, p. 75.
- 47) The "Spirit of Geneva" was the optimistic mood regarding international relations that followed the four-power summit in Geneva in July 1955.
- 48) The idea of a consistent two-emphasis Soviet foreign policy is developed more fully in Glassman, op cit, on

pp. 3-6.

- 49) The "Spirit of Camp David" was, like the "Spirit of Geneva", a positive attitude toward international relations which followed a summit between the world's major powers. This one took place between Dwight D. Eisenhower and Khrushchev at the American President's Camp David retreat in September of 1959.
- 50) The Soviets had been training Egyptian officers in both tactics and the use of Soviet weaponry since just after the Czech Arms Deal. See the Middle East Journal, Vol. 10, #3 (Summer 1956), p. 262 for the announcement of the beginnings of this sort of cooperation between the militaries of the two countries.

CHAPTER III

NOT BY ARMS ALONE: SOVIET-EGYPTIAN DIPLOMACY

The political aspect of the relationship between Egypt and the Soviet Union was by far the most broad-reaching element of the relationship between the U.S.S.R. and the Egyptians. Politics and diplomacy were necessarily involved in each of the other facets of the relationship, if for no other reason than simply because they played the role of the initial phase in the development of the military, economic, and cultural connections between Egypt and the Soviet Union. The political connections between the two countries were tenuous at best before the consummation of the Czech Arms Deal. After the signing of the arms pact, the political aspect of the relationship between the U.S.S.R. and Egypt solidified and became a prominent part of the overall involvement between the two nations. While politics and diplomacy were always involved when one of the other elements of the relationship was being negotiated, they also had an independent role in situations where the others were either useless or inappropriate.

Prior to the signing of the Czech Arms Deal, there were few direct contacts between Egypt and the Soviet Union. Certainly, the connections that did exist were on no scale

of any note. While the direct contacts between the two countries were relatively unimportant, the internal political developments within both Egypt and the U.S.S.R. were instrumental in shaping the interrelationship between the two nations for the next two decades. Developments affecting the future connections between the two occurred in Egypt first when the military coup led by Lt. Colonel Gamel Abdel Nasser and Lt. General Mohammed Neguib swept away the monarchy which had ruled Egypt for the last century and a half.

After leading the successful coup by the military in 1952, Nasser and Neguib became the dominant figures in the Free Officers clique and in Egyptian politics. They then proceeded to form a government that emphasized reform. What had previously been known as the Executive Council of the Free Officers' clique now became known as the Revolutionary Command Council. The Council, under the joint direction of Nasser and Neguib, reinstated Ali Maher - who had been one of the Prime Ministers during Farouk's reign - as Prime Minister with the stipulation that he must accept and implement a list of demands regarding the running of the Egyptian government that the Revolutionary Command Council deemed necessary. These demands included the restoration of the 1923 constitution, the disbanding of the political police, the cessation of martial law, and the deposing of King Farouk. The next major move made by the Revolutionary

Command Council was to ask that Maher begin a program of land reform. The Council continued to push for the political reforms that it had demanded earlier, and it also began to make overtures to the British and American governments for the acceptance of its revolution. It hoped for economic and military aid for Egypt from these two nations, especially from the United States.

In September of 1952, Maher was dismissed as Prime Minister. The officially stated reason for his dismissal was his failure to follow the Revolutionary Command Council's land reform policies.² A more likely explanation of it is that the Revolutionary Command Council was simply making its move to consolidate its effective position of power and its titular counterpart. This argument is lent a measure of credence by the immediate installation of Neguib as Prime Minister after Maher had been dismissed. Still, the old multiple party political system of Egypt remained until January of 1953, when Neguib issued decrees abolishing the 1923 constitution and instituting a military government. The military government was to be a transitional phase that was to last three years according to the decrees. Another important move made by the Revolutionary Command Council at this time was begun by Nasser who had been named Minister of the Interior. As Minister of the Interior, Nasser controlled the police organs of the Egyptian government. He used the security forces which he now controlled to initiate a drive

to suppress the Egyptian Communist Party. The policy of suppressing the Communist Party was to set a pattern that Nasser was to follow all through his career, a pattern that was to cause considerable friction between Egypt and the Soviet Union in later years.

With Neguib's assumption of the post of Prime Minister, a power struggle began to surface which pitted him against Nasser. Earlier there had been subsurface indications of such a dispute existing between the two central figures of the Free Officer's clique, but they had been sublimated by the need for internal solidarity within the Free Officer's clique and the Revolutionary Command Council in the face of its external opponents. The conflict between the two most influential members of Egypt's revolution came to a head in 1954 when Nasser violently suppressed the Moslem Brotherhood.⁴ Neguib was a supporter of the Brotherhood and was, in turn, given its support, so Nasser's act - in his capacity as Minister of the Interior - brought him to loggerheads with Neguib. Their clash resulted in a brief but bitter clash which culminated in Neguib's resignation of the post of Prime Minister. Nasser took over the reins of government when Neguib resigned.

Nasser's arrogation of power in Egypt was greeted with mixed reactions by the leadership in the Soviet Union. The Egyptian Communist Party had sided with Neguib in his power struggle with Nasser. Given the relationship between the

ECP and the Soviet Union at that time, a relationship which was characterized by complete Soviet dominance, the ECP decision to support Neguib would seem to be indicative of the attitude of at least one of the elements in the Soviet leadership at the time. The members of that clique within the Soviet leadership must have felt that Nasser was more pro-British than Neguib because he seemed to have more ties to England from his education there and from his military connections with British officers than did Neguib.

Officially, the response of the Soviet Union to Nasser's assumption of power in Egypt was not quite as hostile as that of the Egyptian Communist Party. It ranged from the condemnation of some of his policies to the encouragement of others. The Soviets, of course, encouraged any kind of hostility toward the West which was exhibited by Nasser. When the Egyptians signed the Anglo-Egyptian Pact in 1954, the Soviets on the other hand reacted in an equally predictable negative fashion. They claimed that the Nasser regime "was totally dishonoured." This oscillation toward Egypt and the Nasser regime was typical of the Soviet Union's attitude toward the revolutionary government for the first few years following its inception in 1952. The initial period of disinterest in Egyptian affairs shown by the Soviet Union (which was mentioned in the first chapter) was quickly followed by the unsettled situation described above. It is understandable in light of the internal turmoil that was

taking place in the Soviet Union and, to some extent, in Egypt at the time.

In the Soviet Union Stalin was still in power, but he was becoming increasingly ill when the coup first occurred. Thereafter, the struggles for power between Malenkov, Beria, and Khrushchev occupied the Soviet leadership. With these concerns, the initial lack of interest and later confusion which they displayed toward a small, albeit important, nation in an area which their influence was extremely limited was not only understandable, but almost certainly predictable.

The earlier years of Nasser's leadership provided much with which the Soviet government could take umbrage. Nasser initially sought the aid of the United States in modernizing his army and in constructing the Aswan High Dam. Nasser always looked to the West first and foremost in any matter of importance to Egypt. At the same time, however, he did seek to improve relations with the Soviet Union. In August 1953, the Soviets signed their first agreement with the new government in Egypt. This pact, which instituted international banking cooperation between Egypt and the Soviet Union, was the harbinger on many more ties which were to develop between the two countries. One year later, there was an agreement on trade between the two nations. Agreements of this sort were typical of Egyptian-Soviet relations until July 19, 1955. The two nations maintained cordial, if

not intimate, relations typical of the sort of diplomatic relations which are maintained by most nations in a relatively stable geopolitical situation as a matter of course.

On July 19, 1955, Egypt made an agreement with Czechoslovakia to trade cotton, rice, and textiles for machinery. The true nature of the agreement was not immediately announced by either country. As the world was to discover later, the agreement was not a simple commercial accord between two countries that were attempting to establish solid trade relations. It was in actuality a deal for 250 million dollars worth of Soviet military equipment which Czechoslovakia was to provide to Egypt as an intermediary for the Soviet Union. The Egyptians were to receive extensive supplies of relatively modern equipment which included MiG jets, 100 tanks, six submarines, artillery and various
10
other weapons.

The Egyptians had been seeking this sort of arms package for more than a year. Initially, they had looked to the United States to supply them with the armament that they desired. Nasser tried hard to obtain the arms from the U.S. The American government equivocated for a long while, refusing to give Nasser a definite answer. When Nasser finally forced the issue, the Americans refused him the arms. As Admiral Arthur W. Radford of the U.S. Navy said before a U.S. congressional committee hearing, "The Egyptians wanted
11
the kind of arms we [the U.S.] did not want them to have."

The Egyptians also tried to obtain arms from the British following the Anglo-Egyptian Pact. The British turned a deaf ear to the purchase requests of the Egyptians as the Americans had before them.

Nasser was determined to obtain modern armaments for the Egyptian armed forces. He apparently felt that such armaments were imperative if Egypt was to survive and to grow as a free and independent nation. He felt threatened by Israel. He saw the Baghdad Pact as a threat to Egypt's prestige in the Arab world which had been initiated by the United States and Great Britain to maintain their domination of the Middle East.¹² The Baghdad accords coupled with Israeli raids on Egyptian territory - the Gaza raid of February 1955 in particular - led Nasser to seek armaments elsewhere.

Nasser's desire for arms led him to the Soviet Union via a very convoluted path. It started with his trip to the Bandung Conference in April of 1955. On his way to the conference, he met China's Prime Minister, Chou En-lai, in India. They became cordial, and in the course of their conversations, Nasser inferred to Chou that he would be interested in obtaining arms from the Soviet Union. Chou indicated to Nasser that the Soviet Union would quite possibly be willing to sell Egypt the arms it needed. Indeed, Chou recommended exactly that course of action to the Soviets in a report he made on Nasser to Moscow.¹³

About six weeks after his return from Bandung, Nasser was approached by the Soviet Ambassador to Egypt, Daniel Solod, at a reception. Solod informed Nasser that he had¹⁴ "an answer to the question you posed to our friends." An appointment was set up for the next day. In that meeting Solod told Nasser that the Soviet Union would be willing to supply the arms that the Egyptians desired and that a committee would be set up in the Soviet Union to decide the¹⁵ exact nature of the armaments that would be supplied.

Nasser now had a firm offer for the arms that he desired. He preferred American arms, however. Since this was the case, he gave the United States one last chance to supply him. According to Mohammed Heikal, he delayed his acceptance of the Soviet offer in the hope that an American¹⁶ arms package would come through. The United States continued in its stubborn refusal to supply the types of weapons that the Egyptians felt were imperative for them to obtain. Finally, although the U.S. tried every means at its disposal other than force or acquiescence to prevent the deal, Nasser consummated the Czech Arms Deal in July.

The interim between the forging of the Czech Arms Deal and the announcement of its true nature was not a period of complete quiet between the Soviets and the Egyptians. To some extent Nasser had given up on the United States and decided to improve his relations with the world's other superpower. Therefore, he decided to make other pacts with

the Soviet Union and their friends. On September 6, exactly three weeks before the Czech Arms Deal was announced, a barter agreement between the Soviet Union and Egypt was signed. Under the terms of this accord, Egypt was to supply the U.S.S.R. with 60,000 tons of rice in return for 500,000 tons of crude oil.¹⁷ Eight days later, the Egyptians exchanged trade offices with the Chinese. These agreements were quite possibly intended - at least secondarily - as warnings to the U.S. that the Egyptians would not wait much longer for a change in attitude. As it turned out, they did not.

The Czech Arms Deal with Egypt was the first major Soviet breakthrough into the Middle East. It was of major significance for both signatories and, indeed, the entire world. It allowed the Soviets to break through the containment barrier of NATO, the Baghdad Pact, and SEATO that the Americans and the British had attempted to set up. It also gave the Soviets a foothold in an area that was ripe for the expansion of their influence because of its blossoming nationalism and independence. Egypt gained the armaments that it needed and, more importantly, an alternative to the West as a source of aid. It now had leverage in its political dealings with both the West and the Communist bloc. As later events were to prove, this leverage was to become an important factor in maintaining an independent course for Egypt in its policies.¹⁸

The Czech Arms Deal opened the door for improved

Soviet-Egyptian relations. It did not, however, advance the Soviet Union to the position of Egypt's closest friend and ally, nor did it make the Soviets the nation that Egypt looked first and foremost to when it sought major aid packages. In fact, the Soviets offered the Egyptians aid for the Aswan High Dam on October 10, 1955. The Egyptians, however, chose not to immediately pursue this informal offer by the Soviets for what was the most important project on the agenda for Egypt. What the Czech Arms Deal did do immediately was cause the Egyptians to accept a great many more minor assistance packages from the Soviet Union and its allies. In February 1956, Egypt and the Soviet Union came to agreement on the cooperative exploitation of atomic energy for Egypt. In March, Egypt concluded a trade agreement with the People's Republic of North Vietnam which exchanged Egyptian cotton for Vietnamese coal and cement. Also in March, Egypt¹⁹ and Bulgaria concluded a trade agreement. These accords were typical of Egyptian relations with the Soviet bloc following the Czech Arms Deal. They were indications of the quickly growing friendship between Nasser and the Soviet Union.

While the relationship between the Soviets and Egypt was becoming more and more cordial, the West was by no means excluded from Egypt. In December of 1955, Great Britain and the United States tendered offers of economic aid for the Egyptian project of building a large modern dam on the Nile

at Aswan. Aswan was the site of an already existing dam, but it was inadequate for Egypt's needs. Nasser and the Egyptians had long dreamed of augmenting their hydroelectric capabilities as well as the cultivatable acreage of Egypt by improving the facilities at Aswan. As a result, they had been attempting to get assistance for this project almost since the successful completion of the Egyptian revolution in 1952. The Western powers had long procrastinated about granting this aid to Egypt, but following the Czech Arms Deal and the subsequent Soviet offer of aid for the project at Aswan,²⁰ they began to view the granting of aid to the Egyptians as an imperative step in weaning Egypt away from a possible turn toward the Soviet Union.

The first step in the Western aid package for what was to become known as the Aswan High Dam Project was the advancement of a 270 million dollar credit package from the World Bank to Egypt. The assistance offered by the World Bank was made contingent upon British and American funding of the project as well as large amounts of Egyptian capital. It contained many conditions that President Nasser found objectionable. He felt that the inspection and supervision clauses in the offer amounted to an attempt by the West to gain control of the Egyptian economy. Further, he feared the stage by stage supply of aid was an attempt to wrest total control of his nation's economy and political life from him by making each stage of aid contingent upon more

and more conditions until Egypt was nothing more than a puppet dancing to Western tugs on its strings. Eugene Black, president of the World Bank, flew to Cairo to discuss the problems with the aid program with Nasser. After a discussion that lasted several days, Black and Nasser came to an agreement upon the conditions of the loan.²¹ One important provision that remained unchanged was that the loan would be conditional upon American and British aid packages.

Great Britain and the United States had sent their aid packages along with that of the World Bank, following its report that the project was financially feasible. They made their offers contingent upon the same conditions as had the World Bank. When they made their offers of aid, both the British and the Americans intended to reassert their influence in Egypt. As John Foster Dulles, then American Secretary of State, told Nasser through Eugene Black, "I want Nasser to understand that the Russians can give him weapons for death, but we alone can give him and his people life."²² An admirable sentiment, and one that almost certainly would have - if carried through - defused the nascent Egyptian-Soviet friendship. However, the British and American offers of assistance were to be withdrawn almost as soon as Black returned from his mission to Cairo.

The reasons for the sudden reversal of the Western position are extremely confused and unclear. Some students of the question claim that the Americans and the British de-

cided that Egypt could not pay her share of the dam's costs²³ because her economy was unsound. (Under the terms of the loans, Egypt was to match the funds supplied by the West with an equal amount of her own money.) Since the dam was a financially unsound project, according to this line of reasoning, the American and British offers were withdrawn and the World Bank's loan automatically lapsed.

In his memoirs, Sir Anthony Eden, the British Prime Minister at the time, also asserted that the Egyptian economy was becoming increasingly unsound. Finally, Eden says that there was only so much aid that the West, especially²⁴ Great Britain, could afford. The British had more important projects in the aid department (e.g. helping their close ally, Nuri a-Said, in Iraq).

Another claim as to the reasoning behind the withdrawal of the loan offers is that American internal political problems caused the Americans to withdraw their loan²⁵ offer. This line of reasoning holds that Dulles was annoyed at Nasser's independence. In the face of tight congressional purse strings, arguments that the money was better used at home, and the Zionist lobby, Dulles reneged on his part of the offer when Nasser recognized the People's Republic of China. This action caused the China lobby to side with the other forces that opposed the loan. With such strong opposition in Congress, the loan for the Aswan was almost certain to be rejected. This being the case, Dulles wished to

avoid an embarrassment for the Administration and so withdrew the proposal.

A fourth suggestion as to the reasons for the withdrawal of the aid package to Egypt is put forward by Kennett Love.²⁶ He advances the notion that the assistance funds were withdrawn because of the failure of an American initiative for peace on the Palestinian issues between Egypt and the Israelis. Love blames this failure on David Ben-Gurion whose obstinancy led him to set conditions on the peace proposals that were impossible for Nasser to accept.

There are other notions as to why the West dropped its offer to loan Egypt money for the Aswan High Dam Project. Some of these are Nasser's unreasonable foreign policy behavior,²⁷ Eden's personal enmity for Nasser, and that the West's more obedient Arab allies (Iraq, etc.) pressured against Nasser and Egypt receiving aid in preference to them.

Most of these reasons undoubtedly carry a modicum of the true reasoning behind the withdrawal of the Western offers. From the point of view of the West, a point of view that was still deeply imbued with the Two-Camp view of the world, Nasser was unreasonable, especially in foreign policy matters. He refused to acquiesce to Western foreign policy dictates in such important matters as the signing of the Baghdad Pact and the recognition of the People's Republic of China. He had allowed the Soviets to break through the ring

of encirclement the West had placed around them when he concluded the Czech Arms Deal. He continually attempted to remove Western influence from the Arab nations and to replace it with his own. He further contributed to the rise of neutralism and independence in the policies of Third World nations by supporting and attending the Bandung Conference. All of these factors combined to make Nasser and his policies objectionable in the eyes of the West and its leaders. His refusal to defer to Anglo-American policy in return for aid made it difficult for the West to aid Nasser. This was especially true in view of the internal politics of the West at the time.

In Great Britain there was a strong lobby that demanded the cessation of British aid to Egypt. They felt that Nasser was bent upon destroying Britain's influence in the Middle East. They were adamantly in favor of the harshest possible measures being taken against him. This lobby was strongly imperialistic and was highly critical of Great Britain's declining role in the post World War II world, especially during Eden's tenure as Prime Minister. They insinuated that Eden was a weakling, a jibe to which Eden
28
was particularly sensitive.

The United States also had a strong faction in its legislature that opposed aiding Egypt in its Aswan High Dam Project. The opponents of the loan contended that, since Egypt was unwilling to follow the American line in return

for aid, there was no good reason for such a large expenditure of money.²⁹ This reason combined with those of the pro-Israeli lobby in Washington to make it difficult to get Congressional approval for the loan. However, Congressional reluctance is rarely a sufficient reason for an American administration to abandon a foreign loan, especially one that has already been offered (e.g., the 1982 American sale of the A.W.A.C. radar system to Saudi Arabia). It would almost have to be combined with other strong reasons for an administration to kill such an important foreign policy initiative.

The argument that Dulles and Eden felt that Egypt was unable to carry its economic share also has some credibility.³⁰ In fact, Eden himself even lends it credence in his memoirs. Certainly Dulles and Eden might have believed this despite the assurances of Eugene Black and the World Bank that the Egyptian economy was sound and the project was feasible ten³¹ short days before the withdrawal of the American offer.

Throughout the period from his meetings with Nasser in late January of 1956 until the official withdrawal of the British and American offers of aid on July 19th, Black maintained that the High Dam was "entirely feasible."³² He stated on several occasions that Egypt was capable of contributing its share of the expenditures. When the United States and Great Britain withdrew their offers of aid, Black regarded their contention that ". . . the ability of Egypt to devote

adequate resources to assure the project has become more uncertain than at the time the offer was made," as both an untruth and a cruel diplomatic ploy designed to damage

33

Nasser's position. Black's belief in the Egyptian economy was later given support by Senator William Fulbright. In his statement about the findings of the Senate Subcommittee on Foreign Relations which he chaired, Senator Fulbright indicated that they had not found any evidence to give credence to the claim that the Egyptian economy was rapidly deteriorating.

Another set of indicators that discredits the American and British claims that the Egyptian economy was becoming incapable of carrying its share of the load for the Aswan High Dam Project are the economic statistics for the Egyptian economy during the period in question. First, during the two-year period from 1955 to 1957, the Egyptian national income increased from 918 million Egyptian pounds to 1086 million Egyptian pounds. Second, the Egyptian foreign debt decreased from 34 million Egyptian pounds to 31.2 million pounds. The claim that Egyptian foreign expenditures (especially those for arms from the Soviet bloc) were going up in proportion to national income are also demonstrably false. In 1955, imports by Egypt as a percentage of their national income were 28 percent. In 1956, this same ratio was 27 percent. Finally, in 1957, the percentage

34

of income that imports provided was 25 percent.

These figures indicate that, if anything, the Egyptian economy was becoming more sound, not less so. Its national income was increasing. The Egyptians were reducing their national debt. The Egyptians were also decreasing their foreign expenditures. These conditions are directly opposite to those that the American and British governments were claiming had been the cause for their withdrawal of their aid packages.

Given these indicators of the strength of the Egyptian economy, one must look elsewhere for the reasoning behind the withdrawal of the Western aid packages. Was the American withdrawal of aid simply a blunder based on misinformation, or was it a concerted attempt at disciplining a wayward foreign government? Whichever is the case, it was certainly one of the most disastrous blunders made by the governments of the West in the Middle East since World War II.

The American withdrawal of aid to Egypt for its Aswan Dam project caused a chasm to be opened between the West and Nasser that could never be bridged. Nasser turned to the Soviets first and foremost from that point in time until his death. It cost the West any hope for the friendship of the most influential Arab nation in the world. It gave their Soviet opponents a strong position in a hitherto inaccessible area of the world. It further polarized a world that was already near the brink of the final holocaust. What was worse from the American point of view is that it was an error

that could have been avoided simply by honoring a commitment that had already been made. Whether Egypt's economy was in a state of disrepair or not, from hindsight it is quite obvious that the investment of Western funds in Egypt's Aswan High Dam Project would have paid much greater dividends than it could have cost. It would have decreased the aid needed to rebuild the armies of the region by almost certainly limiting the rise in tensions that led to hostilities that led to the Arab-Israeli wars that were to follow. It would have delayed, if not totally prevented, Soviet encroachment into the Middle East. It would have slowed the rise of enmity in the Third World toward the United States. If all of these benefits were not in themselves sufficient to grant the aid package to Egypt, there are also the humanitarian benefits that would have come from having a lasting monument to the generosity of the West.

The most immediate benefit of honoring the commitment to aid Egypt in the construction of the Aswan High Dam became apparent immediately after the withdrawal of the aid packages was announced. Nasser's reaction to the Western renege was not long in coming. Exactly one week after the United States withdrew its offer to aid Egypt in the construction of the Aswan Dam, Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal Company. It had owned this company in conjunction with Great Britain and France prior to the act of nationalization.

Nasser's decision to nationalize the Suez Canal came

four days after the United States announced the withdrawal of its aid package for the construction of the Aswan Dam. According to Mohammed Heikal, Nasser's decision to nationalize had come almost immediately after he learned of the re-
35 nege. He delayed in making this response public until he had ascertained the military strength of Great Britain in its Middle Eastern protectorates and dependencies. When he was convinced that the British were incapable of immediate military action against him, he announced his decision to nationalize the Egyptian holdings of the Suez Canal Company in a speech delivered in Alexandria on the evening of July 26th. This decision by Egypt's leader came out of annoyance toward what he perceived as the West's mistreatment of Egypt. Nasser felt that the withdrawal of aid by the United States and Great Britain was unconscionable. In Nasser's eyes, the West's cancellation of the aid packages was an attempt to pressure him into making concessions to Israel over the issue of Israeli passage through the Suez Canal (Egypt had blockaded both terminals of the canal, refusing to allow any Israeli shipping through).

The nationalization of the canal seemed to Nasser to be the perfect response to the pressure he perceived emanating from the West. Beyond indicating to the West that Egypt refused to be pushed around, the nationalization of the canal provided Egypt with another major source of income. The profits from the canal could be applied to building the

Aswan Dam in place of the withdrawn Western funds.

The British response to Nasser's action was immediate. The entire nation was outraged. The London Times commented that "an international waterway of this kind cannot be worked by a nation of as low technical and managerial skills as the Egyptians."³⁶ The leader of the British opposition party, Hugh Gaitskell, denounced Nasser as another Hitler.³⁷ These reactions were typical of the tide of sentiment that was sweeping through Great Britain at the time. The nationalization of the canal was condemned on political, moral, and economic grounds by an outraged British populace.

The most important reaction of anyone in Great Britain was that of Anthony Eden, the British Prime Minister. According to Anthony Nutting, his Foreign Minister at the start of the crisis, the nationalization of the Suez gave Eden the opportunity for which he had been waiting.³⁸ Eden had been spoiling for an opportunity to destroy Nasser. He now had his chance to take down the man whom he so detested.

Whether or not Nutting's characterization of Eden's motives is correct, his description of the response of Eden as ". . . an all-out campaign of political, military pressures on Egypt . . ." is a particularly apt appraisal of what the British did under the leadership of Eden. When Eden heard the news of Egypt's nationalization of the Suez, he was dining with King Feisal of Iraq, Prince-Regent Abdullah, Nuri

a-Said, Lord Salisbury, and Selwyn Lloyd. They were nearly as outraged as was Eden. The Iraqis encouraged Eden and the British to initiate an immediate harsh response.³⁹ This reaction on the part of the Iraqi leaders probably came out of their long rivalry with Egypt for a position of primacy in the Arab world, as well as pique from the failure of Nasser to inform them of his intentions in advance. Whatever the motives behind the Iraqi reaction, it gave Eden political support from an Arab nation in his chastisement of Nasser. From Eden's point of view, things could not have worked out better, or so it seemed. He had what seemed to be the perfect opportunity to reassert British influence in the Middle East and even had Arab support in doing so.

The day after Eden was informed of the nationalization of the Suez Canal, he began to take steps to regain the British interest in the canal. Egyptian assets in Great Britain were frozen. The export of arms and military materiels was banned. A formal note of protest was sent to the Egyptian Embassy in London. The note was returned to the British in its own envelope.⁴⁰

These were the major steps taken by Great Britain in the initial period following the Egyptian seizure of the property and assets of the Suez Canal Company in Egypt. No immediate military action was taken. Nasser had been careful in his planning to be sure that there was insufficient force available to the British in the Eastern Mediterranean

region for them to force an immediate solution favorable to their cause.

The other major stockholder of the Suez Canal Company, France, was also harsh in its condemnation of Nasser's act of "piracy." They, just as had Mr. Gaitskell of Great Britain called the nationalization of the canal an act that compared to Hitler's seizure of the Rhineland in the late 1930's. They refused to accept the situation passively. They, just as Great Britain, were determined that Nasser would not be allowed to have complete control of the so-called "throat" of Europe. The loss of their interest in the Suez Canal Company was a severe economic blow to the French. In an attempt to counter that loss, they paralleled the British move and froze Egypt's assets in France. The French demanded that harsh and immediate action be taken against Egypt. Their Prime Minister, Christian Pineau, claimed that if the West did not react strongly, the Middle Eastern oil pipelines would be nationalized within three months and that Europe would, as a result, be at the mercy of the Arabs. He demanded American approval for the diversion of two squad-⁴¹rons of Mystere IV jets that were bound for NATO to Israel.

While the reaction of the West was in general, outrage and dismay, the rest of the world reacted quite differently. The Arab countries, and to some extent the rest of the Third World, were the scenes of outpourings of popular sentiment favoring the nationalization of the canal. Even the Iraqi

leaders, who had initially encouraged harsh British action, were forced to ameliorate their stand in favor of one which was more in tune with the grass roots sentiments of the Iraqi populace and supported Nasser's act.⁴² The Soviet Union was also eventually supportive of Nasser's move to take over the running of the canal. The Soviets did not come immediately to Egypt's side. Instead, they maintained a brief period of silence. Presumably, the Soviet delay was engendered by a desire on the part of the Soviet leadership to wait and see how things would turn out when the dust had⁴³ settled.

After Nasser made his nationalization speech on July 26, silence was the only thing emanating from Moscow on the subject. In fact, according to Mohammed Heikal, the Soviet Union was so cautious in its response that on the day the canal was nationalized, no member of the Egyptian Embassy could do so much as "contact even a third grade civil servant in the (Soviet) Ministry of Foreign Affairs." The caution of the Soviet Union is highlighted even more strongly when one considers that this was only two days after the Soviets had renewed their offer to help finance the Aswan High Dam. It took a day before the Soviet leadership decided upon its response to Nasser's bold act of political defiance.

The Soviet hierarchy from Khrushchev down to the lower echelons of the Soviet bureaucracy for foreign affairs began to issue statements that were warmly supportive of the

canal's nationalization. In a statement made in Moscow on July 31st, Krushchev urged the international community to react calmly to the takeover. He claimed that "nationalization was an action that the Egyptian government, as a sovereign government, is entitled to take." He also said,

We think that the policy of putting the pressure on Egypt is a mistaken one. Rashness and haste in this matter can only bring undesirable consequences for the cause of peace and can only damage the interests of the Western Powers themselves in the area. The Suez Canal's nationalization does not affect the people of Britain, France, the U.S., and other countries. Only the former Suez Canal Company, which received profits from the canal's exploitation, is now being deprived of the possibility of self-enrichment at Egypt's expense. The Soviet Union, directly interested in the freedom of shipping through the Suez Canal and noting the Egyptian government's statement to the effect that the Suez Canal will remain free for all, considers that there is no grounds for alarm and concern over this matter. We are confident that the situation in the Suez Canal will not become aggravated if it is not artificially aggravated from the outside. ⁴⁴

Most of the other initial statements made by the Soviet leadership and their press organizations were also reasonable and relatively conservative in their support for Egypt and their warnings to the West. Izvestia, the semi-official voice of the Soviet government, took a somewhat more radical stance on the issue. It denounced the "threats of war" made by some Israeli leaders "aided and abetted by external imperialist quarters" against Israel's "peace-loving neighbors." The "external quarters" referred to in Izvestia were undoubtedly primarily France, which had an extremely close relationship with Israel at the time,

and secondarily, Great Britain. Perhaps this hard-line statement in Izvestia represented one element of opinion within the Communist Party hierarchy, or as it has been suggested elsewhere, it was simply a sop to Arab opinion. Whatever the case, it was a harbinger of the stance that Moscow was to take as the crisis over the canal's nationalization deepened.

After the initial uncertainties which followed the nationalization of the Suez, relations between all of the interested parties began to settle into a pattern. The British and French governments established a pattern of escalating pressure with which they attempted to force Egypt to return the canal to its previous owners. The Egyptians resisted all pressure quite firmly. They maintained a calmly reasonable tone in all of their replies to what were quite often vitriolic and extremely unfair and mendacious attacks by the British and French. The Soviets issued statements of support for Nasser and his government, and made increasingly bellicose threats directed against the

46

West.

The United States supported the British and French, but only to a limited extent. The Americans attempted to aid their allies in gaining the return of the Suez Canal Company's assets through negotiations and also through economic and political pressure aimed at Egypt. Despite this support for the cause of the British and French govern-

ments, the Americans did attempt to restrain them from any rash actions such as a military invasion of Egypt aimed at retaking the canal by force. In this atmosphere of bluster and economic and diplomatic warfare, the first stage of the Suez Canal crisis unfolded. It was an event that was to have major political consequences for the British, the French, the Israelis, the Egyptians, and the Soviet Union, and even the Americans, in the ensuing years.

During that first stage, the British, fueled by Eden's undisguised enmity for Nasser, began a series of diplomatic stratagems designed to nullify Nasser's nationalization. Their first step was to meet with representatives of the French and American governments. In these meetings, Eden hoped to come to an agreement which would involve the United States to the utmost in forcing a settlement of the crisis.⁴⁷

The French also were insistent upon American involvement. They wanted the Suez back. They had, after all, built it. Beyond that, Nasser's action would have profound consequences for their entire position in North Africa, said the French. The nationalist elements in Algeria would take fresh heart. The Algerian nationalists would look to Egypt for even more support since it had successfully defied the will of the French. The Egyptians would undoubtedly supply such support in terms of both arms and clamor. As it turned out, the French had correctly predicted the course of events that would follow the conclusion of the Suez Canal crisis in

Algeria. The Americans were unsympathetic to these arguments, probably because of their inveterate distrust of "colonialism." The French put forth another argument. The nationalization was a response to the renege by the Americans and the British on the Aswan High Dam loans.⁴⁸ Therefore, they should take some responsibility for the consequences of their action.

The Americans proved unwilling to accept any sort of responsibility for the nationalization. They took the position that Nasser had been planning this move for a long time and it was not retaliatory in nature. The Americans did agree, however, that some action was necessary. Their contention was that the best solution to the situation was international discussion of the problem. They felt that the U.N. was not the ideal forum for the situation. Instead, Dulles suggested that some sort of international committee would be better suited to deal with the exigencies of the situation.⁴⁹

The American proposals for an international conference were soon to become reality. The final outcome of this round of British-French-American tripartite discussions was the proposal of an international conference which was to take place in London in August 1956. While the three Western powers were conferring in London, the Soviets and Egyptians were having discussions of their own. According to Mohammed Heikal, the Egyptians were careful not to appear

to be coordinating their policy with the Russians. However, Nasser's conference with the Soviets on August 6 and other hints of Soviet-Egyptian cooperation, such as Nasser making the announcement that the Soviets were going to attend the London Conference before the Soviets had officially accepted the invitation to attend, gave many reason to believe that the Soviets and Egyptians were in collusion. Eden was certainly one of the many who held this belief. In his memoirs he states, "Egypt took up a rigid position, after consultation with the Russians. The contacts between the two⁵¹ countries were close." Eden's statement of the nature of Soviet-Egyptian relations during this period is undoubtedly (given the evidence of Nasser's statement about Soviet attendance at the London Conference and the frequency of Soviet-Egyptian meetings) much closer to reality than is that of Heikal. Although there was undoubtedly little strategic or tactical coordination between the two countries, there was probably a great deal of information sharing and political cooperation between them.

The cooperation between the Soviet Union and the Egyptians continued through the first London Conference which was held from August 16 to August 23. The conference was one of the key events of the early stages of the Suez crisis. Twenty-four nations were invited to the conference. Eight of them (Egypt, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Turkey, Russia, and Great Britain) were

asked to attend because they were signatories of the 1888 Convention on canal use. The other sixteen were invited because large amounts of their commerce passed through the canal. The nations who were asked to attend because of the frequency with which their ships plied the canal included Australia, Ceylon, Denmark, Ethiopia, West Germany, Greece, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Portugal, Sweden and the United States. Of the nations which were invited, Egypt and Greece were the only nations that refused to attend.

Egypt did not completely refrain from participating in the conference. Instead of sending active delegates to the proceedings, the Egyptians sent a party of observers to the conference. The delegation was headed by Ali Sabri. The Egyptian party of observers was sent in order to present the Egyptian point of view without giving Egyptian sanction of the conference and also to report the results of the proceeding to Nasser.

In the stead of an active Egyptian delegation, the Soviets became one of the champions of the Egyptian cause. In their statement of their acceptance of the invitation to the conference, the Soviet leaders made it clear where they stood. They stated that the conference was convened in disregard of a number of relevant provisions of the 1888 Convention, that the list of participants was biased (according to Anthony Nutting, the British had purposely stacked the

deck in their favor - a look at the participants and a close look at their political positions at the time seems to confirm the charge), and that acceptance "in no way commits" the Soviet Union to anything that could "harm Egypt's sovereign rights and dignity."⁵² Like India, Ceylon, and Indonesia, the Soviet Union rallied behind Nasser at the Suez Canal Users Conference in London. The Indians, led by Krishna Menon, were the main proponents of the arguments in favor of the Egyptians' nationalization of the canal. The Soviet delegation acted as Menon's second in the debates. The main issue over which the two sides wrangled was the structure of a proposed international group that was to be set up to aid the Egyptians in the running of the Suez Canal. The Anglo-French bloc wanted a tight grouping that would effectively take control of the canal away from Egypt and put it in international hands. The Soviets and the other pro-Nasser nations argued for a loosely knit group, "a consultative body of user interests with advisory, consultative and liaison functions," the existence of which would be "without prejudice to Egyptian ownership and operation."⁵³

At the beginning of the conference, the Soviets had argued that the nations which were now present on the territories of what had formerly been the Austro-Hungarian Empire, as well as the other nations of Eastern Europe and the Arab nations of the Middle East, should have been invited to participate. By reiterating their pre-conference position that

the list of attendees was biased, the Soviets were clearly announcing their pro-Egyptian position. The next argument which the Soviet delegation, led by Dmitri Shepilov, advanced was that no binding decision could be reached without active Egyptian participation since much of what was at issue -
54
nationalization - was an internal Egyptian concern. After having made their basic position quite clear, the Soviets aligned with India and the other supporters of Nasser to block a British proposal which would have instituted "a majority rules" policy on voted issues. As a result, the conference was reft of any teeth that it might otherwise have had and became nothing more than a forum for the exchange of ideas.

The conference resulted in what can basically be termed a stalemate. Eighteen of the attending nations took the position that the canal should be international, as the British had proposed. The other four participating countries (India, Indonesia, U.S.S.R. and Ceylon) supported the Egyptian position of neutralization of the canal under Egyptian sovereignty. (Ironically, the British and the Soviet positions on the issue of internationalization or neutralization of the canal had switched from the positions which the representatives of their respective nations had taken in 1888 at the bargaining table of the Treaty of Constantinople. The Egyptian position, which the Soviets supported, was nearly identical to the position that the

British had assumed in 1888. The British agitation for internationalization was quite similar to the position that the Soviet Union had endorsed as recently as 1946. Both sides were quite fond of reminding each other of their respective about-faces.) The London Conference did not moderate Nasser's position in any way. If any affect upon the Egyptian position was noticeable after the conference, it was that Nasser and the Egyptians stood even more firmly behind their refusal to return the canal or have it internationalized.

The failure of the London Conference opened the door to British and French military sanctions. Only three obstacles remained in the way of immediate action: 1) their armed forces were not yet ready to invade; 2) the Egyptians had given them no justifiable provocation to invade (true they had seized a British and French-owned company; however, they had not done injury to British or French citizens, nor had they prevented British or French ships from plying the canal, despite the refusal by the owners of British and French vessels to pay dues to the Egyptian Canal Authority); and, 3) the United States was strongly opposed to a military invasion. Of these three obstacles, the second was the most important to overcome. The first problem only required a bit of time to reach a solution. The third was insufficient in and of itself to stop the British and French from implementing a plan which they believed would bring them success

on all fronts. They were certain that military action would result in a quick victory which would return the canal to their control and at the same time wreak the destruction of their hated nemesis - Nasser.

The French took the removal of the lack of sufficient provocation into their own hands. Without saying a word to Eden or any British minister, the French had turned to Israel for help in manufacturing a pretext for the invasion of Egypt. Immediately after the London Conference, the French began discussions with the Israeli Defense Minister, Shimon Peres, which were aimed at recapturing the canal with Israeli assistance.⁵⁵

While the French and Israeli governments were collaborating in the development of a plan designed to gain each its respective desire vis-a-vis Egypt, the war of words between Egypt and its European opponents continued its rapid escalation. The mounting tension was highlighted by the London Conference's decision to send a team of negotiators to Egypt to try to arrange a settlement. Ostensibly this would seem to be a positive step toward achieving a peaceful solution to the crisis. However, the emissary who was delegated to head the negotiating team could hardly have been a less suitable selection. Robert Menzies, the Prime Minister of Australia, was made head of the delegation. Menzies was extremely pro-British and anti-Nasser in his public statements and his selection was made even more detrimental to the

possibility of a successful negotiation by his personal prejudice against non-Caucasians. Menzies described himself publicly as a "reasonably bigoted descendant of the Scottish⁵⁶ race." Naturally, with an emissary like Menzies, the peace mission was a dismal and absolute failure. A second major step toward war came after the London Conference when French troops were stationed on British-controlled Cyprus in preparation for an invasion of the Suez Canal Zone.

With the predictable failure of the Menzies mission, the prospect of war loomed even more brightly on the horizon. All that remained between the prospect and the actuality was an acceptable pretext for a Franco-British invasion. An attempt toward providing themselves with just such a pretext was made by the British at the second London Conference which was convened on September 16th. The conference resulted in the setting up of an association of the users of the Suez Canal (S.C.U.A.) which the British hoped would agree to divert all users' fees from Egypt to a fund controlled by the membership of S.C.U.A. The British hoped that this would cause the Egyptians to deny ships of the S.C.U.A. members passage through the canal and thus provide the British with an excuse to invade. The British hopes were dashed, however, by what seemed to be an American insistence on maintaining⁵⁷ the then existent status quo.

The Soviet reaction to the Anglo-French military build-up was predictable. They responded immediately to the prep-

arations for war by the British and French militaries in their press. An editorial which was signed by an "Observer," a sobriquet which generally indicates that the author was a member of the Politburo and that the statements contained within the piece represent official policy, stated that the Anglo-French troop movements were indicative of "a nervousness (that was) in no way justified." The position put forth in the editorial by an "Observer" was repeatedly put forward by the Soviet press over the next few weeks. The articles were all indicative of both the Soviet desire to support Egypt and their concomitant belief in the necessity to keep tension in the Middle East at a minimum.⁵⁸

The Soviet hope that the brewing storm in the Middle East could be kept from breaking was to a large extent matched by similar hopes among American policy makers. In an American statement on the subject which was reported by Pravda on August 9th, President Eisenhower said that "force is a bad solution to the Suez problem," but that he did not oppose the use of force "under any circumstances."⁵⁹ The last phrase in Eisenhower's statement was undoubtedly motivated by the political necessities of the alliance between Great Britain and France and the U.S., but it seems likely that they had no greater significance given the evidence of later American actions and the efforts of John Foster Dulles to arrive at a legal solution to the crisis over the Suez Canal such as the one represented by S.C.U.A.

The next step taken by the British in "setting the stage" for an Anglo-French invasion was to take the matter to the United Nations' Security Council. The British delegation was led by Selwyn Lloyd who put forward six requirements for a settlement that Eden felt would be unacceptable to the Egyptians. These requirements were to become known as the Six Proposals, and they were:

- 1) Free and open transit of the canal without discrimination, overt or covert;
- 2) The sovereignty of Egypt would be respected;
- 3) The insulation of the canal's operation from the politics of any country;
- 4) The manner of fixing tolls should be decided by agreement between the users and Egypt;
- 5) A fair proportion of dues should be allotted to development; and
- 6) In case of disputes, unresolved affairs between the Suez Canal Company and Egypt should⁶⁰ be resolved by arbitration.

The British proposed that these six principles be implemented by an international board. This was something that Egypt had already rejected absolutely. The Soviets were adamantly against any strictures such as the ones the British proposed. The Egyptians, however, surprisingly proved willing to accept the original six proposals, but were still unwilling to accept internationalization of the canal. They were willing to compromise as long as their sovereignty was not dimin-

ished. Selwyn Lloyd, Mahmoud Fawzi, and U.N. Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold began discussions and eventually were on the verge of a peaceful solution to the swelling⁶¹ crisis.

Eden and French Prime Minister Pineau were displeased at the turn toward a negotiated settlement of the canal⁶² crisis. Such a conclusion to the dispute would destroy, temporarily at the very least, their plans for the eradication of Nasser and the restoration of Anglo-French influence in the Middle East. They did their best to delay the process of negotiation by making false and antagonistic accusations directed at the Egyptians in their public speeches. Their delaying tactics were successful enough to keep a settlement from being reached before Israel had invaded Egypt.

During the period of verbal sparring following the first London Conference, the French and the Israelis had been quietly working out a plan in which Israel was to mount a rapid attack on Egyptian positions in the Sinai. Given this opening, Britain and France would wait until Israel had seized all or most of the Sinai and would then intervene demanding that both sides withdraw their forces from the Suez Canal. The invasion by the two erstwhile controllers of the canal would take place on the pretext that the Anglo-French forces were attempting to prevent the canal from sustaining damage during the fighting. Given this scenario,

Britain and France would have, according to the plan, a perfect excuse for re-establishing their control of the Canal Zone and for taking over the terminal ports which had hitherto been used by Egypt to implement their blockade of the canal from use by Israeli ships.⁶³

The French presented this plan to Eden and his top advisors on October 14. As reported by Anthony Nutting, Eden's reaction was scarcely concealed glee. Despite the objections and warnings of his Foreign Minister and his Foreign Secretary, Nutting and Selwyn Lloyd, Eden went to Paris two days after the French proposal had been broached to him. There he had several meetings with his French opposite number, Guy Mollet. In those meetings, he agreed to the French plan for an Israeli attack.⁶⁴

The Israeli attack took place on October 30. It was a complete and rapid success. Inside of one week, the Israelis had driven Egypt out of the Sinai in a series of paratroop and armored attacks that devastated the Egyptian army. The Israelis had Franco-British aid in their attacks. In addition to the physical aid of British and French air strikes, the Israelis were benefited by the Egyptian preparations to defend Alexandria from an Anglo-French invasion. The expectation of an attack from Cyprus helped the Israelis to achieve a nearly total surprise of the Egyptian forces.⁶⁵

Almost immediately after the Israeli invasion, the

British and French governments sent an ultimatum demanding that both sides cease hostilities and withdraw ten miles from the Suez Canal. If these conditions were not met, the French and British threatened military intervention in
66
twenty-four hours. Perhaps the most significant thing to note about the ultimatum is that it demanded that the Israelis withdraw ten miles from the canal four days before they had even come near it. By granting this territory to Israel and allowing Egyptian forces only twenty-four hours to withdraw (an impossible task), the British and French served notice to anyone who cared to look that they were in collusion with the Israelis.

By the time that Israel had consolidated its hold on the Sinai (one week after their initial attacks), Britain and France were prepared to intervene physically with their own troops. Their "efforts" at "peacemaking" had failed as was intended, and they had provided the French and British with an excuse to intervene since the Egyptians had not complied with the terms of their ultimatum. So on November 5, a force of Anglo-French paratroopers invaded Port Said. Their invasion was the beginning of the final stage of the Israeli-French-British plot to destroy Nasser. According to their plan, this last stage was to end with an Egyptian popular revolt which was to oust Nasser. If such a revolt failed to materialize, the allies were prepared to invade
67
Cairo and eliminate Nasser themselves.

The last stage of the plan came to an abrupt and abortive halt on November 7. The British pound sterling had taken a nose dive on the world market and, as a result, the British economy was in danger of collapse. A cease-fire in the Sinai was the price of American intervention to stave off such a fiscal disaster for Great Britain.

The American desire for a cease-fire was the result of their view of the Anglo-French adventure as a dangerous folly. They had agitated from its inception to halt it and had tried to prevent it from occurring in the first place. The American view was generated out of a well-placed sense of timidity. Despite the bitter resentment of Nasser that had been engendered in Dulles, the Americans apparently realized what an armed incursion into an independent Arab nation would do to damage their image in the Middle East - whether or not it was successful in its short term goal. Any attack on Nasser would make him a martyr to the rapacious desires of Western imperialism - especially if it was successful. If the attempt was unsuccessful, it would heighten Nasser's prestige in the Third World also. If it was successful, it would probably cause a drastic shift toward the Soviet Union. Thus, any military action to regain the canal could only result in a serious loss for the United States.

68

The Soviet Union had also agitated from the beginning for a halt to the Anglo-French invasion. Unlike that of the

Americans, the Soviet role was limited to vociferous saber-⁶⁹ rattling that did little to end the conflagration. The Soviets were limited to a secondary role because, unlike the U.S., the Soviet Union had no political and very little economic leverage with the participants in the invasion. The Soviet leaders did gain much more than the United States as a result of the invasion. A drastic improvement in the Soviet position in the Arab world was built into the situation. They were able to be quite public in their condemnation of the invasion of Egypt because their allies were not involved in it. The United States could not possibly gain anywhere near the kind or amount of prestige that the Soviets did despite the fact that its quiet machinations were the instrument that actually halted the allied aggression.

Soviet saber-rattling came in a series of communiques to Britain, France and Israel. Implications that were read into their communiques included the threat of nuclear war, and the dispatch of communist volunteers to aid Egypt. As the result of such bellicose diplomacy, the Soviets have often made the claim to have been responsible for the cessation of the hostilities between Egypt and her foes. It is a claim which is quite often given credence in the Arab world (but a claim which even Nasser discounted). In their communications with the Egyptian government, the Soviets were much more cautious. Perhaps the most significant communication with Egypt was one that came just after the Franco-

British invasion of Port Said. It informed the Egyptian government that no material aid was forthcoming and that they (the Egyptians) would have to "strengthen their will to resist." ⁷⁰ Thus, the Soviet contribution to the Egyptian war effort was limited to rhetoric and the agreed upon arms shipments which stemmed from the 1955 arms deal. The Soviets risked nothing. However, their minimal contributions did provide them a great deal of benefit in the years to come.

When the hostilities were over, the balance sheet seemed fairly clear. The Israelis had achieved their probable objectives by increasing their own territory and opening up the sea lanes. The French had not succeeded in quelling the Algerian revolution by destroying Nasser, but then neither had they lost anything of significance. They were already friendless in the Arab world and their conduct of the war cost them none of their other friends. They had regained a damaged and inoperative canal at minimal loss. The British had won an easy military victory along with their allies, but they had failed to dislodge Nasser, lost prestige in the Arab world, and antagonized the U.S. In reality, they had gained nothing but woe for all of their troubles. A particularly apt description of the results of the Suez war for Britain came from Dulles, who described the British post-incursion position by saying, "Eden had wrested one end of the (Suez) canal out of Nasser's throat but the piece now stuck in his own and Eisenhower was pound-

ing on his back to get it loose."

The U.N. had shown itself to be ineffective by its failure to keep the Israelis from invading, the manner in which its authority was flaunted by the Anglo-French intervention and through their threats (albeit threats which none of the participants seemed to take seriously) and vituperation. The U.S. had gained some prestige through its role in stopping the war, but its propaganda gains in the Third World were severely tarnished by its continued alliance with Great Britain. The Soviet Union had, by bellowing its outrage, made important gains in attracting the Arab nations toward its side. They had also been provided with a diversion from their own actions in Hungary. Egypt had lost a military victory. The overwhelming force that had been arrayed against it made such a defeat one without disgrace. The very fact of the combined aggression against Nasser had, instead of weakening him, made him even more clearly the focal point of Arab unity. He had emerged as one of the major spokesmen for the entire Third World, but most especially Africa and Asia.

With the cessation of hostilities, this episode in the history of the Middle East entered a new phase. Combat was over, but negotiations were just beginning. The negotiations turned out to be one of the most unusual postwar palavers that ever took place. They were extremely one-sided. In itself this is not unusual, quite often the

victors on the battlefield completely dictate the postwar settlement as they did at Versailles in 1919. The negotiations following the Suez War were unique in that the military victors were forced to give up their gains and the loser was given nearly everything that it desired. France, Great Britain, and Israel were forced by political pressure and economic fact to give up all of their military gains. The only concession that the allies were able to gain was a face-saving measure. Instead of immediately implementing a total withdrawal, the 'victors' were allowed to withdraw their troops in phases.

The end result of the Suez Canal War and its immediate aftermath was the cementing of the friendship between the Soviet Union and Egypt. By concluding an amicable relationship with the leader of the Arab world, the Soviet Union succeeded in spreading the roots of its influence even more widely in the politically fertile soils of the Middle East. They accomplished an extremely important victory in the arena of international influence without any immediate risk to themselves. The Soviets had managed in one fell swoop to acquire new friends in the Middle East and to strengthen their ties with the region's leading Arab power.

Although the Suez Canal War improved the relationship between the Soviet Union and Egypt, all of their contacts were not necessarily positive. For example, the Egyptians disbanded their National Guard because of its apparent

attempts to gain credit for the victorious settlement of the Suez dispute by associating with the popular Soviets. The disbanding of the National Guard was greeted with intense displeasure in Moscow because the Guard had strong communist elements within its ranks. Nasser also made attempts to improve relations with the United States which caused consternation in Moscow that they might be losing their recently acquired gains.

According to Mohammed Heikal, these attempts to improve relations with the Soviet Union's primary foe were the result of Nasser's gratitude for the role which the U.S. had played in halting its allies' incursion, as well as a conscious policy of playing the two superpowers off of one another. Because of the relatively tight bipolar makeup of the world political system at the time, this was obviously bound to be displeasing to the Soviet government. Another indication of the minor abrasiveness that still pervaded the the Soviet-Egyptian relationship was the closure of a Soviet film festival in Cairo by the Egyptian authorities. The Egyptians called the films blatant communist propaganda and no amount of Soviet effort was able to get the film festival reopened, even though they did make strenuous attempts in this regard. They even went as far as sending the Minister for Cultural Affairs to straighten out the contretemps.

Contacts between the two nations were increased despite the problems which occasionally developed between

them. After the cease-fire was declared, an Egyptian Trade Union delegation was sent to the Soviet Union by the Nasser government. This was the first step in the resumption of a more normal pattern of cultural and economic relations between the Soviet Union and the Egyptians. In the days following the cease-fire, the Soviets also continued to support the Egyptian position vis-a-vis their opponents when they threatened to allow Soviet "volunteers to go to Egypt's aid should there be no foreign withdrawal."⁷⁴ In December, Nasser publicly declared that he was seeking closer ties with the Soviet Union in a speech he made over Radio Moscow.⁷⁵

The year following the Suez War was one of continued tightening of the ties between the Soviet Union and Egypt. In mid-January, a Soviet industrial fair opened in Cairo. Four days later, the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China both demanded that Great Britain, France, and Israel pay Egypt reparations for the damage done in their joint invasion of Egyptian territory.⁷⁶ In February, a delegation of atomic physicists from the Soviet Union visited Egypt to participate in discussions with their Egyptian counterparts regarding the development of nuclear power in Egypt. These and other like meetings resulted in the July 6 announcement from Moscow which stated that an atomic electric station was to be set up in Egypt with Soviet aid. Between the visit of the Soviet physicists to Egypt and the announcement of Egypt's entry into the production of electric

energy via the use of atomic power, there were other important contacts between the Nasser regime and the Soviet government. Two of the most important were the May visit to Egypt of a Soviet governmental delegation and the visit by members of the Egyptian Trade Union to the Soviet Union in that same month.

The Soviet governmental delegation was headed by its Foreign Minister, Dmitri Shepilov. It is quite probable that the two major topics which the Soviet delegation and Nasser's government discussed during the conferences were the forthcoming atomic electric plant and the renewed possibility of Soviet aid in building Egypt's Aswan High Dam. The Western renege on their promise to help Egypt build the dam has been cited previously as one of the proximate causes for the Suez Canal War, and getting such a project under way was still in the forefront of Nasser's thoughts. Nasser still believed that the improvements in irrigation and electric production that would result from the project were a vital step in bringing Egypt into the modern world as an equal with the nations of the West. Building the dam would increase Egyptian agricultural production, thus increasing both its capacity for feeding itself and the levels of crops such as rice and cotton which it had available for export. It would help it industrialize. The dam would provide power and raw materials for the development of industries like the steel industry and the chemical fertilizer industry.

The latter would again be beneficial to agriculture and further fuel its growth. The dam would also be extremely valuable as a tool to control the destructive flooding of the Nile such as that which occurred in 1955.⁷⁷ With advantages as important to the growth of the Egyptian economy as these, it is little wonder that Nasser felt that without such a project, Egypt would never be anything but a poor relation unable to stand on its own two feet in the economic and political world that was developing around it.

Curiously enough, despite their earlier assertions that they were willing to aid Egypt in the Aswan High Dam project, the Soviets did not immediately make a firm offer of aid to the Egyptians after the dust of the Suez Canal crisis had settled. They did not make an offer in the following year. They did not make an offer to aid the Egyptians' project until October 1958, nearly two years after the West's withdrawal of aid had precipitated the Suez Canal crisis. When the Soviet offer finally came, it came at a time when Soviet-Egyptian relations were beginning to feel the strain brought on by another of Nasser's campaigns against the Communist Party of Egypt.

During the interim between the end of the Suez Canal War and the Soviet offer of aid for the Aswan High Dam, diplomatic contacts between Egypt and the Soviets continued apace. The contacts were, however, on a substantially lower political level than had been the case during the Suez Canal

and its immediate aftermath. In fact, 1957 and 1958 most accurately would be called a period of consolidation, a period when the developing friendship between the two countries was cemented by the broadening of the infrastructure of middle-level contacts in the realms of economics, culture, and the military.

During the nearly two dozen months between the signing of the Aswan Dam deal between the Soviet Union and Egypt and the placement of the U.N. peacekeeping force in the war zone around the Suez Canal, there were twenty-six agreements or exchanges which helped to widen and deepen the scope of contact between the U.S.S.R. and the Egyptians. Nearly half of them were cultural in nature, but the rest ran the gamut from diplomatic initiatives to military coordination and economic cooperation. By the end of this period, the infrastructure of the Soviet-Egyptian relationship was sufficiently well established to allow Nasser to visit Moscow for consultations with Soviet leaders about the stance and course of action which each of their respective nations would take in reaction to the international crisis in Lebanon in July of 1958.

There were two events of major international significance in which either the Soviet Union or Egypt was involved in 1957 and early 1958. Ultimately, neither had much direct effect upon the relationship between the two countries. The first, the Soviet Union's launch of the first artificial

satellite to orbit the earth, was important both because of its impact upon the scientific communities of the United States and the rest of the world and because of its effect upon the thinking of the military strategists in the West and the Soviet Union. Its immediate effects upon Egypt, however, were minimal. Over the long term the ancillary benefits of the Soviet space program (such as the improvements in its guided missile technology and launching capacity) had an important effect on the world strategic situation, and thus the ability of the Soviet Union to assist its allies, and in its political and military strategy. In these respects, there were long term effects upon the relationship between Egypt and the U.S.S.R. from the launching of the Sputnik satellite and its effect on world politics.

The second event of note occurred in February 1958 when Syria and Egypt signed an accord which bound the two nations in a federal republic. Known as the United Arab Republic, the union between the two Arab nations did not last long. As a result, it had little overall effect upon the relationship between the Soviet Union and Egypt. In fact, the little effect it did have was negative, not positive as one might expect. Instead of applauding the assumption of control of the presidency of Syria by their ally, Nasser, the Soviets were somewhat dismayed by the prospect (which eventually did become a reality) of Nasser suppressing the strong and growing Communist Party of Syria.

Nasser's suppression of the Syrian and Egyptian Communists later in 1958 did engender quite a bit of tension in the relationship between the Soviets and Egypt.⁸⁰ Yet the strain was insufficient in October to stop the process begun years earlier which resulted in the Soviet loan of 80 million dollars to Egypt for the construction of the Aswan High Dam. In mid-October, Egyptian Vice President Marshal Amir went to Moscow. During Amir's visit, Khrushchev announced the Soviet⁸¹ decision to aid the Egyptians in the building of the dam.

The signing of the agreement between the Egyptians and the Soviets on financing the Aswan Dam was the beginning of steadily increasing Egyptian economic and military dependence upon aid from the Soviet Union. It was also the final act of the first period of cordial diplomatic relations between the two countries which had begun with the Czech Arms Deal.

The deterioration of the relationship between the Soviets and the Egyptians had its roots in Nasser's anti-communism and in Khrushchev's unwillingness to accept Nasser's decision to suppress the communists of the U.A.R. without at least attempting to do something to stop it.

Nasser's drive against the Communists in the U.A.R. was brought on by two parallel developments. The first, a purely internal matter, was the result of the political situation in Syria. Unlike the parties in Egypt before its

revolution, the political parties of Syria were broadly based and deeply rooted. They ran the gamut from the extreme left to the far right. Another difference between the situations of the two countries when they came under Nasser's sway, and perhaps the one which ultimately was the key to the failure of the union between Syria and Egypt, was the position of Nasser himself in relation to the political structure of the country.

In Egypt, Nasser had been a member of an indigenous group of political elites which represented the aspirations of the majority of the Egyptian populace. He had solidified his position as the dominant figure in the political hierarchy because of his understanding of Egypt and the Egyptians and the latent political desires of the mass of the Egyptian elite. In Syria, on the other hand, Nasser was an outsider, albeit an outsider who was looked upon by much of the Syrian political elite as some sort of demigod, but an outsider nonetheless. He did not understand the Syrians nor did he comprehend their political system. Without the basic knowledge of the Syrians and their political system that a native would have possessed, Nasser made a series of political miscalculations that destroyed the political alliance that had resulted in the Syrian request for union with Egypt.

While the twists and turns in the political situation in Syria that would eventually rupture the U.A.R. were

taking their course, the second of the two developments that helped to bring about Nasser's drive to suppress Syria's communists was taking place in Iraq.

In July 1958, the Iraqis had overthrown the Hashemite monarchy which had long been in place in their country. In its place, there emerged a "progressive" government which was composed of several different factions, including Iraq's communists. This new regime in Iraq immediately recognized the Soviet Union and soon thereafter established relations with the rest of the world's communist states. The Soviets hailed General Abdel Kareem Kassem, the leader of the new Iraqi government as "a truly democratic ruler." Suddenly,⁸² Iraq had become more democratic than Egypt and the U.A.R.

The foundation of a new regime in Iraq which had a strong communist element and which seemed to be Moscow's new darling in the Arab world caused two distinct problems for Nasser. First, along with the communists, there was a strong pro-Nasser element in the Iraqi coalition, including⁸³ the Ba'ath party. The Ba'ath party, the Sunni Moslem minority, and the other pro-Nasserites were led by General Abdel Salaam Aref and they sought union with the U.A.R. on much the same basis as that upon which Syria had joined Egypt. The Communists, the Kurds, the majority of the Shi'ite Moslems, and other elements were led by Kassem. While at first they, too, desired links with the U.A.R., they wanted a very loose federal arrangement which would have kept their country

autonomous for the most part.

The two factions in Iraq quickly clashed. The opening salvo of their battle was fired in November when Kassem had his Deputy Prime Minister, Aref, arrested. As a result of the arrest, the groups which opposed union with the U.A.R., including the Communists, gained predominance within the government of Iraq. In December, the pro-union group led by Rashid Ali Gaylani attempted a coup. It failed. The anti-U.A.R. faction gained even more strength. In late February and early March of 1959, the pro-Nasser forces in Iraq made one last-ditch effort to change the political course of Iraq. Led by Colonel Abdel Wahhab Shawwaf, they once more attempted to overthrow Kassem and his supporters by force. They failed once again, and with their failure the last hopes for an Iraqi union with the U.A.R. died.

The defeats of the Nasserites in Iraq bolstered the position of the Iraqi communists and strengthened their dislike for Nasser and his policies. They began to agitate vigorously against Nasser and sought the breakup of the U.A.R. Along with Kassem and the other foes of Arab union, the communists made sure that it would not come to pass in Iraq.

That was the first problem which the new Iraqi government presented Nasser. The second had its roots in the struggle for preeminence in the Arab world which had existed

for centuries between Cairo and Baghdad and which had resurfaced with the political duels between Nasser and Nuri a-Said. The emergence of a viable new regime in Iraq with the support of the Soviet Union could threaten Egypt's cultural and political dominance (and with it Nasser's own prestige) and possibly represent an alternative center for Arab unity. This, in turn, threatened the relatively weak ties which had been established between Syria and Egypt.

Both the growing power of the Iraqi Communist Party and its support against Nasser encouraged the Syrian communists to begin to work actively against the Nasser regime. In November of 1958, soon after the arrest of Aref in Iraq, the Syrian Communist Party issued a thirteen point program which assailed the recently formed Union and asserted that Arab unity would fail unless more democratic freedoms were allowed and the differing conditions in each country were fully considered.⁸⁴ What made the charges of the Syrian communists particularly damaging to Nasser and the Union was the accuracy of their commentary.

Nasser began the suppression of the Syrian Communist Party in December. He effectively shattered their organization with the arrest of the majority of their leaders. During the process of the destruction of Syria's communists, Nasser leveled a series of broadsides at both the Syrian party and its Iraqi counterpart. Indirectly, these attacks were also aimed at the Soviet Union. The first of Nasser's

verbal assaults came on December 23 at Port Said, where Nasser accused the Syrian Communist Party of attempting to undermine Arab unity.⁸⁵ Nasser's choice of time and place for the opening salvo of the war of words between him and his communist adversaries was extremely significant. He chose Port Said, the symbol of Egyptian resistance to the foreign incursion by Britain and France in 1956, on the anniversary of the withdrawal of the Anglo-French forces. At least subtly, Nasser was equating communism with Western imperialism.⁸⁶

Freed by Nasser's barrage, the Egyptian press unleashed a violent polemical campaign against Arab communism. At the same time, they tried to soften their statements for the Soviets to some degree by coupling them with assurances of the goodwill of the U.A.R. toward the Soviet Union. Despite these attempts to lighten the blow, the attacks by the Egyptian press aroused Soviet ire. Khrushchev took up the gauntlet at the 21st Party Congress of the CPSU and attempted to defend his fellow communists against the unjust attacks.⁸⁷

The Egyptians parried Khrushchev's attack by claiming that he was attempting to violate the principles adopted at the Bandung Conference by interfering in the internal affairs of the U.A.R.⁸⁸ By April, Soviet-Egyptian relations had deteriorated to the point where Khrushchev and Nasser had begun to exchange personal insults, and the Soviets were

threatening the withdrawal of their aid.

Eventually, the war of nerves between the two erst-while allies subsided. The Egyptians apparently realized that a break with Moscow was not in their own best interests. As a result, they halted their public attacks on the U.S.S.R. The Soviets, on their part, came to understand that a break with Nasser would only benefit the West. So they also decided to call a halt to the hostile comments directed toward Egypt by their press.

However, in less public situations, there were still problems between the two nations. For example, the conditions under which Egyptian students in the Soviet Union were living began to worsen. The students were forced to live two to a room when in the past they each had been provided with a single room for themselves. The Egyptian students were also forced to attend classes on communist doctrine which was a violation of the agreement between the two governments that there was to be no indoctrination of exchange students, an agreement which was one of the bases upon which they had been sent.

In October, Nasser and the Egyptians withdrew their students from their schools in the U.S.S.R. They sent them to the U.S. instead. They arrived there in a blaze of publicity and enrolled in the various U.S. universities in which places had been made for them. Incidents of this

sort, while having relatively little significance in and of themselves, nevertheless kept the relationship between Egypt and the Soviet Union from progressing smoothly. They kept tension at a level where neither side could really trust the other or consider it an ally.

In January 1960, both sides determined that things had gone far enough and decided to further ease the tension that had beset the Soviet-Egyptian relationship for more than a year. The Soviet Minister of Power Stations, Ignatti Novikov, came to Egypt early in the month to attend the start of work on the Aswan Dam. He brought with him a polite message from Khrushchev and a modest gift. Nasser met him and during the discussion of the forthcoming celebration of the dam's opening, Nasser showed Novikov a medal which he had struck to commemorate the occasion. Nasser told Novikov that he wanted to send one of these medals to Khrushchev in honor of the role that he and the Soviets had played in bringing the plans for the construction of the dam to fruition.

Later in the conversation, the question of the status of the dam project came up. Novikov pointed out that the distinction between the first and second stages of the dam was artificial and that it was going to result in a good deal of wasted effort. Nasser agreed, and asked, "But would Mr. Khrushchev be willing to discuss the second phase now?"
91
I am making this request officially."

Novikov got in touch with Khrushchev and after a few days he received Moscow's reply. In a Politburo meeting on January 17, the Soviet leaders had decided to help finance the second stage of the dam. The agreement was made official in an exchange of letters between Khrushchev and Nasser.

The attempts at reconciliation between the countries had finally borne fruit. The Egyptians were being relatively friendly toward the Soviets in the press, while the Soviets were allowing Egypt to conduct its own affairs without Soviet interference. Overt Soviet participation in Egyptian affairs was now limited to that which the Egyptians themselves had requested - arms supply and economic loans. As Khrushchev put it at an embassy party in Moscow, "We have forgotten our quarrels with Egypt. It was all a misunderstanding and a waste of time."⁹²

The crisis in Soviet-Egyptian relations had passed. The two countries were now successfully patching up many of their quarrels and the Soviet supply of aid was flowing undiminished to Egypt. Still, the problems in the relationship between the two countries had not yet quite come to an end. During the final months of the year, beginning at the November meeting of 81 Communist and Workers' Parties in Moscow, the Soviets started to shift their foreign policy toward a new more militant posture which outside pressures, such as their growing conflict with China, had forced them to adopt.

The changes in foreign policy were in large part only differences in their ideological stance upon certain issues. Perhaps the most important alteration in Soviet policy came in regard to the stance which they took on the internal structure of the nations of the underdeveloped world. The new Soviet ideological posture was predicated on the existence of a "new" stage of political development which nations went through on the path to socialism. This new phase, the phase of so-called "national democracy," was defined as being a period in which a state consistently upheld its political and economic independence and fought against imperialism and its military blocs; a period in which a state fights against new forms of colonialism and the penetration of imperialist capital; a period characterized by a state's rejection of dictatorial and despotic methods of government and by the assurance of broad democratic rights and freedoms for the people.

93

Another question which the new Soviet foreign policy line took a different tack toward than the old one had was the role of Communist parties in national liberation movements (during the phase of national democracy as well as during earlier periods). It was a question which had been ignored for the most part by the Soviets since Stalin's death. Now, at least temporarily, the Soviet hierarchy, led by Boris Ponomarev, advocated Communist ascendancy at all times.

94

With these changes in attitude toward the countries of the Third World, tension between the Soviet Union and Egypt was bound to rise once more. A series of articles attacking the repressive policies of the Egyptian government appeared in the Soviet press.⁹⁵ According to the Soviet journalists, the U.A.R. was resorting to "dictatorial" and "repressive" methods and therefore was not "a state of national democracy."

Initially, this campaign did not have too much effect upon the relationship between the Soviets and the U.A.R. The top leadership of both countries seemed content to let the issues raised in these articles remain undiscussed. In May 1961, however, a serious breach of the temporary truce that had been arranged between the two nations occurred during Anwar Sadat's visit to Moscow for the May Day celebrations there. When Khrushchev received Sadat in his office on May 3, he launched into a tirade during the course of which he lambasted everything American. When Sadat tried to placate him, he told Sadat that Arab "nationalism wasn't the summit of happiness." He went on to claim that the Arabs were politically backward and that they were falling into an imperialist trap. Sadat was shocked, but he refrained from responding until he had consulted with Nasser.

Nasser was furious. He told Sadat that he must answer strongly. Sadat responded in a written draft that was pre-

pared by Heikal. It defended Arab nationalism and suggested that Khrushchev was making the same mistake as the imperialists were when he claimed that his was the only path to political maturity and happiness. Sadat concluded with the suggestion that there were alternative paths to political adulthood and that each nation must choose its own. ⁹⁶

Sadat's letter ended the incident, and a period of relative calm in the relationship ensued. Mid-level contacts between the two nations were still maintained, and cooperation in the economic, military, and cultural realms continued to develop.

The breakup of the union between Egypt and Syria in September 1961 coincided with new less repressive policies at home in Egypt. Nasser's belief that the U.A.R. had been sabotaged by the Syrian feudal and bourgeois classes and by conservative elements in the rest of the Arab world caused ⁹⁷ him to cling more tightly to the ideals of Arab socialism. His adherence to those principles isolated him in the Arab ⁹⁸ world, and was one of the factors which led to the beginnings of rapprochement between the U.S.S.R. and Egypt in 1962.

During 1962, the levels of trade between the two nations once again increased sharply. Other indicators, such as cultural contacts, showed that important new connections were being developed between the U.S.S.R. and

Egypt. The ideological questions raised in late 1961 were still obstacles to smooth relations, however. They were still under debate and Khrushchev, the primary force in Soviet politics behind the U.S.S.R.'s interest in Egypt, was in the midst of a period of relative political decline in his personal power because of the U-2 incident.⁹⁹ As a result, there were no high-level exchanges between the two countries during the year.¹⁰⁰ In the meantime, the ideological debate was continuing in the Soviet Union, with Ponomarev and the Ideological Department for Foreign Policy of the Central Committee coming down in favor of the hard-line stance discussed in the preceding paragraphs, and experts on the Middle East and its affairs like Georgi Mirskii and R. Ulianovskii adopting a more positive attitude toward Egypt.¹⁰¹

The favorable stance of the Middle Eastern experts was in part a reaction to the new National Charter which Nasser and the Egyptians had instituted in May 1962. In it, Nasser created a new party, the Arab Socialist Union, which took up the mantle of the National Union as Egypt's sole political party. The charter also declared Egypt's rejection of the capitalist path and emphasized the need to eliminate class differences within the country. Finally, it reserved 50 percent of all parliamentary seats for the elected representatives of the workers and the peasants.

The positive outlook that Soviet Middle Eastern ex-

perts displayed toward Egypt was also partially due to Egypt's intervention on behalf of the republican forces in Yemen in late September. Nasser's intervention on behalf of the Yemeni revolutionaries was a sign of just how important the role that he could and did play in Arab politics was. Clearly, there were practical advantages to be derived from - as well as theoretical justifications for - dealing with him as a friend and ally.

The theoretical dispute over foreign policy continued to rage unabated in the U.S.S.R. in 1963, but the Middle Eastern experts seemed to slowly be getting the upperhand in influencing decisions regarding regional affairs in their own area of expertise. Nasser's generally progressive stance in both his domestic and external policies seemed to be overcoming the miasma of negativism that his anti-communism had engendered among the members of the Soviet political elite. In June, Khrushchev sent Adzhubey back to Egypt as his proxy. His mission was to try to convince Nasser to try to relax his hard-line anti-communist position. The Soviet politician argued that the cessation of the attacks upon Egypt's communists by Nasser and the state apparatus would remove the last obstacles in the way of the improvement of relations between the U.S.S.R. and the Egyptians. Nasser relented. He must have seen that there was relatively little point in the continued persecution of Egypt's communists. He had already effectively destroyed

most of their influence in the country and severely crippled their organization. He no longer had any reason to worry about their subversive activities. In July, he announced that all political prisoners were to be released, that concentration camps were to be closed, and that communists were to be invited to the ASU as individuals and to aid it in the building of socialism. This change in policy was greeted with enthusiasm in the Soviet Union and resistance to a visit by Khrushchev evaporated.¹⁰²

Khrushchev visited Cairo in May 1964. The visit, his first to Africa, was in honor of the completion of the first phase of the Aswan High Dam. The Egyptians accorded Khrushchev a massive reception and invited him to perform the opening ceremony for the dam. During his speech at the dam's opening, Khrushchev awarded Nasser and Amer (then Vice-President) the honor of naming them each a "Hero of the Soviet Union."¹⁰³

Khrushchev's visit to Egypt lasted sixteen days. The visit has been called a "festival of Arab-Soviet cooperation."¹⁰⁴ And, to a certain extent, it was. The Soviets had proffered a 250 million dollar loan for economic development, and they had made Nasser and Amer "Heroes of the Soviet Union." Most importantly, the occasion for Khrushchev's visit was the completion of the first phase of the most important symbol of Arab-Soviet cooperation that has been constructed to date, the Aswan High Dam. The

visit also had its low points. One example is the row between Khrushchev and Iraqi President Aref over that country's communists. Another is Khrushchev's embarrassment of Gromyko and Marshal Andrei Grechko, his Minister of Defense, at a luncheon in Alexandria.¹⁰⁵

Both the positive and negative aspects of Khrushchev's performance played a minor role in the political events which took place in the Soviet Union over the next few months.¹⁰⁶ They were added to a long list of faux pas and political blunders which Khrushchev had made during the course of the years he spent in power. These errors cost Khrushchev his position in October when the other members of the Politburo dismissed him from both his job as Prime Minister and his position as First Secretary of the Communist Party.

The relationship between the Soviet Union and Egypt during the period in which Khrushchev was in power in the U.S.S.R. was one of "sturm und drang." There were tremendous highs like the Czech Arms Deal and the intervals which the building of the Aswan High Dam produced, but there were also years of strain and tension which were brought about by the tempestuousness and flamboyance of both Khrushchev and Nasser. Those came about when Khrushchev could not contain himself in the face of what he saw as the extreme provocation of Nasser's anti-communism and his attempts to improve relations with the West. Nasser reacted in kind, bickering with Khrushchev and the Soviets despite the strong friendship

which had developed between the two men.

The friendship between Khrushchev and the Egyptians was the basis for a good deal of consternation following his dismissal. The loan agreement which Khrushchev had arranged for the Egyptians was rumored to be in jeopardy with the change of leadership in the Soviet Union. Nasser and the Egyptians need not have worried. In November 1964, the Egyptians sent Amer and Heikal to Moscow to attend the annual Military Day parades in Moscow. During their first meeting with Leonid Brezhnev they were told they had nothing to fear. "What happened has nothing to do with you or our policy towards the Arab world . . . ," said Brezhnev. "Our relations with you are based on long-term decisions taken
108
by the party, not by Khrushchev."

The collective leadership did have some criticisms of Khrushchev's method of dealing with Egypt. They disliked his personal style of diplomacy. Contacts with Egypt had only developed between Nasser and him. They claimed that there was no solid basis for contact with Egypt outside of
109
Nasser. Some members of the oligarchy - most notably Mikhail Suslov - took up the argument of the local Arab CP's that the stronger Nasser became, the weaker they would become, and if he achieved Arab union, they would find themselves dissolved.
110

The arguments about which course of foreign policy the

Soviets should pursue in the Third World were flaring once more. Suslov, Ponomarev, and Nikolai Podgorny backed the old hard-line stance, while Brezhnev, Alexei Kosygin, and Alexander Shelepin favored the more moderate position. This time, however, the ideological arguments did not have a significant effect upon the relationship between the two countries.

In December, Shelepin followed up Amer's visit with a visit of his own for the victory day celebrations at Port Said. His visit underscored the desire on the part of the new Soviet leadership that their relations with Egypt stay at the same high level at which they had been when Khrushchev had been ousted. They were successful in achieving their goal. Throughout the first half of 1965, a potpourri of cultural, military, economic, and governmental delegations passed between the two countries.

The middle level exchanges between the Soviet Union and Egypt paved the way for a five-day visit by Nasser to the U.S.S.R. in August. ¹¹¹ It was his first meeting with the new leaders and was intended to develop a personal rapport between the leaders of the two countries. Much of the visit was spent at a hunting lodge just outside of Moscow where Nasser and his entourage got to know the leaders of the new Soviet oligarchy better. ¹¹² At the end of his visit, Nasser decided to find out just how close his new relationship with Brezhnev, Kosygin, Podgorny, and the other leaders of the

Soviet Union could be. He asked the Soviets to cancel some of the debt which the Egyptians had incurred from arms purchases from them since 1962 when they began their intervention in Yemen. The Soviets agreed that the Yemeni civil war was a war of "national liberation" and decided to cancel 500 million dollars of Egypt's debt.¹¹³

During the next two years, the Egyptian-Soviet relationship was smooth and stable. Contacts between the new regime in Moscow and the old one in Cairo were strengthened and personalized. In May of 1966, Kosygin came to Cairo to ensure that the positive contact that had been established the previous August during Nasser's visit between the new Soviet leaders and the Egyptian head of state were maintained. During the course of the visit, Kosygin apologetically informed the Egyptians that the Politburo had not yet had time to respond to an Egyptian request for more arms which had come just before his departure from Moscow. He explained that such requests must now come far in advance because the Soviet Union had a planned economy and each request must be carefully weighed before it could be acted upon. This was his reply to an Egyptian request for additional wheat supplies as well.¹¹⁴ He told Nasser that he could not promise anything; Soviet wheat supplies were a weak point in the economy, and nature and the entire Politburo must decide.

Two months later, the Egyptian request for wheat was

answered positively. The Soviet harvest had been sufficient¹¹⁵ and the Politburo was willing. From the foregoing, it is clear that the new Soviet regime was much more deliberate and dependent upon the wheels of bureaucracy than the impetuous and headstrong Khrushchev had been. Despite this¹¹⁶ and the occasional flareups which it caused, the new Soviet leadership and the Soviets were beginning to understand one another and build a strong, stable, mutually beneficial relationship.

Nasser wanted Brezhnev to visit in 1967 to cement the newly developed relationship. Tentative plans were made, but they were abandoned when the Soviets had second thoughts. Apparently, the Soviets were concerned that such a visit would be compared unfavorably with that of Khrushchev in 1964. They excused themselves on the grounds that 1967 was the fiftieth anniversary of the Russian revolution and Brezhnev must focus his attention at home in order to prepare for the occasion. There had also been some criticism of¹¹⁷ Brezhnev for the amount of time he was spending abroad.

Gromyko came instead. In March, he spent three days in Cairo. While he was there, Nasser brought up the subject of arms, a topic which was often in his thoughts during the period just before the Six Day War. A considerable portion of Nasser's preoccupation with armaments and Israel may have been derived from a series of Soviet intelligence reports which were purportedly transmitted by Soviet naval vessels

118

in the Mediterranean to Egypt and Syria. These documents contained information that Israel was preparing to attack Syria. Coupled with a string of vitriolic expostulations by Israeli leaders, the documents and the Soviets' own apparent concern would certainly have alarmed Nasser and convinced him that the period of calm between Israel and the Arab states was about to end. If that was the case, he must have reasoned, Egypt had to stockpile arms and prepare for war.

Early in 1966, a new regime seized power in Syria. Led by Dr. Nureddin al-Atassi, an extremely radical and pro-Marxist wing of the Ba'ath party took control of the Syrian government and declared its increased support for Palestinian efforts at "national liberation." The Soviets were quick to recognize and encourage the isolated and politically insecure new regime in Syria. Izvestia, in particular, was effusive in its praise of the new Arab government.¹¹⁹ The Soviet leadership, while somewhat more restrained toward the Syrians than Izvestia, also gave them strong support and began to pressure Nasser into helping the new Syrian regime as well.

Nasser was still suspicious of the Syrian Ba'athists. His caution stemmed from the ill-fated attempts at union between Syria and Egypt. However, Soviet pressure and Israeli threats and attacks convinced him to conclude a mutual defense pact with the Ba'athist regime in Syria in November 1966.

The pact with Syria was the first in a series of events that led Nasser into what has been termed by some a trap.¹²⁰ Oddly enough, the Soviets, who in November 1966 had counseled restraint, seemed to be promoting a more belligerent attitude on the part of the Egyptians. In fact, the Soviet actions and the attitudes which they expressed in early 1967 could only be characterized as inflammatory. They gave Nasser unsupported information about American and Israeli troop movements and joint intents and persistently urged him to take a more militant stand vis-a-vis Israeli "provocations."

Throughout early 1967, the Syrians and the Israelis had been engaging in air battles, artillery duels and other hostilities. While this was taking place, the Egyptians were having abuse heaped upon them by the Syrians, Jordanians, and Saudis for "hiding behind the skirts of the U.N. Emergency Force" and failing to aid their Syrian brothers against the Israelis while at the same time they¹²¹ were killing their fellow Arabs in Yemen.

In April, the growing crisis advanced another step. On April 7, one of the by now routine artillery battles between the Syrians and Israel escalated sharply into a large scale aerial dogfight. The Israelis shot down six Syrian jets and then "flew on to Damascus, making victory swoops over the city." Two weeks later the Soviets warned the Israeli ambassador about Israel's provocations in areas near the

Soviet Union. On the 25th of April, the Soviets once more called Israel's ambassador to the Soviet Foreign Ministry. There he was given a note warning the Israelis about their troop concentrations on the borders of Syria. Two days later an Egyptian parliamentary delegation arrived in Moscow for consultation with the Soviets. It stayed two weeks.

By mid-May, tension on the Syrian-Israeli border had reached the critical level. The Soviet press had joined with that in the Arab countries and began calling for a united Arab front and condemning the Israelis. ¹²² On May 15, following a series of inflammatory speeches by Israeli leaders and the return of the Egyptian delegation from Moscow, a state of alert was declared in Egypt. The following day the Egyptians requested a limited withdrawal of the U.N. Emergency Force from their posts on the Sinai border. U Thant, the U.N. Secretary General, informed Nasser that either a full withdrawal or none at all was the only acceptable alternative as far as the U.N. was concerned. Egyptian troops were already moving east across the Sinai in order to occupy the UNEF positions, so Nasser was faced with a difficult choice - humiliating retreat or another step along the path toward war.

He chose the latter, perhaps hoping that he still had time to prevent the approaching conflict. In articles in Izvestia, Krasnaia Zvezda, and Pravda, the Soviets lauded the Egyptian actions. ¹²³ The Egyptians formally requested the withdrawal of UNEF forces on May 18. The Egyptians occupied all

of the U.N. posts on their side of the border except the crucial post of Sharm el-Sheik. Nasser hesitated to take this key port on the Gulf of Aqaba because it would have meant barring Israeli shipping from the Tiran Straits which would have brought the Middle East to the brink of war.

On the evening of May 21, due to a combination of the pressure from Arab public opinion and the Egyptian military's wish to avenge its defeat in 1956, Nasser took the final step and occupied Sharm el-Sheik. Two days later the Egyptian Defense Minister, Shams Aldin Badran visited the U.S.S.R. During his visit, the Soviets emphasized the necessity of
124
avoiding military conflict. They expressed their willingness to support Egypt to the hilt diplomatically, but stressed that military assistance would not be forthcoming from the U.S.S.R.

At the end of Badran's visit to Moscow, an unfortunate incident occurred. Marshal Grechko told Badran, "Stand firm. Whatever you have to face, you will find us with you. Don't let yourself be blackmailed by the Americans or anyone else." As it turned out Grechko did not mean exactly what he implied,
125
he was just giving Badran "one for the road." But Badran was the wrong person to say such things to. A militant, he was one member of the Egyptian upper echelons who wanted Nasser to take a hard, aggressive stance. He returned to Cairo and told Nasser that the Soviets had pledged unconditional support to Egypt in its conflict with Israel.

On May 30, the Jordanians, despite their many contre-temps with both Egypt and Syria earlier in the year, joined the Syrian-Egyptian mutual defense alliance. By doing so, they physically encircled Israel and gave the Israelis one more excuse to start hostilities. An American mission came to Cairo to try to find a solution to the impending conflict. Apparently it had some success and there was some possibility of the two sides reaching an agreement. Zacharia Mohieddin was scheduled to visit Washington on June 7 to work out a solution in conjunction with the Americans. Nutting quotes Dean Rusk as saying that this helped "to press the trigger" of war by making the Israelis fearful that a solution would be imposed upon them before they could teach the Arabs a
126
lesson.

The story of the Six-Day War has already been told. The Soviet role in the conflict was limited to support for Egypt and the other Arab states in their press, diplomatic pressure, and eventually, convincing the U.N. to censure Israel. In the eyes of most Arabs, this support, such as it was, was insufficient. They believed that the Soviets should have physically intervened to save them from what many believed to be a joint American-Israeli attack. The failure of the Soviets to enter the arena of combat engendered long-term hostility in the Arab populace. However, despite the Arab view that the Soviets had deceived and abandoned them, they still needed Soviet support to shore them up after

the war. In fact, they needed it now more than ever.

Egypt, as Israel's main target in the brief conflict, was the most devastated by it, and it needed the most bolstering. Nasser, in particular, was in a tenuous position. He had been the architect of both Arab radicalism and Egyptian policy. His plans and stratagems had been shattered. In the aftermath of the war, a distraught Nasser had decided in conjunction with his military advisors that, since the Israelis had inflicted such a humiliating drubbing upon the Egyptian military in the war which his policies had led to, he must resign. He did so, but almost immediately was back in power because the Egyptian populace, upon hearing of his decision, had responded with a spontaneous groundswell of emotional backing and demanded that he remain as head of state.

Nasser remained in power, and soon consolidated the three most powerful offices in Egypt in his hands by adding the Secretary-Generalship of the ASU to his own portfolio. He also conducted a mini-purge of the military, getting rid of both those responsible for the debacle in the war against Israel and those whose discontent might make them dangerous.

Having strengthened his power base, Nasser turned his attention toward rebuilding the Egyptian military which had been devastated by the war. To accomplish this task, he had to turn once more to the Soviets for massive aid. There was

some concern on the part of Nasser and the Egyptians that the Soviets would be unwilling to resupply them given the breadth of the military losses. Another factor which undoubtedly aggravated Egyptian disquietude was the exchange of recriminations and charges of responsibility (or lack of it) that had been going on between the Egyptian military at all levels and its Soviet advisors. The Egyptian misgivings turned out to be baseless. The Soviets were indeed willing to resupply the Egyptian military and to do so rapidly.¹²⁷

By this time Nasser had decided that he had to use diplomatic proxies to deal with the Israelis. He was certain (probably with more than adequate justification) that any direct negotiations with them would be just like the Germans' efforts at negotiating with the Allies at Versailles - fruitless. Nasser believed that the Israelis would simply dictate terms to the Egyptians which the Egyptians would be forced to accept. The Soviets seemed to be the perfect choice of proxies for the Egyptians. They could deal with the Americans as one superpower to another. They could not be intimidated by the Israelis. They could represent themselves as a relatively disinterested party. Most importantly, they were willing to assume the role of mouthpiece for the Egyptians.

Therefore, Nasser made it a policy to increase Soviet-¹²⁸ Egyptian involvement whenever and wherever he could. He was quite successful in doing so. Soviet military, economic,

and diplomatic involvement with Egypt all rose drastically after the June war. During the next three years, the relationship between Egypt and the U.S.S.R. was smoother and the policies of the two nations were more closely coordinated than they had ever been before.

The desperate needs of the Egyptians caused them to rely more and more heavily upon the largesse of the Soviets. To some extent, it appeared that they were forced to give up their sovereignty in return for the aid which the Soviets provided. In fact, they did abandon some of the policies which had been followed during the previous years of Nasser's dominance of Egyptian politics in return for a clear increase in the commitment of the U.S.S.R. to the Arab cause. Nasser gave up any thoughts he may have had of resuming the persecution of the ECP. Egypt pursued more radical internal policies. And in response to Soviet suggestions, the purge of the military following the June war included its right wing.¹²⁹ In return, the Soviets identified themselves with the Arabs, going so far as to commit their own personnel, first-line weaponry, prestige, and capital resources to what at times may have seemed to be a bottomless pit.

Despite this seeming dependence upon the Soviets, Nasser never gave up control of Egypt's policies or of its destiny. He never made any changes which he would not quickly reverse. Even when he promoted the pro-Soviet faction in the ASU to positions of enhanced power, he kept enough con-

trol over them to eliminate any threat to his position or the policies which he wanted to institute which they might pose.¹³⁰ In these instances, and others like it, Soviet wishes were clearly not a determining factor in any way.

On the diplomatic front, the Soviets championed the Egyptians. The U.N. Security Council had been in nearly continuous session since the fighting had begun on June 5. On the 13th of June, the Soviets proposed a resolution branding Israel as an aggressor and calling for the immediate withdrawal of Israel's armed forces from the territories which they had seized.¹³¹ The bill was defeated by a coalition of nations spearheaded by the U.S., which was committed to a veto of any plan which would eliminate Israeli gains without giving them a complete peace in return. With American opposition blocking any progress in the Security Council, the Soviets turned to the General Assembly. Even there, the Soviets were unable to garner sufficient support for the Arab cause to censure the Israelis and force a withdrawal.

While the U.N. deliberations were in progress, the Soviets also resorted to other avenues to try to aid Egypt and the other Arab countries. On June 9, the states of Eastern Europe attended a conference in Moscow which was held to discuss the crisis in the Middle East. The conference produced a declaration which condemned Israel and promised "to do everything necessary to help the peoples of the Arab countries give a firm rebuff to the agressor" All¹³²

of the nations involved in the conference except Rumania signed the declaration and, by June 11, they all (again with the exception of Rumania) had severed diplomatic relations with Israel.

Twelve days after the Soviets and their East European allies condemned Israel, the first major Soviet diplomatic mission to Egypt arrived in Cairo. Led by President Podgorny, the mission, which also included Chief of Staff Marshal Matvei V. Zakharov, was crucial for Nasser and the Soviets both. It provided Egypt with massive military and economic aid and the promise of political support. This ensured that Nasser had the means to carry on the struggle with Israel and thus to avoid the diktat which he feared. By providing Nasser and Egypt with massive aid and political encouragement, the Soviet visit demonstrated the solidarity of the U.S.S.R. with Egypt and curbed to some extent the anti-Soviet sentiment which was spreading through the Egyptian populace.

Soviet efforts at mediation of the Arab-Israeli crisis continued throughout the months following the cessation of active hostilities. In mid-July, they presented a proposal to Nasser which they had developed in conjunction with the Americans on the basis of a suggestion put forward by a group of Latin American countries. Since it called for Israel's withdrawal from all Arab territories coupled with immediate Arab recognition of Israel's right to exist, the superpowers

considered the proposal to be the sort of compromise that might satisfy both sides in the conflict. However, despite its possibilities, the proposal failed to address the Palestinian problem, something which Nasser was politically bound to try to solve.

Although the joint Soviet-American proposal of July had failed as had the earlier Soviet attempts to mobilize the U.N., both the Soviets and the Egyptians continued to seek a diplomatic solution to the problems at hand in the Middle East. On November 7, the Egyptians called a meeting of the U.N. Security Council. Over the next two weeks the Egyptians and their Soviet allies fought to get a favorable resolution adopted. On November 22, the Security Council adopted Resolution 242. Despite some discrepancies in the wording of the text of the resolution in various languages, the resolution in essence called for Israeli withdrawal from Arab territories which would be accompanied by the acknowledgment of the right of all states to exist within recognized boundaries in peace. It also maintained that there should be freedom of navigation through international waterways in the region, that a just solution of the refugee problem should be sought, and that a just and lasting peace in the Middle East would be found with this resolution as its basis.

Resolution 242 became a weapon with which both Egypt and the Soviet Union would scourge the Israelis in the years to come. The Israelis opened themselves up to such assaults

when they stopped abiding by the spirit of the resolution and began to fortify the territories which they had occupied (the Bar Lev line, the fortifications in the Golan Heights and along the West Bank) and announced that they were in those territories to stay.¹³⁴ This made them vulnerable to charges of bad faith which were put to good use by the Soviets and the Egyptians when they were attempting to mobilize opinion in the U.N. and other international forums.

Even for the Egyptians, however, this diplomatic byplay was little more than window dressing because, according to Heikal, "Nasser was always skeptical about Resolution 242." He believed that what was "taken by force can only be recovered by force," and that, "If you look at what the Israelis are doing in the occupied territories, it is perfectly obvious that they are never going to evacuate those territories unless they are made to do so."¹³⁵

The strengthening of the ties between Egypt and the Soviet Union was progressive. The next step came on January 7, 1968, when Kirill Mazurov led a Soviet delegation to Egypt to help celebrate the eighth anniversary of the start of work on the Aswan Dam and the tenth anniversary of the first Soviet-Egyptian economic agreement regarding the construction of the dam. The visit was played down by the Egyptians and at its end a relatively terse joint communique was issued which, by its omission of any statement of gratitude for Soviet aid, did two things: 1) it implied that such assis-

tance was a matter of course; and 2) that Egypt wanted the
¹³⁶
 levels of aid increased.

Later, in January, the first tangible sign of a change in Egyptian internal policy which was specifically designed to please the Soviets came when Nasser resigned the post of Secretary-General of the ASU in favor of Ali Sabri. Sabri had long been identified with the pro-Soviet faction among Egypt's elite and his promotion was greeted with muted ap-
¹³⁷
 plause in Moscow.

On March 30, another Egyptian internal development which was viewed with pleasure in Moscow came to pass. Nasser instituted a program of reforms which were intended to move Egypt closer to Nasser's ideal of socialism. The Soviet press applauded Egypt's most recent reforms (as it had others in the past) as another step forward in the permanent process of revolution. Like its press, the Soviet government responded positively to Egypt's internal re-
¹³⁸
 structuring.

Cooperation between Moscow and Cairo was becoming in-
¹³⁹
 creasingly deep. The Soviets seemed to be identifying themselves more and more with the Arab cause. On July 1, at the signing of a nuclear non-proliferation treaty, Kosygin presented a nine-point proposal for arms control which included an arms freeze in the Middle East as one of its stipulations. He linked the freeze with an Israeli withdrawal from occupied

Arab territories. The Soviets had apparently made obtaining a solution to the crisis in the Middle East on Arab terms one of their primary goals in the arena of international politics. Clearly, Nasser was succeeding in his attempts to entangle the Soviets in his webs of diplomacy and dependence.

Nasser continued those efforts later in the year during his visit to Moscow on July 7. By the end of this consultation between Nasser and the Soviet leaders, they had agreed to issue a joint communique which set out joint positions on most of the major issues of the day, thus indicating a consonance of views. A further indication of the growing unanimity in world outlook of the two countries which was brought to light in the joint communique was the announcement in its text of the establishment of direct party-to-party contacts between the CPSU and the ASU.¹⁴⁰

In September, Egypt started to raise the level of its hostilities toward Israel along the Suez Canal. Soon thereafter, both Egypt and the Soviet Union stepped up their diplomatic activity as well. On September 25, 1968, the Soviet Foreign Ministry issued a statement sharply condemning Israeli intransigence. Two days later, Al-Ahram reported a peace plan which the Soviets had presented to the U.S. two weeks earlier that called for an Israeli pullback to its prewar borders, an expanded U.N. presence in the areas evacuated, an Arab statement ending the state of belligerency which had existed since 1949, great power guarantees of

peace, and the setting aside of the Palestinian issue for
later discussion.¹⁴¹ At the same time, the U.S.S.R. upped the
level of its military aid to Egypt.

The September initiatives of the Egyptians and their Soviet allies were not successful in bringing peace to the Middle East. In the meantime, domestic pressures upon Nasser had begun to mount. In November widespread student unrest and rioting spread through Egypt while, at the same time, the military once again began to get increasingly restive at being restrained from retaliating against the Israelis. The most important underlying cause for the growing civil disorder and the impatience in the military was Nasser's failure to liberate the occupied Arab territories and avenge the humiliation which the Israelis had inflicted upon the Arab nations. In response to the growing discontent of the Egyptian populace, Nasser decided to
escalate the level of conflict along the Suez Canal.¹⁴²

In December, Moscow once more presented a peace plan to the U.N. which was based upon Resolution 242. At the same time, Gromyko was sent to Egypt to discuss matters with Nasser. In the joint communique, which was the product of the meeting between the Egyptian head of state and the Soviet Foreign Minister, it was clear that the policies of the two nations had once again converged. Both realized that the time had come to cause some movement in the situation in the Middle East.

The new peace initiative which the Soviets presented in the U.N. was a failure. The Israelis once again rejected a position which was based upon a maximalist interpretation of U.N. Resolution 242. By January 1969, Nasser was once again speaking in terms of force rather than diplomacy as the solution to the tense situation in the Middle East.¹⁴³ By the end of February, a state of emergency had been declared in Egypt. The Soviets, realizing the costs of renewed warfare, tried to dissuade Nasser from his chosen course toward war. At the end of January, Shelepin returned to Cairo along with a trade union delegation. His mission was to try to convince Nasser that political maneuver was his best bet for an advantageous solution and that the resumption of open conflict would be disastrous for Egypt and the Soviet Union. Try as he might, Shelepin could not persuade Nasser to alter his course. Nor could the other Soviet leaders alter Nasser's decision without producing a clear change in the situation between Israel and the Arabs, a change which, given Nasser's intransigence, had to come on the terms of the Arabs, something which was extremely unlikely because of the stubbornness of the Israelis which matched or exceeded that of the Arabs.

The Soviets were unsuccessful in their attempts to avert the suddenly acute crisis. As a result, on March 9, 1969, Nasser declared a new phase of the Arab-Israeli conflict open - the "war of attrition" had begun. The "war of

attrition", while begun without Soviet approval, was the perfect tonic for the maladies which beset Egypt. The commando raids and artillery duels gave the Egyptian army a taste of the action for which its officers had been spoiling. The renewal of conflict with Israel gave the populace a measure of renewed pride and diverted their attention from the other factors which had led to the student rioting earlier in the year.

At this juncture, the Soviets were determined to do two things if they possibly could - give Egypt their full support, and at the same time lower the level of conflict in the Middle East. They were successful in the former, but the latter proved to be more difficult. The Soviet press mounted a campaign for a peaceful solution to the hostilities along the Suez Canal.¹⁴⁴ The mild pressure of a press campaign was completely unable to convince Nasser to moderate his position. In one last effort to change Nasser's mind, the Soviets sent Gromyko back to Cairo. The Soviet Foreign Minister's mission was a failure just as that of Shelepin had been. At the end of Gromyko's three-day visit, Moscow finally accepted the fait accompli and endorsed the Egyptian stance in a short joint communique.

The failure of the Gromyko mission was a harbinger of things to come. The Soviet acceptance of the Egyptian position vis-a-vis Israel brought Soviet-American discussion of the problems of the Middle East nearly to a halt. The

fighting along the Suez Canal escalated once again in July. In recognition of the Soviet acceptance and support of Nasser's position, the Egyptians sent Ali Sabri to Moscow again for a three-week visit. The visit was intended to assure the Soviets of the "progressive" character of Egypt's government.¹⁴⁵ In another gesture of thanks to the Soviets, Nasser also decided to extend full diplomatic recognition to the DDR.

As the "war of attrition" raged on and Soviet weaponry in the hands of the Egyptian military proved itself to be inadequate to halt Israel, the Soviets were once again drawn further into Nasser's webs of entanglement. The Soviets had been conducting desultory talks regarding peace in the Middle East with the Americans, but in October the Soviet leaders decided to break them off and proposed a resumption of Four Power talks in their place. The move was one which Nasser had encouraged and the Soviet acquiescence further encouraged "Arab belligerence" by making a diplomatic solution even more remote.

In November, Sadat went to Moscow on a mission intended to raise the level of Soviet military assistance. Israel's air superiority had proven to be too much for Egypt to handle and the Egyptian air defense system was now in tatters. Israeli planes could now range freely throughout Egypt. Sadat went to the U.S.S.R. to find some means of deterring those attacks. On December 12, after more than two weeks of

discussions, the Soviets and the Egyptians issued a joint communique which outlined the outcome of the talks. The two sides stressed the importance of improving bilateral ties. More concretely, the Soviets agreed to take "urgent and constructive steps" to counter the Israeli attacks.¹⁴⁶

These "constructive steps" did not come quickly enough for the Egyptians. In mid-January, the military situation in Egypt had deteriorated even further from the position that had prompted Sadat's visit. As a result, another indication of just how close the ties between Nasser and the Soviets had become became apparent almost immediately. On January 10 a Soviet delegation headed by Politburo member D. A. Kunaev visited Egypt for ten days to assess the situation there. Two days after the Soviet contingent departed, Nasser flew secretly to Moscow to ask that direct military aid from the Soviet Union be sent to Egypt forthwith. The commitment which he received during his four-day visit far outstripped anything which the Soviets had previously been willing to offer Egypt or any other non-communist country since the Soviet regime had come to power in Russia in 1917: the active involvement of Soviet military personnel in the defense of a non-communist nation.

Nasser's plea to the Soviet leaders had come for a variety of reasons which ranged from his own political instability to his avowed desire to enmesh the U.S.S.R. as deeply as possible in the political imbroglio of the Middle

East. The Soviets had responded with a major commitment of military personnel and hardware for an equally wide range of reasons. They had already invested a great deal of time and effort in supporting Nasser and Egypt and his fall quite probably would have been extremely expensive for them in terms of both prestige and military might. By making a major commitment to Egypt, they were improving their strategic position in the Mediterranean basin and, by extension, the world as well as broadening - or at the very least maintaining - their political pull in Egypt and the rest of the Arab world by bolstering the position of the man who they felt was the key to their influence in the region.

The Soviets took responsibility for Egypt's air defense. It was the first time that the Soviet Union had undertaken such a task and committed its personnel to the active defense of a non-communist country. The Soviets sent both fighter pilots and missile technicians to the fracas along with their new SAM-3 missiles. At the same time, the Soviets took a stance which was more visibly supportive of Egypt in its conflict with Israel. Led by Kosygin, the Soviets issued what were interpreted in the West as a series of purely polemical statements which expressed their willingness to render all "necessary aid to the Arab states in strengthening their ability to uphold their just interests." 147 In reality, these statements represented the actual commitment of the Soviets to Egypt and its allies.

In return for the Soviet commitment of its personnel and their assumption of responsibility for the defense of Egypt's air space, Nasser turned six airfields over to the Soviet military. He also gave them a free hand in the deployment of Soviet weaponry and personnel.¹⁴⁸ With these concessions, the Soviets now had control over both the Egyptian skies and parts of Egyptian territory for the first time.

The military commitments of the Soviet Union were soon matched by similar diplomatic commitments. In March, when the Soviet military presence had allowed Egypt to regain some semblance of control of the air space over the area west of the Suez Canal, the Soviets adamantly refused to compromise their commitment to Egypt in any way when the American government suggested such a move in order to decrease "tension" along the canal.¹⁴⁹

While the Soviets were rejecting the overtures which had been made by the Americans, their Deputy Foreign Minister for Middle Eastern Affairs, Vladmir Vinogradov, went to Cairo to serve as a liaison between his government and Nasser for the next six weeks. His trip was indicative of both the newfound closeness of the Soviet and Egyptian governments and the importance which Egypt's problems had taken on for the Soviets. The implications presented by Vinogradov's visit were to some extent confirmed when Ali Sabri, who had once again recovered much of the power that had been stripped from him, visited Moscow for the Lenin

centenary and consultations with Soviet leaders in April.

A little over a month later, two events took place which were to have an important affect upon Middle Eastern affairs. The first of these was the submission by the American government of the final draft of the so-called "Rogers Peace Plan" to the Egyptian government on June 25. 150 The Rogers Plan offered a chance for negotiations between the Israelis and the Egyptians on a mutually acceptable basis as well as arranging for a cease-fire along the Suez.

The Rogers Plan precipitated the second of the two developments which influenced the course of events in the Middle East. Four days after the American proposal was announced, Nasser flew to Moscow to discuss its ramifications with the Soviet leadership. He spent nineteen days in the U.S.S.R., and after his discussions with Brezhnev, Kosygin, Podgorny, Gromyko, Vinogradov, and the other members of the Soviet ruling elite, the two sides issued a joint communique which reaffirmed the commitment of the two sides to one another and to the search for a "just peace." The communique also announced that Brezhnev had agreed to make his first visit to Egypt and that Kosygin and Podgorny had accepted invitations from the Egyptians for them to return 151 there.

On July 23, the real reason for Nasser's visit became more apparent than it had been from the communique. The com-

munique had not mentioned the Rogers Plan at all; however, that afternoon, three days after he had returned from the Soviet Union, Nasser announced Egypt's acceptance of the American proposal at a stormy session of the ASU party congress and agreed to a three-month cease-fire along the Suez. The announcement incurred the wrath of the radical Arab regimes and the PLO. Both groups hurled invective and charges of treason at the Egyptians. Nasser scoffed at the charges and soon thereafter began a crackdown on the radical Palestinian organizations in Egypt.

Nasser's crackdown on the radical Palestinians within his borders was followed by a much harsher assault by Jordan's King Hussein on the Fedayeen in his country. The trouble in Jordan had been brewing for a long time and in mid-September, Hussein decided to send his army against Palestinian units throughout his country. In order to stop the internecine warfare in Jordan and to keep it from involving much of the Arab world (the Syrians were threatening to intervene on the side of the Palestinians and the more moderate regimes of the Arabian Peninsula were offering to aid Jordan if the Syrians should take military action), Nasser, whose health had been deteriorating for some time, interrupted a rest which had been prescribed for him by his physicians. He invited the two sides to Cairo for discussions with each other and the other Arab heads of state which he would mediate. The conference proved successful in

heading off the incipient tempest in Jordan, but it also¹⁵²
brought about a drastic deterioration in Nasser's health.

The downturn in Nasser's health quickly proved fatal. He died on September 28. Nasser left a legacy of a diplomatic involvement between the Soviet Union and Egypt that to varying extents had helped to shape the foreign policy of both countries and the internal policy of Egypt. Both countries became involved with situations that they might not have otherwise. Egypt would have been unable to pursue its internal development and modernization if the conduit for necessary Soviet economic aid had not been developed by Nasser's diplomacy.

The political ties between Egypt and the U.S.S.R. had given Egypt valuable support for its positions in such international forums as the U.N. and S.C.U.A. They had provided Egypt with a staunch ally which lent both military and economic support when the Egyptians needed it most. The relationship had provided an avenue for cultural contacts which, to some extent, broadened the cultural horizons of the Egyptian people.

The benefits of relations with the Soviet Union for Egypt are clear: It received money, arms, and technical expertise when it needed it; it was given diplomatic support which bolstered its positions during such international contretemps as the Suez Canal crisis and the Six-Day War; and,

the relationship gave Egypt flexibility in its overall international posture by providing it with an alternative to the West as a source of aid and support.

While the benefits of the Soviet-Egyptian relationship to the Egyptians are evident, the advantages to the U.S.S.R. are also apparent, even if they are for the most part intangible. First, the Soviets gained egress to an area from which they previously had been excluded by Western influence. Second, they had gained some influence in the affairs of a region which for a variety of reasons had an important impact upon the Soviet Union and on world politics. Third, the Soviets had also gained prestige throughout the Third World by helping Egypt to assert its independence from the West.

Despite the obvious benefits to both countries, the relationship between the U.S.S.R. and Egypt was often stormy. During periods like 1958-59 and 1963-64, distinct chills in the association between the two nations were manifest as a result of Egypt's suppression of its Communist Party and the ineffective attempts by the Soviet leadership to pressure Nasser into halting his anti-Communist drives. In 1969 Soviet dismay at their lack of influence upon Egyptian policies was again evident in the Soviet press when Brezhnev, Kosygin, and other Soviet leaders were unable to dissuade the Egyptians from plunging headlong into the "war of attrition" with Israel.

The causes of the discord between the Soviet Union and Egypt are evidence that the controlling influence in the relationship between the Soviet Union and Egypt lay in Nasser's hands. Nasser was always able to control his own destiny, at least insofar as his dealings with the Soviet Union were concerned. Whenever he chose to pursue a course of action, he did so, and there was little or nothing that the Soviets were both willing and able to do to stop him. Eventually, despite whatever reservations the Soviet leaders may have had about a course of action which Nasser took, they would, however grudgingly, give him their support. Nasser's entrance into the "war of attrition" is particularly illustrative of this facet of the Soviet-Egyptian relationship. The Soviet leadership "begged" Nasser not to embark upon what they considered to be a rash course of action. He did so anyway. When his adventure proved disastrous, they bailed him out of what might have proved to be a situation which would have led to his humiliation and political downfall.¹⁵³

By 1970, Soviet policy in Egypt and the entire Middle East had become based upon Nasser and his influence to such an extent that they clearly believed that - if they were to maintain the level of influence in the region which they had attained - it was imperative for them to support him at almost any cost. However reluctantly, they gave him some of their most advanced defensive military equipment to fight his wars despite the risk of its eventual capture by the

Israelis. They spent hundreds of millions of dollars on and in his country. They even went so far as to send their own troops to defend him when his fate hung in the balance. The situation which one might have expected - Egyptian dependence upon Soviet arms, money, and technical support - had come to pass; the Egyptians did need the arsenal and the economic support with which the Soviet Union had supplied them to pursue both their domestic and foreign policies. Unfortunately, from the Soviet point of view, the Soviets had fallen prey to a countervailing pressure: they had become so dependent upon Nasser and his influence throughout the Arab world that their dependence upon him played a greater role in determining the interrelationship between the two countries than did Egypt's dependence upon the material and spiritual support which the U.S.S.R. provided to it.

In part, Soviet dependence was a result of the situation which the two nations faced: the issues upon which the two governments collaborated were usually ones which Nasser chose. They were questions in which Egypt was more deeply involved and upon which Egypt inherently had more influence because of its more direct involvement. As a result, Egypt was more concerned with the solutions of the problems with which the two countries were forced to cope and the U.S.S.R. was primarily interested in its relationship with Egypt and only secondarily in the problems themselves. Because of

this divergence in the primary concerns of the two nations, the Soviet Union was placed in a support role while Egypt took the lead and acted as its leaders felt best whether or not the Soviets approved.

It was within this context that the Soviet-Egyptian relationship developed. The two nations cooperated closely on issues which were essential concerns of the Egyptians and Nasser, while the Soviets, who were less concerned with the issues themselves, put the weight of their prestige and power behind the positions which the Egyptians took. The relationship flourished. The Egyptians were allowed to pursue policies which they might not otherwise have been capable of pursuing. The Soviets gained prestige and influence in both the Third World in general and the Middle East in particular. The relationship deepened throughout the years in which Nasser was in power in Egypt despite temporary fluctuations in the level of agreement and cordiality between the two countries which occurred when the Soviet Union's leadership disapproved of a course of action which its Egyptian counterpart chose to take.

In general, it can be said that both sides benefited from the relationship although each occasionally paid a price in situations where their chosen ally cost them some of the flexibility they might otherwise have had. Usually this influenced the Soviet Union more than it did Egypt, but the Egyptians were also affected in situations where either

the U.S. would have been more effective as an ally or no ally at all would have been more useful. (An example of the former is the building of the Aswan Dam, where superior Western technology and more freedom in the choice of spare parts suppliers helped to make the U.S. and the rest of the West Egypt's first choice as a partner despite greater surface costs. The latter situation is exemplified by the situation which arose from the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian revolution, a circumstance which put the Egyptians in the position of having to at least nominally support what was ostensibly an imperialistic war because of its own international situation, i.e. the diplomatic machinations which followed the Suez Canal crisis.) Despite its occasional debits for both sides, the diplomatic relationship between the U.S.S.R. and Egypt during the years from 1953 to 1970 seems to have been one from which both nations benefited enormously and one with which, on balance, both sides were satisfied at the time of Nasser's death.

NOTES (Chapter III)

- 1) See Anthony Nutting, Nasser, pp. 39-45, for an account of the first few weeks after the revolution in Egypt.
- 2) The break between the RCC and the old parliamentary system had begun long before, but it hardened into its final form when the Wafd party stubbornly resisted the reforms which the Free Officers wanted to institute. See Nutting, ibid, pp. 52-53.
- 3) This drive and the military and middle-class backgrounds of the majority of the members of the Revolutionary Command Council were among the many reasons which helped to develop strong initial distrust in the Soviet leadership for the new regime in Egypt. See Nutting, Nasser, pp. 43-44, 54, and 57. Also see Walter Laqueur, The Soviet Union and the Middle East (New York: Praeger, 1959), p. 195. George Lenczowski brings up Soviet suspicions (which were probably unfounded) that the Egyptian revolution was actually the product of a CIA operation. If true, CIA involvement would bring into question the standard accounts of the chain of events that led to the military coup in Egypt like the one Nutting provides. Lenczowski, Soviet Advances in the Middle East, p. 76.
- 4) The Communist Party of Egypt - much diminished because of Nasser's drive against it after the revolution - also supported Neguib against their old adversary. For a discussion of the political events of this period, see Marlowe, A History of Egypt and Anglo-Egyptian Relations, pp. 381-407, and Nutting, ibid, pp. 56-73.
- 5) The ECP had actively worked against Nasser. The Soviets on the other hand initially were very quiet about the Egyptian revolution. Presumably they had other things on their minds (such as the impending death of Stalin). Although Soviet statements were initially somewhat hostile, they were few and far between. See Heikal, The Sphinx and the Commissar, pp. 53-54; Lenczowski, op cit, p. 75-76; and Laqueur, op cit, p. 195.
- 6) See the articles on the Anglo-Egyptian Pact in Pravda and Izvestia on October 21 and 22, 1954.
- 7) Robert O. Freedman points this out in Soviet Policy Toward the Middle East Since 1970, where he suggests that it was in large part due to the premiership of Georgi Malenkov. Freedman, p. 10.
- 8) This agreement, which was related to cooperation between

the banking and financial institutions of the two countries, will be more fully discussed in the following chapter.

- 9) Jon Glassman, Arms for the Arabs, p. 11.
- 10) For a more complete look at the Czech Arms Deal and the rest of the Soviet-Egyptian military relationship, see Glassman, Arms for the Arabs.
- 11) Nutting, op cit, p. 104.
- 12) The Baghdad Pact was the Middle Eastern link in the chain of defense treaties which the U.S. and its NATO allies were attempting to forge to place as a containment barrier around the Communist Bloc.
- 13) For a discussion of the evolution of Chou En-lai's mission and the text of his report, see Mohammed Heikal, op cit, pp. 57-60.
- 14) Ibid, p. 59.
- 15) Ibid, p. 59.
- 16) See Heikal's description of the negotiations with the Americans about financing for the dam. Ibid, pp. 68-69.
- 17) See Middle East Journal, Vol. 10, #1 (Winter 1956) for a report of this agreement, as well as a chronology of the key events in the foreign relations of the nations of the Middle East during the quarter. The agreement is also mentioned in McLane, Soviet-Middle Eastern Relations, p. 35.
- 18) Anthony Nutting cites Joseph Broz Tito as being Nasser's teacher - the man who instructed him on the advantages of playing the West and the Soviet Bloc off of one another (Nutting, op cit, p. 117). Nasser continued to use this technique throughout his sojourn in power.
- 19) The agreement with the Bulgarians was signed on March 17. See Middle East Journal, Vol 10, #3 (Summer 1956), p. 282.
- 20) The Soviet offer came on October 11, 1955, when Solod came to Nasser with a proposal for Soviet aid in the building of the dam that was to cover a 25-year period. Love, Suez, p. 255.
- 21) Love, ibid, p. 311. The discussions were apparently long and arduous and had to overcome initial antipathy between Nasser and Black.

- 22) See John Foster Dulles, War or Peace (New York: Macmillan, 1957). Dulles commented further that the loan to Egypt was "a cheap price to pay for peace." Herman Finer, Dulles Over Suez: The Theory and Practice of His Diplomacy (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1964), p. 38.
- 23) This contention is brought out by both Nutting and Love in their discussions on the subject. Nutting, op cit, pp. 141-142; and Love, op cit, p. 316. It also appears in Chester L. Cooper, The Lion's Last Roar: Suez, 1956 (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), on pages 94-99. Black, who had determined otherwise for the World Bank, always considered such a contention ridiculous. Nutting, p. 135 and Love, p. 316.
- 24) Anthony Eden, Full Circle (Boston: Houghton Mifflin & Co., 1960), p. 469.
- 25) The most detailed versions of this contention appear in Cooper, *ibid*, pp. 95-98, and Love, *ibid*, pp. 323-324. The contention also appears in Nutting, *ibid*, p. 135.
- 26) Love claims that this angered Dulles so much that it was responsible for his abrupt change of heart regarding the financing of the dam. Love, *ibid*, pp. 307-310.
- 27) Terence Robertson, Crisis: The Story of the Suez Conspiracy (New York: Atheneum, 1965), pp. 35-37. Robertson supports the claim that Nasser was unreasonable. Nutting, who was Eden's Foreign Minister as the Suez crisis evolved, is one of the foremost proponents of enmity as a primary cause. See his statements regarding Eden's dislike for Nasser in Nasser, pp. 89, 136, 183, and 383, and No End of a Lesson, (New York: Potter, 1967), pp. 23, 40-41, and 45-46. Love is even more certain that Eden's enmity was a factor and repeatedly makes and remakes the point in Suez.
- 28) The Daily Telegraph was often a spokesman for this lobby. It was one of its editorials that resulted in Nutting saying he had "never seen Eden so stricken" when it impugned Eden's courage. Nutting, No End of a Lesson, p. 26.
- 29) Nutting, *ibid*, p. 24.
- 30) Eden, Full Circle, pp. 468-469.
- 31) The costs of Soviet armaments were relatively high for the Egyptians. However, later events and Black's assurances both argue that they were not too high. See footnote #23 for Black's reaction. A few years later, the U.S. Embassy in Cairo reported that the yearly costs of

the first three arms deals between the Egyptians and the Soviets were 25 million dollars and "no strain on the Egyptian economy at all." Love, Suez, pp. 316-317.

- 32) Black made this statement in a speech before the Connecticut Chamber of Commerce on May 8. He steadfastly held to this position thereafter. Love, *ibid*, p. 314.
- 33) Love, *ibid*, p. 316.
- 34) See The U.A.R. Yearbook for the years 1955, 1956, and 1957. The gross national product figures given there are compared with the import figures and the given percentages result.
- 35) Heikal chronicles the role of Nasser in the nationalization of the Canal and the events immediately thereafter on pages 67-69 of The Sphinx and the Commissar.
- 36) Love, *op cit*, pp. 362-363.
- 37) Gaitskell was endorsing a comparison originally made by Guy Mollet, the French Prime Minister. Love, *ibid*, p. 383. A similar comparison had been made about the first years of the new Egyptian regime. See Laqueur, *op cit*, p. 195.
- 38) Nutting spends a good deal of time making the point that Eden was spoiling for Nasser because of what Eden perceived as Nasser's role in the dismissal of General Glubb by the Jordanians. Nutting, No End of a Lesson, pp. 40-47. Eden's distaste for Nasser is also readily apparent throughout Eden's memoirs.
- 39) Nutting, *ibid*, p. 47.
- 40) Eden, Full Circle, p. 478. See pp. 477-478 for Eden's description of the actions taken by the British as retaliation for the nationalization of the Canal by the Egyptians.
- 41) Pineau also claimed that the Suez Canal Company had ordered its employees to defy Egyptian work orders, a claim that was untrue. Love, *op cit*, p. 367. For more on the role of the Suez Canal Company in the crisis, see the memoirs of its head, Jacques Georges-Picot, The Real Suez Canal Crisis (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanich, 1978).
- 42) The popular unrest in Iraq over Nuri a-Said's friendship with the French and the British is mentioned along

with a similar upheaval in Jordan on pages 173 and 193 of Nasser by Nutting.

- 43) Love reports that initially Khrushchev "told workers at at a stadium rally that the West had reacted with 'too much excitement'". Love, op cit, p. 377. The reasoning that the Soviets were slow to get involved in the Suez crisis out of simple caution only addresses a part of the whole situation. The Soviets also had their hands full in Hungary and Poland at the time and, as a result, could do little of substance to support the Egyptians. Their Hungarian adventure, which began on October 24, was also a weak spot in their international posture. Undoubtedly, it was another reason that they kept a lower profile than they otherwise might have.
- 44) The speech was reported in Pravda on August 1, 1956.
- 45) See the articles in Izvestia on July 31 and August 3, 4, and 5, 1956.
- 46) To get an idea of the increasingly belligerent and intransigent stand the Soviets took in support of the Egyptians (in response to the clearly hostile intent of the British and French), see Love, op cit, pp. 428, 580, 612-613, and 652.
- 47) The specter of this hope appears throughout Eden's recollections of the genesis and evolution of the crisis. See Eden, op cit, pp. 481-489.
- 48) This information comes from Eden, ibid, pp. 485-486, who attributes the French charge to Christian Pineau, the French Foreign Minister.
- 49) Love, op cit, pp. 376-381.
- 50) See Heikal's description of the events following nationalization on pages 65-73 of The Sphinx and the Commissar. According to Heikal, the reason behind the placement of this calculated distance between Egypt and the Soviets by the Egyptians was the need to maintain an independent road in foreign relations.
- 51) Eden, op cit, p. 493.
- 52) Pravda, August 10, 1955.
- 53) Donald Neff, Warriors at Suez (New York: The Linden Press, 1981), p. 198.
- 54) For a record of the arguments of the Soviet delegation and the other participants in the Conference, see The

Suez Canal Problem, July 26-September 22, 1956 (Washington: U.S. Department of State, 1956). This compendium presents the statements and proposals made at both users' conferences as well as a record of the Menzies' mission to Egypt.

- 55) Nutting, No End of a Lesson, pp. 56-57.
- 56) Menzies' statement appears in Love, op cit, on p. 412, where Love points out Menzies' lacks in the way of qualifications for the task which he was purportedly attempting to accomplish.
- 57) Love, *ibid*, pp. 435-442.
- 58) See the articles in Pravda on August 3, 6 and 10, 1956, for a look at the Soviet response to the Anglo-French buildup.
- 59) Pravda, August 9, 1956. Also see Finer, op cit, pp. 114-115, for an analysis of Dulles' reaction.
- 60) The "Six Principles" were dictated "off the cuff" by Selwyn Lloyd, the British Foreign Secretary, during his visit in New York in October. Love, *ibid*, pp. 445-446.
- 61) Love, *ibid*, pp. 445-452.
- 62) According to Nutting, Eden was "distraught". The French however, had their Israeli ace up their collective sleeve. For more on this, see Nutting, No End of a Lesson, pp. 66-69.
- 63) The Franco-Israeli plan was presented to Nutting and Eden by General Maurice Challe and French Labor Minister, Albert Gazier. Nutting's reaction was immediate rejection. Eden, on the other hand, thought it was a wonderful idea and convinced Lloyd to accept it. See Love, *ibid*, pp. 449-452.
- 64) Love, *ibid*, p. 452. This entire episode is described in detail by Nutting in No End of a Lesson on pages 90-99. A much more self-righteous version of the story appears in Eden, op cit, pp. 569-574.
- 65) See Love, *ibid*, pp. 495-497 for an account of Egypt's preparation for the invasion from Great Britain and France which Nasser feared.
- 66) Eden discusses the events leading up to the notes from the British and French to the Egyptians and Israelis, and the Egyptian rejection of theirs, but he fails to give the terms of the notes. Eden, op cit, pp. 584-592.

The text of the notes appears in Love, op cit, p. 386 and in Nutting, No End of a Lesson, Appendix VIII, pp. 193-194. Coming as they did at a time when the Canal was still approximately 100 miles behind the front, these notes stand out as one of the many transparent pretexts throughout history for an undeclared invasion of a sovereign country. Nutting was, for example, indignant at such bald-faced aggression and resigned his post in the British government. See No End of a Lesson, p. 116.

- 67) This plan is reported by Nutting on pages 163-164 of Nasser, where this perfidy is attributed to Guy Mollet in his discussions with David Ben-Gurion. It may not have been an element in the British conception of the scenario, however. Certainly, Eden does not mention it in his memoirs despite his ill-concealed dislike for Nasser.
- 68) Ultimately, as Karen Dawisha has pointed out, Nasser was the chief beneficiary of the prestige in the Arab world which was derived from the conclusion of the Czech Arms Deal and his victory over the Anglo-French-Israeli alliance at the postwar conference table. Dawisha, Soviet Policy Towards Egypt, p. 15. The losses which the U.S. would have suffered would undoubtedly have been much like those the British and French were forced to endure as a result of their roles in the Suez adventure. Both suffered through a long period of poor economic and diplomatic relations with the Arab nations of the Middle East.
- 69) Arguably, the Soviet role was somewhat more important. Heikal states that, "Russian attitudes made a significant contribution to the final result." Heikal, The Sphinx and the Commissar, p. 72. However, even he admits that it was American, not Soviet, pressure which ultimately forced a positive resolution to the situation for the Egyptians.
- 70) Love, op cit, p. 610.
- 71) Love, ibid, p. 633.
- 72) Heikal provides this information on page 74 of The Sphinx and the Commissar.
- 73) For more on this see Chapter V. Also see Dawisha, op cit, p. 195, and Spector, The Soviet Union and the Muslim World, 1917-1958, p. 261.
- 74) Nutting reports this in No End of a Lesson, on p. 144. In the U.N. Security Council emergency meetings, the

Soviets even went so far as to propose a joint Soviet-American military action against the Anglo-French forces if those forces failed to withdraw. The threat to send Soviet volunteers appeared in Pravda and Izvestia on November 11. See CDSP, Vol. VIII, #45, p. 26 for the English text.

- 75) The speech was made on December 27. It is cited without reference to the location from which it was given in Middle East Journal, Vol. 11, #1 (Winter 1957), p. 76. The location is given in Middle Eastern Affairs, Vol. 8, #2 (February 1957), p. 85.
- 76) In the aftermath of the 1955 flooding in Egypt, the Soviets sent gifts of food and medical supplies to the country for relief of the victims. These were the first of many gifts and packages of aid with which the Soviets were to supply the government which Nasser and the other Free Officers had set up.
- 77) The crisis in Lebanon was brought about when the Moslem minority of the country rebelled against the reelection of Camille Chamoun as president, a post which, under the Lebanese Constitution, was to be in the hands of a Christian. The Moslem rebellion brought American marines into Lebanon in an effort to "protect American citizens and their property." The Soviets and Arab nationalists feared that it was merely a pretext to bring down the U.A.R. government in Syria. As it turned out, the Americans apparently were in Lebanon to achieve their stated goals and not to stage an invasion of Syria. Nasser, Chamoun, the U.S. and the leaders of the Moslems reached an agreement whereby a compromise candidate was placed in the presidency and the rebellion was stopped. Nutting, Nasser, pp. 218-244.
- 78) The Sputnik launch brought a complete reorientation of American education which was designed to eliminate the perceived gap between American science and that of the Soviets. It also brought the threat of nuclear devastation - which had theretofore been confined to Europe for the most part - to the entire world. Accordingly, military strategists in both Moscow and Washington were forced to recalculate the possibilities and dangers of war.
- 79) The suppression of the U.A.R.'s communists was the result of an ongoing campaign in Egypt and the banning of political parties in Syria. The Egyptian CP was the victim of continuing efforts to destroy it throughout the year. The Syrians, on the other hand, were left to their own devices until December when Nasser and the Syrian intelligence apparatus made its move to elimini-

nate their influence.

- 80) For more on the Soviet aid package for the building of the dam, see Chapter IV.
- 81) Laqueur, The Struggle for the Middle East, p. 84.
- 82) The Ba'ath party was a part of an international organization of Arabs whose goal was the union of all of the Arab people. In fact, their political philosophy has been said to be the "purest milk" of Nasser's own philosophy. Nutting, Nasser, p. 247. The headquarters of the organization was in Damascus and Nasser's banning of parties in Syria when the U.A.R. was formed was a severe blow to the organization. That, along with Nasser's subsequent failure to favor the Ba'athists as much as they believed was their due, was a big factor in the failure of the U.A.R. to survive.
- 83) Mizan, Vol. VIII, #1 (January 1959), pp. 10-11, and Dawisha, op cit, p. 22.
- 84) Dawisha, *ibid*, p. 22
- 85) Later, Nasser would call the Syrian and Iraqi communists "agents of a foreign power." Dawisha, *ibid*, p. 22. This crisis is described in detail in Oles Smolansky, "Moscow-Cairo Crisis, 1959". Slavic Review, Vol. XXII, #4 (December 1963), pp. 713-726
- 86) Khrushchev called Nasser "a passionate and hot-headed young man" who had "taken more upon himself than his stature permitted." Laqueur, op cit, p. 85. Nasser replied by claiming that it was the very passion and hot-headedness of the Arab people that had prevented Egypt from becoming a missile base with its weapons pointed at Moscow. Nasser also suggested that the Russians were trying to turn the Middle East into a "red" fertile crescent. Khrushchev reminded the Egyptians that the Soviets hadn't forced their aid upon them, thus intimating that perhaps it could be withdrawn if the Egyptians were afraid that the Soviets were trying to fiscally blackmail them. See Smolansky, op cit, pp. 715-723.
- 87) Nasser made this charge in a speech he made at Damascus. An excerpt of the speech is reported by Heikal, The Sphinx and the Commissar, p. 104. Excerpts also appear in Lenczowski, op cit, p. 87ff.
- 88) Khrushchev made an oblique reference to this possibility in his speech to the 21st Party Congress. Heikal, op cit, pp. 103-104. According to Nasser, however,

the Soviets never threatened to stop their aid to Egypt. For a discussion of the Soviet-Egyptian dispute see Walter Z. Laqueur, The Struggle for the Middle East, pp. 84-86.

- 89) This incident is reported by Heikal on page 109 of The Sphinx and the Commissar.
- 90) Heikal, *ibid*, p. 110.
- 91) *Ibid*, p. 111.
- 92) Dawisha, *op cit*, p. 25. The U.A.R. came up short in the last two categories of the definition for one reason: its suppression of its communists.
- 93) See Boris Ponomarev, "O gosudarstve natsionalnoi demokrati," Kommunist, Vol. XXXVIII, #8 (May 1961), pp. 33-49. Ponomarev also attacked the terroristic methods of Nasser in the article. Prominent Arab Communists such as Khalid Bakdash also took this position. It seems likely, however, that their support had largely ulterior motives.
- 94) See Ponomarev, *op cit*, and articles in Pravda on January 20 and February 5.
- 95) Heikal, *op cit*, pp. 112-114.
- 96) Dawisha, *op cit*, p. 30. This belief was not entirely accurate. Many of the problems arose from Nasser's own mishandling of the situation. Others arose from the opposition of the far left, particularly the Syrian Communist Party which was led by Khalid Bakdash. In fact, Syrian opposition to the union was voiced by nearly every element in its political spectrum by the time of the U.A.R.'s dissolution.
- 97) Nasser's move to the left isolated him from the right. He was already alienated from the countries of the Arab left (except Algeria, Iraq and Syria) by the events which led to the dissolution of the U.A.R.
- 98) For a discussion of the effect of the U-2 incident on internal politics and foreign policy in the U.S.S.R., see Michel Tatu, Power in the Kremlin (New York: Viking Press, 1969).
- 99) Khrushchev's son-in-law, Alexei Adzhubey, did visit the U.A.R. However, his official position in the Soviet hierarchy was relatively low and this visit at least could not be construed as a "high-level" contact.

- 100) See Heikal, op cit, p. 119, and Mirskii's article "The UAR Reforms," New Times, #4 (1962), pp. 12-15, for examples of the arguments that the Soviet Middle Eastern expert made. Also see Dawisha, op cit, pp. 30-31.
- 101) See for example the Pravda article of August 16 which is reprinted in CDSP, Vol. XXV, #15, p. 20.
- 102) Giving Amer the award was apparently one of many "sins" which Khrushchev committed on his trip to Egypt. Others purportedly included his promising the Egyptians a substantially larger loan for the second development plan than the Politburo had authorized and engaging in a heated dispute with Aref, who was now President of Iraq, having overthrown Kassem by way of a military coup. Dawisha, op cit, pp. 32-33. Khrushchev contended that the dispute with Aref was not really heated. He also claimed that he had been asked to respond to Aref by Nasser. Nikita S. Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970), pp. 443-445.
- 103) Heikal, op cit, p. 20.
- 104) Khrushchev handed Gromyko a plate and told him to "make music" and then told Gromyko to dance to the tune. Heikal, *ibid*, p. 137.
- 105) There were rumors that Khrushchev's favorable treatment of the Egyptians had been the cause of his downfall. The new Soviet leaders disproved this hypothesis soon after they assumed power. Heikal, op cit, p. 146.
- 106) The relationship between the two men was characterized as a friendship by Nasser's confidant, Heikal, when he discusses Khrushchev's downfall. Heikal, op cit, p. 138. Nutting claims that Nasser was "seriously put out by the fall of Khrushchev." Nutting, Nasser, p. 358.
- 107) Heikal, *ibid*, p. 159.
- 108) Their claim was not entirely accurate. Close relations had been developed by the Soviet leadership with Ali Sabri and other members of the "Soviet" lobby in Egypt. Their connections with Sabri played a major role in his later demotions.
- 109) The Egyptian Communist Party had decided to accept Nasser's offer of entry into the ASU and had voluntarily dissolved itself. The other leaders of Arab

CP's and Suslov obviously believed that this was a dangerous precedent. Heikal, op cit, p. 156. Dawisha claims that the dissolution of the Egyptian CP was done with the encouragement of the Soviet leadership. Dawisha, op cit, p. 35.

- 110) Heikal suggests that Nasser's visit was in response to a request from the new Soviet leaders that he visit in reciprocation for Khrushchev's visit. According to Heikal, the request had been precipitated by the crisis at the second Afro-Asian conference in which the Soviets and the Chinese had clashed. The Egyptians had proven unwilling to support the Soviets and Heikal says that the Soviet leaders interpreted this as a sign of Nasser's lack of confidence in them. Heikal, ibid, p. 143.
- 111) The visit is described by Heikal, ibid, pp. 143-147.
- 112) Heikal, ibid, pp. 146-147.
- 113) The Egyptians were being pressured by the Americans to make changes in certain aspects of their foreign policy - the incursion into Yemen in particular. The American supplies of wheat which were being shipped to Egypt were being used by the American government as a lever.
- 114) The 1966 Soviet wheat harvest was their best ever. For statistical information on the 1966 harvest, see Sel'skoe Khoziaistvo SSSR: Statisticheskii sbornik (Moscow: Statistika, 1971), pp. 161-171.
- 115) An example of the flareups which occurred because of the bureaucracy failing to take into account special circumstances comes in Heikal, op cit, where he describes another incident when the Soviets attempted to indoctrinate Egyptian students despite an agreement not to. This time, however, it was a group of Egyptian military officers studying in the U.S.S.R. which was the target. The incident was resolved much more easily than the 1959 incident had been when the Soviets stopped trying to indoctrinate the Egyptian officers. Heikal, op cit, p. 166.
- 116) Heikal, op cit, pp. 168-169.
- 117) Israeli author Ilana Kass mentions these reports in Soviet Involvement in the Middle East: Policy Formulation, 1966-1973 (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1978), p. 27. Nutting claims that these reports were the product of "a clever combination of calculated leakage, for the benefit of the Soviet Embassy in Tel

Aviv, and fictitious radio messages" Nutting, Nasser, p. 397.

- 118) See Kass for a study of the reactions of the Soviet press to the new Syrian regime. Kass, *ibid*, pp. 17-24.
- 119) According to Nutting, the Israelis set a three-stage trap which caught Nasser - despite his own reluctance - up in a war for which he was unwittingly unprepared. Nutting, *op cit*, pp. 383-402.
- 120) See Kass, *op cit*, p. 27; Dawisha, *op cit*, p. 39; and Nutting, *ibid*, pp. 392-397.
- 121) Dawisha, *ibid*, pp. 38-39.
- 122) See the articles in Pravda on May 15 and May 18 for examples.
- 123) Izvestia, May 17, 1967; Krasnaia Zvezda, May 17, 1967; and Pravda, May 18, 1967. These articles are also reported by Kass. Kass, *op cit*, p. 243ff.
- 124) The Soviets had apparently already realized that they must do something to avert hostilities. Earlier in May, in response to an Egyptian request for satellite reconnaissance, they had suggested that Israeli troop concentrations on the Syrian border might be defensive. Heikal, *op cit*, p. 175. They did, however, continue to send mixed messages. As late as June 3, Izvestia expressed Soviet willingness to help the Arab countries "in every way." Izvestia, June 3, 1967.
- 125) This incident is reported by Heikal. He gives it much weight in Nasser's decision not to compromise with the Israelis more quickly. Heikal, *op cit*, pp. 179-180.
- 126) Nutting, *op cit*, p. 413.
- 127) See Chapter II.
- 128) Heikal, *op cit*, p. 191.
- 129) See Kass for an account of the campaign in the Soviet press for a purge of the military in the U.A.R. Kass, *op cit*, pp. 40-41. Also see Dawisha, *op cit*, pp. 43-44. The Egyptians eventually dismissed over 800 officers in their post-war campaign.
- 130) The demotion of Ali Sabri and those associated with him in 1969 is one of the best examples of just how quickly and easily Soviet preference could be dis-

regarded when it suited Nasser.

- 131) See Heikal, *op cit*, pp. 183-184.
- 132) Rubinstein, Red Star on the Nile, p. 13. Rubinstein overstates the Soviet role in the conference when he claims that the Soviets "mobilized" the countries of Eastern Europe. Heikal says that the idea for the conference originated in Yugoslavia and attributes a major role to the Yugoslavians in its organization and outcome. Heikal, *op cit*, pp. 182-183.
- 133) All but the English version of the text contain the word "the" in the key phrase, "withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from the territories occupied in the recent conflict." For more on the importance of the precise wording of this phrase, see Rubinstein, *ibid*, p. 39.
- 134) Nutting, *op cit*, p. 438.
- 135) Mohammed Heikal, The Road to Ramadan (New York: Quadrangle, 1975), p. 54.
- 136) Rubinstein, *op cit*, p. 44.
- 137) See the article in Izvestia, January 26, 1968, for the Soviet response. Ali Sabri's fortunes often shifted quickly. He was demoted from his new post by March.
- 138) The Soviets provided Egypt with a 200 million dollar credit for the expansion of the Helwan complex six weeks after the reforms were announced. Robert Slusser and George Ginzburgs, A Calendar of Soviet Treaties, 1958-1970 (Rockville, MD: Sitjen & Noordhoff, 1981).
- 139) By August, the two nations were so closely aligned that the Egyptians supported the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in a Radio Cairo broadcast. BBC/ME/2858/A/1. Also cited by Rubinstein, *op cit*, p. 69ff.
- 140) For a summary of this joint communique and others, see Rubinstein, *ibid*, pp. 355-366, where the author summarizes all of the major joint communiqués issued by the two countries. This particular communique is summarized on p. 357.
- 141) Rubinstein, *ibid*, p. 67.
- 142) The fighting had almost come to a halt after the Nag Hamadi raid in October. For more about the prelude to the "war of attrition," see Edgar O'Ballance, The Electronic War in the Middle East, 1968-70, p. 45.

- 143) Rubinstein cites Nasser's speech to the National Assembly on January 20, which clearly shows that Nasser was growing pessimistic about peaceful methods of solving the crisis. Rubinstein, *ibid*, p. 77. Further evidence of the interlinked policies of the Soviet Union and Egypt appeared at the same time when Al Ahram published another Soviet peace proposal on January 19 - six days before the same proposal appeared in Pravda. Kass, *op cit*, pp. 71-72.
- 144) See Rubinstein, *ibid*, pp. 82-84, for an account of the Soviet press campaign.
- 145) This was a fateful trip for Sabri. At its end, he was shorn of his power. He and his closest followers reputedly were suddenly demoted because of Sabri's own lust for power. One of the most important criticisms of Sabri came from Heikal who suggested that Sabri thought the road to power in Egypt lay through Moscow. For more on the Sabri affair, see Rubinstein, *ibid*, pp. 93-95.
- 146) Rubinstein, *ibid*, p. 101.
- 147) See the statements by Kosygin and the Soviet leaders which were reported in the New York Times on February 5 and February 17, 1970, as well as others cited in Rubinstein, *ibid*, p. 111ff, for a more extensive look at the Soviet stance vis-a-vis the situation in the Middle East. The American response to the statement by Kosygin (which had been made on January 31) was reported in the New York Times on February 3. According to Sadat, the Soviet statement which was reported by the Times on the 17th had come on the heels of the first Soviet combat deaths in Egypt. New York Times, January 5, 1971.
- 148) This was not particularly well received by the Egyptian military, the members of which generally disliked their Soviet "advisors." See Chapter II, footnote 43.
- 149) See for example, a statement by Brezhnev which underscored the hard-line which the Soviet leadership had taken vis-a-vis the Israelis and the Americans. Pravda and Izvestia, April 15, 1970.
- 150) The Rogers Plan was actually launched on December 9, 1969. It was perhaps the most important element in the solution to the "war of attrition."
- 151) For a discussion of Nasser's visit to Moscow and the subsequent communique, see Rubinstein, *op cit*, pp. 118-120.

- 152) For a discussion of this conference and its ramifications for inter-Arab politics, see Heikal, The Road to Ramadan, pp. 98-102.
- 153) Cindy Roberts cites this incident as an example of a pattern in Soviet arms exports to its allies, a pattern which demonstrated Soviet willingness to support its allies with sophisticated defensive weaponry when it perceived the existence of the regime to be threatened. Cynthia Roberts, "Soviet Arms-Transfer Policy and the Decision to Upgrade Syrian Air Defenses," Survival, Vol. XXV, #4 (July-August 1983). Ms. Roberts also provides a short but interesting discussion of the question of political influence between countries. For relevant material, see pp. 157-158, 161, and 163ff.

CHAPTER IV

THE SOVIET-EGYPTIAN ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP: HOW THE TIES WERE FORGED

One of the most important elements of the Soviet-Egyptian relationship during the period when Nasser was in power was the economic relationship between the two nations. The Soviet-Egyptian relationship was composed of two separate parts: economic assistance and trade relations. The former was, like military assistance, extremely undirectional. The flow of aid was, predictably, exclusively from the Soviet Union to Egypt. Unlike military aid, however, economic aid returned little to the Soviet Union in terms of benefits that it could have gained only through Egypt. Economic aid did not provide the Soviets with bases or testing grounds for equipment that were unique in their advantages. It did make Egypt somewhat dependent on the Soviet Union for machinery and spare parts. This was true in part because most Soviet aid to Egypt came in the form of project aid which utilized Soviet personnel, Soviet equipment, and Soviet training for Egyptian personnel.

Soviet economic aid to Egypt came in two different types. The most common type of Soviet assistance was a loan or credit to Egypt for a specific project. These loans, like all Soviet loans and loans from one nation to another

in general, provided the Soviets as lender with some return on their investment. That return was, however, minimal. Usually, the loans were extended to Egypt in rubles and were to be paid with 2.5 to 3 percent interest in equal yearly installments over a ten to twelve year period, beginning a year after the completion of a project.¹ Repayments were generally made in Egyptian pounds, although most agreements did contain a clause which stated that payments "may be converted to pounds sterling or any freely convertible currency which will be agreed upon between the two governments."² Apparently the Soviets never requested repayment from the Egyptians in hard currency at any time - even after Sadat expelled the Soviets from Egypt in 1975.

The other form of direct Soviet aid to Egypt, the economic grant, was utilized very rarely and the amounts of Soviet grants were always quite small. In fact, Soviet grants to Egypt played a negligible role in developing Egypt's economy and had little impact on Soviet-Egyptian relations as a whole. One of the few instances in which anything which could be termed a Soviet grant to Egypt played a significant role in supporting the Egyptian economy and in bolstering Soviet-Egyptian relations was during the singular circumstances of the aftermath of the June 1967 war between Egypt and Israel. Actually, even in that instance, the Soviets did not provide a large grant to the Egyptians outright, but instead simply cancelled half of

Egypt's prior debt to the Soviet Union and rescheduled the remainder.³

The sum of these two types of economic assistance to Egypt made up over 28 percent of the total of all Soviet aid to developing nations and approximately 15 percent of its total aid from 1954 to 1970. Much of the dominant element of project aid went toward the development of Egyptian heavy industry and hydroelectric power.⁴ Of this portion, the most important single project was the building of the Aswan Dam and its attendant industries. The Soviet Union contributed over 325 million dollars for the project, a sum which constituted 27.7 percent of the total cost of the project.⁵ Much of the remainder of the project aid with which the Soviets provided Egypt was for heavy industry and came in the form of complete industrial plants which the Soviets shipped to Egypt. This form of aid was especially prominent in the mid and late 1960's when an average of approximately 80 million dollars worth of complete industrial plants were sent to Egypt by the U.S.S.R. annually.⁶

The element of economic assistance was added to the Soviet-Egyptian economic relationship in the 1950's. There had already been a commercial relationship on a small scale between the two countries for many years. Begun in 1923, the trade relationship between the Soviet Union and Egypt continued with few interruptions up to and through the Nasser era (see Appendix A). Throughout the Nasser era, trade be-

tween the Soviet Union and Egypt was handled on a state to state basis. From the beginning of the Nasser regime until its end, the commerce between the two countries increased steadily from a minimum value of 15.6 million rubles in 1954 to a maximum of over 600 million rubles in 1970.⁷

Soviet trade with Egypt was always of only minor significance to the Soviet economy. This is particularly apparent when that trade is viewed in light of the total volume of Soviet trade with the entire world. Soviet-Egyptian trade made up only approximately 3 percent⁸ of the entirety of Soviet trade. Clearly, the Soviet Union was in no way economically dependent upon its trade relationship with Egypt. That fact stands out even more when one considers the fact that the major portion of Soviet imports from Egypt came not in the form of some rare but crucial mineral for industry that was not produced in the Soviet Union, but rather in the form of raw materials - cotton and oil - which the Soviets produced in quantities sufficient or nearly sufficient for their own needs within their own borders.

For Egypt, on the other hand, its trade relationship with the Soviet Union was extremely important. Not only did its trade relationship with the U.S.S.R. and the other centrally-planned economies of the world account for over 60 percent of its exports, but it was also dependent upon the Soviets for machinery and technical expertise necessary

for its industrial development. This situation was exacerbated by the nature of the Soviet-Egyptian trade relationship. The commercial relationship between the two nations followed a trade pattern that was characteristic of much of Soviet trade: the bilateral trade pattern. This pattern heightened the dependence of Egypt upon the Soviet Union by providing a single buyer for its cotton crop. For a single crop economy like Egypt's that could be disastrous if it wished to retain its independence. Dependence upon the Soviet Union for its industrial supplies also put Egypt in a position where it seemed to have little alternative for assistance. No other country could offer technical familiarity or spare parts for the machinery on which Egypt relied. Given this situation, the inception of Egypt's commercial relationship with the U.S.S.R. in 1954, while minor in terms of capital, undoubtedly changed - and changed drastically - the course of Egypt's economic development.

The economic relationship between Nasser's regime began quietly enough with the signing of a routine commercial banking agreement between the two governments in August of 1953.¹⁰ It was the first official agreement of any sort between the two countries. Although it seemed at the time to be nothing more than a rather inoffensive and unimportant step toward the normalization of relations between one of the world's emerging superpowers and a nation which had only recently regained its political independence, it was in

reality the first step in a binding process which would eventually shake the foundations of peace in the Middle East and which, by doing that, would bring to the fore ominous possibilities for the entire world. The agreement itself, however, was nothing more than an agreement by the commercial institutions of the two countries to honor each others credit arrangements.

The commercial banking agreement between Egypt and the U.S.S.R. opened the doors for much more extensive and important economic agreements between the two countries. A year later, the banking agreement was followed by the first trade agreement between the revolutionary government of Egypt and its Soviet counterpart.¹¹ The trade agreement itself had relatively little immediate impact upon the economy of either country. It involved very little in terms of money - the total flow in both directions for 1954 and 1955 amounted to only 39.3 million rubles worth of goods - and exchanged small amounts of unwanted surplus items such as Egyptian cotton and non-crucial machinery from the Soviet Union. It was, however, the first step in the broader and much more significant - particularly for Egypt - trade relationship that was to develop over the next decade between the two countries.

After 1954, the economic relationship between Egypt and the Soviet Union quickly blossomed. In January of 1955, the Soviets sent their first direct economic aid to Egypt

in the form of money and supplies for the relief of the victims of the disastrous flooding of the Nile that year. In April, the economic relationship expanded to include the Soviet Union's erstwhile ally, the People's Republic of China. In September, the Egyptians and the Soviets signed a trade protocol which was indirectly related to the Czech Arms Deal which had been arranged at the same time.¹²

These relatively minor steps toward an economic rapprochement between the Soviet Union and Egypt combined with the much more ominous Czech Arms Deal to help prod the U.S. and the United Kingdom to offer Egypt the financial assistance which it had been seeking to build the Aswan Dam. The terms of the aid from the West for the building of the dam were too harsh as far as Nasser was concerned for Egypt to accept. He threatened to go to the Soviets for aid for his project just as he had gone to them for arms when the West had proven "unreasonable."¹³ Despite Nasser's threat and continuing evidence of the ever increasing number of connections between Egypt and the Soviets such as the cooperative agreement on the development of nuclear energy in Egypt which had been announced by the two countries in February of 1957,¹⁴ the United States withdrew its offer of aid for Egypt in July. Great Britain and the World Bank soon followed suit. Nasser's response was the nationalization of the Suez Canal.

Nasser's action led to the Suez Canal War and the

international turmoil which followed from it. Despite that turmoil, the development of closer Soviet-Egyptian economic relations continued apace. In July of 1956, the Soviet Union established a permanent trade mission in Cairo. In October, the Chinese, who were still relatively closely allied with the Soviet Union, extended a credit to Egypt for commodity purchases. Most importantly, the negotiations between the U.S.S.R. and Egypt regarding Soviet aid for the Aswan Dam which had begun casually in May now became earnest discussions between two parties actively seeking mutual accommodation.

Serious negotiations between Egypt and the Soviet Union about the Aswan Dam continued throughout 1957. While they were going on, agreements regarding other sorts of Soviet economic assistance for Egypt were held in abeyance. Only the expansion of trade between the two countries continued as before. By 1957, trade between the Soviet Union and Egypt had broadened to the point where Soviet exports to Egypt had increased from their 1954 minimum value of 8 million rubles to almost 100 million rubles in value. Egyptian exports to the Soviet Union had also increased dramatically from their 1954 value of 7.6 million rubles to 74 million rubles in 1957.¹⁵ The figures for trade in 1957 represent a level for the value of trade between Egypt and the Soviet Union which would not substantially change for three years.

Even after that initial three-year period, the total value of trade would stay approximately the same for another three years. During that period, only the balance of trade between the two countries would change. By 1963, the value of each nation's trade had been approximately reversed so Egypt stood as the larger exporter of the two.

In January of 1958, the Egyptian Minister of Industry, Samir Ibrahim, went to the U.S.S.R. and arranged a credit agreement between the Soviet Union and Egypt for industrial projects. It was the first in a series of middle level meetings and economic agreements during 1958 which would lead to the announcement in October of that year of an agreement between the two nations under the terms of which the Soviet Union would provide Egypt with financial and technical assistance in the building of the Aswan High Dam. The second step in the development of an economic infrastructure which would facilitate the building and utilization of the dam was an April protocol which specified uses to which the credit which had been agreed upon in January would be put. The April meeting regarding the uses to which the 175 million dollar credit with which the Soviet Union had provided Egypt would be put was followed by a June visit to the Soviet Union by Egypt's Minister of Trade. During August, the Soviet Union's Minister of Agriculture visited Egypt to arrange for closer cooperation between the two nations in his realm. In September, Aeroflot and the

Egyptians reached an agreement upon air service between the
17
two countries.

The visits and agreements between the Soviet Union and Egypt during the first nine months of 1958 were merely a prelude to the vastly more important agreement between the two nations regarding Soviet support for the first stage of Egypt's Aswan High Dam project. The October 23 agreement between the two countries provided the Egyptians with a credit worth up to 100 million dollars worth of technical expertise and equipment for the building of the dam. It was by far the most important agreement of an economic nature which had been or would be signed between Egypt and the Soviet Union.

Some of the reasons behind the construction of the dam were discussed in the previous chapters. Others and their ramifications still need to be reviewed. By agreeing to help the Egyptians finance their project, the Soviets were guaranteeing that, for a time at least, they would be able to maintain a strong presence in the Middle East. To gain this advantage, the Soviet Union had to agree to provide Nasser with the low interest capital which he desired for his project without forcing him to mortgage the entire Egyptian economy in return. For Nasser, the Soviet loan was a dream come true. He had successfully defied the West and still gotten the economic aid he needed to modernize Egypt.

The initial Soviet loan to Egypt to help the Egyptians with the financing of the Aswan High Dam project was for the first stage of the construction of the dam only. As it turned out, the Egyptians utilized 80 million dollars worth of the possible 100 million dollars that the Soviets had¹⁸ provided. The dam was scheduled to be built in four stages. The Soviets and Egyptians announced a Soviet loan of 180 million dollars for the second stage of the dam on July 27, 1960, shortly after the Egyptians had already received a firm offer of assistance from West Germany for the remainder of the work necessary to complete the dam.¹⁹ Over 300 factories in the Soviet Union participated in the Aswan Dam project. They manufactured over 500,000 tonnes of²⁰ equipment for the dam.

The Soviets provided the Egyptians with technical expertise and equipment and a portion of the financing for the dam. Just how great a portion of the financing the Soviets provided is open to question. According to Marshall Goldman, the Soviets provided a total of 325 million dollars (100 million in the first installment and 225 for the second²¹ stage) worth of aid for the Aswan High Dam project. Accepting that figure would mean accepting that the Soviets financed only 27.8 percent of the total cost of the dam and that Egypt bore the brunt of the costs. Another source²² puts the total of Soviet assistance at 559 million dollars, a figure which encompasses approximately one-half of the

total cost of the project. The second set of figures seems more credible. Despite some improvements in Egypt's financial situation, the Egyptian economy was far from capable of producing a surplus of three quarters of a billion dollars even for so vital a step in its industrialization as²³ the construction of the Aswan High Dam.

The Aswan Dam was completed in 1972. Its construction was vital to the Egyptian economy. By 1974, it was supplying²⁴ Egypt with nearly 53 percent of its electricity. It had also allowed the Egyptians to reclaim approximately 590,000 hectares of land in the Nile Valley. By aiding the Egyptians in the construction of the dam, the Soviet Union had made what was perhaps the greatest possible contribution that could have been made to the Egyptian economy. It had helped to make possible the development of Egyptian heavy industry, it had helped provide Egypt with an alternative power source to the Sinai oil fields, and it had helped improve the agricultural situation of Egypt both by adding to the arable land and providing irrigation systems and by²⁵ adding to Egypt's capacity to produce chemical fertilizers.

In the years following the initial Soviet-Egyptian agreement on credit for the Aswan Dam, there were no other agreements of comparable value. The Egyptian-Soviet economic relationship continued to develop despite that, however. In January of 1959, an Egyptian business delegation visited the U.S.S.R. to widen trade contact between the two

nations. In March, the Soviets gave the Egyptians mill equipment for oil refineries. In May, an accord on shipping between the two nations was signed. In August, a contract between the two nations was signed under the terms of which the Soviets would undertake the building of an irrigation project in Egypt. In September, the Egyptians signed a contract to purchase Soviet factory equipment.²⁶

1960 saw the continued expansion of the economic relationship between the Soviet Union and Egypt. In February, protocols on the trade of oil and of pharmaceuticals were signed. In September, a protocol on the development of the Alexandria shipyard was signed. In September, an agreement regulating trade between the two nations for the next two years was signed when the Egyptian Minister of Economics and Foreign Trade, Mohammed Shokose, visited the U.S.S.R. In December, protocols on several industrial projects were signed.²⁷

Along with the more mundane contacts detailed above, discussions regarding the financing of the Aswan High Dam continued in 1959 and 1960. In May of 1959 for example, the Egyptian Minister of Public Works, Mohammed Salama, was in the Soviet Union for talks about continued Soviet support of the dam project. In November, Soviet experts on the construction of dams visited the Aswan site in Egypt to inspect the progress of the dam. In February 1960, the Deputy Minister of Economics of Egypt visited Moscow for

more talks with the Soviets about their continued financial assistance in the construction of the dam.²⁸

In August, the efforts to reach an agreement on Soviet aid for the next stage of the dam came to fruition. Salama returned to the Soviet Union where he signed an agreement under the terms of which the Soviets would provide an additional 180 million dollars for the construction of the second stage of the Aswan project. The agreement, which was announced on August 27, marked an important step in the cementing of Egypt's ties with the Soviet Union, coming as it did in the face of a West German offer to aid the Egyptians with the final phases of the dam.²⁹ The West German offer, while genuine, should not be taken overly seriously however. It would seem that neither the Egyptians nor the Soviets took it extremely seriously. Neither displayed any pressing urgency to get the agreement signed. The discussions were quite leisurely. Another fact which would seem to lend support to the argument that the West German offer was not a serious challenge to the Soviet position in Egypt is the level at which the discussions were held. Unlike the discussions on the first phase in which Nasser and Khrushchev participated directly, the discussions on the second stage were held exclusively between middle-level members of the two governments. It seems unlikely that the Soviets would be so laconic about the discussions if the West German offer was a serious threat to their position in Egypt.

In 1961, another milestone in the development of Egyptian industry occurred with Soviet assistance. In July, the first Egyptian atomic reactor was completed. The reactor was small and played only a small role in the development of power for Egypt. Egypt's joining the ranks of the countries which produced atomic power had tremendous potential military significance, however. It gave them the potential capability of building an atomic bomb and using it on Israel if they so chose.³⁰

July also saw internal changes in Egypt which ultimately had much greater effects on its economy than did the development of a small nuclear reactor. The last vestiges of private investment in its major industries were removed by Nasser's decree on nationalization.³¹ A program of agrarian reform was also undertaken which spread the wealth and land of the countryside more evenly among the peasantry. Although these steps did make the economy of Egypt somewhat more like that of the Soviet Union and were hailed in the Soviet Union as a welcome change in the Egyptian economy, the changes were accomplished without the Soviet Union being actively involved in any way.

The Soviet Union was involved in the construction of the Helwan steel mills. In March of 1962, a contract was signed between the Soviet Union and Egypt which provided Soviet aid in the building of the steel plant. In June, V. F. Garbuzov, the Soviet Minister of Finance, was in

Egypt where he arranged for a three-year agreement which detailed the trade between the two nations during that time period.³² At the same time, the Egyptian Minister for the Aswan Dam went to the U.S.S.R. to study dams and their utilization in the Soviet Union. Garbuzov also negotiated an agreement by which the first two agreements between Egypt and the Soviets were refinanced to ease the strains of repayment on the Egyptian economy. In September, a pair of protocols between the two nations was signed under the terms of which the Soviet Union would aid Egypt in the building of a new coal tar chemical plant and a calcium carbide and ferrosilicum factory.³³

Economic contacts between Egypt and the Soviet Union in 1963 continued in much the same manner as they had ended in 1962. In January, the Soviet Minister of Power was in Egypt for the anniversary of the construction of the first stage of the Aswan Dam. While he was there, a protocol was signed which guaranteed Soviet support for the final stages of the dam. In June, a credit agreement was signed which gave Egypt the wherewithal to purchase Soviet power equipment. At the same time, a Soviet aviation delegation was in Egypt. While there, the delegation arranged a new air service agreement between the two countries. In October, protocols regarding radio and a television plant were signed. In November, the Egyptian Minister of Industry went to the U.S.S.R. for talks about getting more Soviet aid.³⁴

In February 1964, a cooperative agreement on fishing was signed between the two countries. February 1964 also marked the completion of two major factories that the Egyptians had built with Soviet aid. One was a coking plant and the other manufactured pharmaceuticals. In March, a contract for Soviet aid in building a chemical plant in Egypt was signed.

On May 23, 1964, the third and last package of Soviet aid for the Aswan High Dam project was announced. Worth over 250 million dollars, the third loan contributed significantly more Soviet financial capital to the project than either of the first two aid agreements regarding the dam. It brought the total value of Soviet assistance for the project to over a half billion dollars. The agreement was followed by the June visit of a Soviet economic delegation to Cairo. The Soviet visit was the first in a series of discussions about the specifics of the third aid package. The next in this series of discussions came in August when the Egyptian Minister in charge of the Aswan Dam project, Mohammed Sidqi Sulaiman returned to the Soviet Union. The discussions were terminated in September when the two nations signed a protocol which finalized the details of the aid project's first half. The last important economic contact between the Soviet Union and Egypt in 1964 came when Egypt's Deputy Prime Minister, Abdel Munim Qaysul, visited Moscow and signed a protocol with the Soviets regarding trade for

36

the coming year.

The year 1965 opened with what the Soviets must have considered an ominous note: the People's Republic of China extended a credit to Egypt for industrial projects. The offer was the beginning of an attempt by the Chinese to more actively assert themselves in the Middle East. The Chinese effort marked an escalation of their conflict with the Soviets, a conflict which had been simmering at least since 1957 and which may well have begun earlier.

The Chinese threat was certainly something which the Soviets had to take seriously. Chinese relations with Egypt and the rest of the Third World had been strongly positive on the whole for some time. The developing countries perceived China as one of their own and had since the Bandung Conference in 1955. The Chinese also had the advantage in their relations with the newly formed governments of the Third World of being at the very minimum a match for the Soviets in "revolutionary" prestige. These factors forced the Soviets to take the Chinese challenge in the Middle East seriously even though China's economic infirmity ultimately militated strongly against its success. Still, the Soviets weren't about to take any risks in any area which they had just entered. They maintained the pace of their assistance to Egypt throughout 1965 as a result.

37

The year's contact between the Soviets and Egypt began

with the February visit of a Soviet agricultural delegation to Egypt. The February visit to Egypt by Soviet agricultural personnel was followed in June by a visit of Soviet Deputy Premier, I. T. Novikov. These two missions were the harbinger of a Soviet credit of grain to Egypt in July. The credit was extended to prevent the possibility of starvation there due to a projected bad harvest. Contact between the two countries for 1965 closed in December when the new Soviet Minister of Trade, Nikolai Patolichev visited Egypt and negotiated a new five-year pact detailing the trade relationship between the two nations.

1966 marked the first year of the new trade package. It also marked another active year for Soviet-Egyptian economic contacts of other sorts. In January, a Soviet delegation visited Egypt and signed protocols which promised Soviet aid on several different industrial projects in Egypt. May was marked by an agreement between the two nations through which the remainder of the package of aid for the Aswan Dam was disbursed. During June, another Soviet trade delegation arrived in Egypt to arrange for additional deliveries of Egyptian cotton to the U.S.S.R. In August, the Egyptian Deputy Minister for Electrical Energy visited the Soviet Union to study the electrical industry of the Soviet Union and a trade protocol worth 30 million dollars between the two countries was signed. In October, Egyptian engineers visited the Soviet Union for a six-month

study of cotton growing and irrigation in the U.S.S.R.

The next four years were probably the most active years of the Soviet-Egyptian economic relationship during the years that Nasser was in power in Egypt. In January of 1967, the Soviet Minister for Land Reclamation visited Egypt to inspect its irrigation projects. During February, a Soviet trade delegation visited Egypt. One month later, a Soviet delegation visited Cairo to discuss Soviet aid to the Egyptians. At the same time, the Soviet Minister of Fisheries was in Cairo to discuss cooperation on fishing between the two countries.

After the Six Day War in June between Egypt and the other Arabs and Israel, the Soviet-Egyptian economic relationship continued apace. In July, the Soviets sent a gift of foodstuffs to the Egyptians. That month, a protocol on an oil pumping station in Egypt was also signed between the two countries. Approximately one month later, a new trade protocol was signed to regulate Soviet-Egyptian trade. Finally, in September, a protocol detailing the shipment of Soviet equipment for the Aswan Dam was announced.

During the course of 1968, there were seven major economic developments which directly affected Egyptian-Soviet relations. The first was a protocol which detailed the trade relationship between the two countries for the year. The next three involved the extension of Soviet assistance

in the development of Egyptian industry in such widely diverse areas as the steel industry, the Egyptian telecommunications network, and the shipbuilding program which was being built up in Alexandria. In November, Soviet Deputy Premier Mikhail T. Efremov visited Egypt to discuss continued Soviet aid for the Aswan project. During Efremov's stay in Cairo, several more protocols were signed which detailed the administration of the aid which he agreed to extend in his discussions with Egyptian leaders. The year closed with two more important developments that affected the Soviet-Egyptian economic relationship. The first was almost certainly the more important of the two. The Soviets appointed a new Deputy Minister of Electrification whose sole duty was to advise the Egyptians in the development of their electrification, a network which was expanding with more and more haste as the Aswan Dam approached completion. Finally, a joint Soviet-Egyptian commission met in Moscow to arrange for heightened cooperation in the fishing industry between the two countries.⁴¹

1969 was another busy year in the Soviet-Egyptian economic relationship. In January, the work of the joint commission on fisheries came to fruition when the two nations signed an agreement on cooperation in the fishing industry. At the same time, the two countries signed an agreement which contracted for the Egyptians to build ships for the Soviets in their Alexandria shipyard. A month later, a

trade protocol for 1969-70 was signed. During May, the two nations signed a protocol which arranged for joint oil prospecting in Egypt. A gift of industrial safety equipment was sent from the U.S.S.R. to Egypt in June. In July, the Egyptian Minister of Industry visited Moscow. During that visit, he arranged for a protocol which called for the joint Soviet-Egyptian development of an aluminum plant and a phosphates plant in Egypt. The Soviets signed an agreement during November to purchase sheet metal from the Helwan complex. At the same time, Deputy Premier V. N. Novikov was in Egypt for talks about aid and an Egyptian delegation was in the U.S.S.R. for a farm conference. In December, an Egyptian economic delegation visited Russia. While there, they arranged a trade protocol which supplemented the agreement that had been reached in February. Also in December, a Soviet shipping delegation was in Alexandria. As a result of their discussions with their Egyptian counterparts, the Soviet delegation negotiated a protocol which updated the 1959 agreement between the two countries on shipping.⁴²

In 1970, the last year of Gamel Abdel Nasser's life, the Soviet Union and Egypt were in the midst of a period of close economic cooperation. Contacts between the two nations were deep and frequent. In March, Egypt's Minister of Communication was in Moscow to arrange for Soviet aid in the development of Egypt's communications industry. Two months later, a trade delegation from Odessa visited Egypt.

At the same time, the director of Egypt's airline went to the U.S.S.R. and bought commercial aircraft from the Soviets. During July, the Egyptian Minister of Industry went to Moscow and opened an Egyptian industrial exhibition there. The Soviet Minister of Land Reclamation went to Egypt to present the Egyptians with the gift of a mechanized farm in early August. In September, Soviet scientists made a fishing survey of the Red Sea in order to investigate its potential as a site for large-scale harvesting.⁴³

Economic contacts between the two nations came to an abrupt but temporary halt on October 3 when Nasser died. From the foregoing it is clear that economic contacts between the Soviet Union and Egypt were broad and deep. The economies of the two countries were completely intertwined. The Soviets were involved in areas as diverse as fishing, farming, and heavy industry. The Egyptians depended on the Soviets both as a buyer of goods that the Egyptians produced and as a supplier of the goods that they needed. Soviet purchases (which were usually purchases of goods for which the Soviets had little need) helped nascent Egyptian industries like the shipyards in Alexandria and the Helwan steel complex get off the ground. They also helped keep the economy of Egypt on an even keel during years like 1965 when the cotton market was depressed.

As the years progressed, the dependence of the Nasser regime on Soviet purchases and aid became more and more

acute. The increasing levels of dependence are demonstrated by the progressive escalations of the ratio of Egypt's trade with the Soviet Union versus its trade with the rest of the world in 1957, 1963 (see figure 5) and each year thereafter except 1968.

Despite the dependence of Egypt's economy on Soviet largess, trade, and technical expertise, the economic relationship between the two was not the Soviet-dominated proprietary relationship that it might seem to be on the surface. The Soviets were purchasing the influence in the Middle East that they wanted so badly with their aid and were trying to secure it by tying the Egyptian economy to theirs through trade. However, that influence was much more limited than the Soviets would have liked because the Egyptians nearly always had aid alternatives. So curiously enough, despite Egypt's dependence on the Soviet economy, it was Nasser, not the leaders of the Soviet Union, who controlled the relationship between the two countries.

For Egypt the advantages and disadvantages of its economic relationship with the Soviet Union are readily apparent. The first, and perhaps most important, advantage which Egypt gained from its economic relationship with the U.S.S.R. is obvious: it gained a partner that was willing to finance a large portion of the Aswan Dam's construction and which was willing to provide technical expertise as well. With the building of the dam came several ancillary

benefits, such as irrigation systems, the reclamation of large tracts of arable lands, and sufficient power for the development of heavy industry.

Over the years, the tangible benefits of Soviet aid built up as Egypt industrialized. There were few if any similarly tangible debits. Perhaps American aid would have proved more effective in building a lasting base for industrialization. Even that seems debatable, however. American industrialization programs in the Third World have often proved ephemeral. It seems that the effectiveness of Great Power aid in the industrialization of a Third World nation often is much more dependent upon the wisdom of the leaders of that nation than on which Great Power provided the aid. American aid may well have had costs which Egypt simply could not afford to pay. Certainly, that was ultimately the case with regard to aid for the Aswan High Dam.

Soviet trade also provided advantages to Egypt that were available in few if any other places. One of the most important of these was the ability of the non-market Soviet economy to absorb surplus goods during periods when the international commodity market slumped. Another advantage of trade with the Soviet Union was that the Soviets were willing to provide Egypt with needed grain when the Soviet Union itself was suffering from shortages. A third advantage of commerce with the Soviet Union was that the Soviets were capable of providing Egypt with the technology neces-

sary to industrialize and were often willing to provide it gratis or for cut-rate prices that were scheduled for payment according to the ability of the Egyptians to pay.

Despite its manifest benefits for Egypt, there were also several important disadvantages inherent in the Soviet-Egyptian economic relationship. First, there were strings attached to Soviet economic aid. The most obvious of these is Egypt's dependence upon the Soviet Union for that aid. The dependence necessarily gave the Soviets some leverage with which they could attempt to influence Egypt's actions. An example of the attempted use of the economic lever against Egypt is Khrushchev's attempt to pressure Nasser into easing his repression of the Egyptian Communist Party in the 1958-62 period. In general, however, the economic lever was left unused by the Soviets. Such use was ineffective and usually would have been counterproductive. The West would have been quite willing to step in and fill the Soviet shoes if the Egyptians found them to be demanding during almost any part of the 1954-70 period.

Like economic assistance from the Soviets, trade also held drawbacks for the Egyptians. Perhaps the most important of these was the bilateral nature of that trade. Bilateral trade tends to limit the growth of a developing country's economy by limiting its choice of imports and of markets. This is even more likely in the case of a one-crop economy like Egypt's trading with a country like the

Soviet Union in a barter type arrangement which pays in products rather than hard currency. Overreliance on such a partner creates dependency. Another problem was the quality of Soviet goods. Goods from the U.S.S.R. were often relatively low compared to similar items available from other countries. Spare parts were also often in short supply and deliveries were occasionally delayed.

For the Soviets, the advantages of its economic relationship with the Egyptians were fewer and less tangible. They were nevertheless quite real to the Soviets. The most important of the advantages which it gained was something that it gained from both its aid and trade relationships with Egypt. By entering into a broad-scale relationship with the Egyptians which included an economic aspect, the U.S.S.R. gained more leverage over Egypt than it would have had through a simple military or military and diplomatic relationship with the Egyptians. Granted, the leverage was still ineffective, but that was due to the international situation more than anything else. Broadening the relationship with Egypt also effectively solidified the political entry of the Soviet Union into the Middle East.

To gain these subjective advantages, the Soviets had to expend a great deal. The Soviet Union had to provide Egypt with large amounts of credit. They had to give the Egyptians a great deal of technical assistance. They purchased large quantities of cotton and oil which they didn't

really need. They had to supply grain to Egypt when grain was in short supply in the Soviet Union. They also had to absorb Egyptian cotton surpluses when the world market was down. Finally, the economic lever over Egypt that they had hoped to gain proved ineffective in most instances.

The advantages and disadvantages of the economic relationship between the Soviet Union and Egypt are, like those of their military relationship, multifold. Unlike the military relationship, for Egypt at least, any assessment of long term value of the relationship would almost certainly be positive. The Egyptians accomplished their objective of getting the Aswan Dam built and irrigation projects throughout the Nile Valley set up. They also succeeded in getting the industrialization of their country underway. And they gained all of the less tangible benefits mentioned in the foregoing. The advantages of the relationship probably outweighed its debits for the Soviet Union as well. The actual costs of their aid to Egypt, while great in Egyptian terms, were on the Soviet scale relatively small, and the benefits of the relationship, while seemingly intangible, were nevertheless concrete enough in Soviet eyes to make them willing to pay the costs throughout most of the Nasser era and for the first years after his death.

NOTES (Chapter IV)

- 1) James Richard Carter, The Net Cost of Soviet Aid (New York: Praeger, 1969), p. 16, and Karen Dawisha, Soviet Foreign Policy Towards Egypt, pp. 168-169.
- 2) Marshall Goldman, Soviet Foreign Aid (New York: Praeger, 1967), p. 225. However, this clause was essentially pro forma. The Egyptians would almost certainly have never agreed to pay in any hard currency. Another form of repayment was production of industrial products which were unneeded in Egypt and which were almost exclusively exported to the Soviet Union. Yaacov R'oi and David Ronel, The Soviet Economic Presence in Egypt and its Political Implications (Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Research Paper #9, 1974), pp. 16-17.
- 3) SWB IV ME/3311/A/3 and Dawisha, op cit, p. 49. This was not the first time that the Soviets had annulled a portion of Egypt's debt. In 1965, the Soviets had cancelled 460 million dollars of the Egyptian indebtedness.
- 4) One Soviet source has estimated this portion was as much as 80 percent of the total of all Soviet economic aid to Egypt between 1952 and 1972. N. A. Ushakova, Arabskaia Respublika Egipet: Sotrudnichestvo so stranami sotsializma ekonomicheskoe razvitiie, 1952-1972 gg (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1974), p. 84.
- 5) Goldman, op cit, p. 67.
- 6) By 1964 the level of this sort of aid from the Soviet Union to Egypt had already gone over 55 million dollars. See Kurt Muller, The Foreign Aid Program of the Soviet Bloc and Communist China: An Analysis (New York: Walker & Co., 1967). According to Karen Dawisha, the level had risen over the next few years to reach the indicated level. Dawisha, op cit, p. 172.
- 7) For a year by year look at Soviet-Egyptian trade see Appendix A.
- 8) Most Soviet trade - nearly 70 percent - was with the nations of Eastern Europe over the period. Of the remainder, an average of less than 10 percent was the Third World. Annual percentages fluctuate, but Egypt received an average of approximately 20 percent of this per year. U.N. Statistical Yearbook, 1954-1971.
- 9) An Israeli source indicates that according to Egyptian

- 19) Dawisha, op cit, p. 171. The West German effort was the first effort by a NATO nation to reinsert Western influence into the Egyptian economy. It was the harbinger of similar later efforts that would prove successful in the 1970's.
- 20) Ibid, p. 171, citing an Egyptian publication.
- 21) Marshall Goldman, op cit, p. 97.
- 22) Lenczowski, op cit, p. 94.
- 23) Lenczowski's information is more accurate in its details. The dam project was constructed in four stages as Lenczowski points out. Goldman simply lumps the last three together. Lenczowski gives data for three separate disbursements of aid, one for each of the first three stages. Goldman's figures are older and less detailed and seem less credible in light of the relative inelasticity of the Egyptian economy.
- 24) Dawisha, op cit, p. 171.
- 25) Over 56 billion cubic meters of water/year was made available for irrigation. This in turn helped the Egyptians to develop 500,000 hectares of previously unavailable land. These improvements helped the Egyptians to double their rice output and to increase corn production by 36 percent between 1964-65 and 1974. For more complete looks at the importance of the Aswan project to Egypt, see Baard Stokke, Soviet and Eastern Trade and Aid in Africa (New York: Praeger, 1967), pp. 123-130, and USSR and countries of Africa, op cit, pp. 190-192. The additions to the capacity to produce chemical fertilizers had been planned from before the Egyptians even had a firm offer of aid for the dam. See Gamel Abdel Nasser, "The Egyptian Revolution," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 33, #2 (January 1955), p. 206.
- 26) Slusser and Ginsburgs, op cit, pp. 63 and 65.
- 27) Ibid, pp. 111, 112, and 120.
- 28) Charles B. McLane, Soviet-Middle Eastern Relations (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), p. 37.
- 29) The treaty is summarized in Slusser and Ginsburgs, op cit, p. 110. The West German offer is discussed briefly in Dawisha, op cit, p. 171.
- 30) The building and use of an atomic bomb required two things: highly refined uranium and delivery capability - either through the use of missiles or of planes.

With the completion of the Egyptian reactor on July 27, 1961, the Egyptians had both.

- 31) July marked the beginning of a major program of nationalization that put all of the major financial and industrial institutions of Egypt in the hands of the Egyptian government. Industries affected included the banking industry and the shipping industry as well as others. Nasser's move received a good deal of favorable commentary for its short-term goals in the Soviet press. See "Differing views on the UAR" in the Mizan Newsletter, April 1968, pp. 1-8 for a discussion of the Soviet reaction to these events.
- 32) This agreement was one of the few which the U.S.S.R. and Egypt filed with the U.N. See the U.N. Treaty Series, Treaty #1: 6836, Vol. 472, p. 43. Also see Slusser and Ginsburgs, op cit, p. 182.
- 33) Slusser and Ginsburgs, ibid, p. 19.
- 34) Slusser and Ginsburgs, ibid, pp. 203, 221, and 231. Also see McLane, op cit, pp. 37-38.
- 35) Slusser and Ginsburgs, ibid, p. 249.
- 36) These two visits were reported in Pravda on August 6 and 10 and December 12. The details of the trade protocol also appeared in the December 12 issue of Pravda.
- 37) In terms of the amount of aid, for example, the Soviets cancelled 460 million dollars of Egypt's debt to them in August. Contacts between the two countries had come often in 1964 and they came just as frequently in 1965.
- 38) Novikov's visit to Egypt was reported in Pravda on June 12.
- 39) The January visit was headed by S. Skachkov, the Chairman of the Soviet Foreign Trade Ministry. It was reported by Tass (1/15/66 and 1/29/66), Pravda (2/25/66), and Izvestia (2/6/66). The May visit was by a delegation of Soviet leaders headed by Alexei Kosygin and included Skachkov, Andrei Gromyko, Admiral Sergei Gorshkov, and Peter Neporozhili. Pravda (5/11-19/66). The trade protocol involved Egyptian imports which were mainly of Soviet food and it was to be implemented over the next two years. Cairo Radio (8/28/66). See Mizan Newsletter Supplement A for 1966 for a chronology of the year.
- 40) McLane, op cit, p. 40.

data, exports to the Soviet Union alone amounted to 37.9 percent of Egyptian exports in 1970. The other centrally planned economies accounted for more than one-third of the remainder. R'oi and Ronel, *op cit.*, p. 19. According to the Soviet trade annual, spare parts accounted for 14 percent of Egypt's imports from the U.S.S.R. Vneshnaia Torgovliia (Moscow: Vneshfor-gizdat, 1971), p. 17. For more about the importance of Soviet technical assistance to Egypt and other Third World nations, see USSR and countries of Africa (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1980).

- 10) Sbornik deistvuiushchikh dogorov, soglashenii i kon-ventsii, zakliuchennykh SSSR s inostrannymi gosudarst-vami, vyp. XV (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1956), pp. 52-54, #609.
- 11) Robert Slusser and Jan Triska, A Calendar of Soviet Treaties, 1917-1957 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), p. 309. Some of the goods included Soviet tractors, automobiles, grain, and medicine and Egyptian rice, cotton, artificial silk, and hides.
- 12) The trade protocol which was concluded on September 6 called for an exchange of Egyptian cotton for Soviet petrol. Walter Laqueur, The Soviet Union and the Middle East (New York: Praeger, 1959), p. 219.
- 13) For a fuller discussion of the reasoning and diplomacy involved in the various decisions about aid for the Aswan Dam see Chapter III.
- 14) The agreement on nuclear energy had been signed on July 12, 1956, and called for the Soviets to "assist" the Egyptians in building a nuclear physics laboratory, electro-static generators, geological research stations and experimental reactors. Muller, *op cit.*, p. 268.
- 15) An indeterminate amount of the trade was related to the Czech Arms Deal. Still, the figures represent a substantial increase in other trade.
- 16) These agreements provided monetary and technical assistance for the development of the Egyptian economic infrastructure. The October agreement on the Aswan project was undoubtedly the most important economic agreement between the Egyptians and the Soviets.
- 17) See Robert Slusser and George Ginsburgs, A Calendar of Soviet Treaties, 1958-1973 (Rockville, MD: Sitjen & Nordhoff, 1981) for a synopsis of these agreements.
- 18) Lenczowski, Soviet Advances in the Middle East, p. 94.

- 41) Slusser and Ginsburgs, op cit, pp. 426, 435, and 468, and McLane, ibid, p. 41.
- 42) Slusser and Ginsburgs, ibid, pp. 481, 495, 509, and 526, and McLane, ibid, p. 41.
- 43) Slusser and Ginsburgs, ibid, pp. 541 and 559.

CHAPTER V

EGYPT AND THE SOVIET UNION: THE CULTURAL DIMENSION

Like the other aspects of the relationship between the Soviet Union and Nasser's Egypt, the cultural dimension of the relationship between the two countries did not really begin to become prominent until after the Czech Arms Deal had been concluded. See Appendix A. The cultural aspect of the relationship has certainly received less attention from scholars than its economic, diplomatic, and military aspects have. There are several reasons for this being so, including the difficulty of assigning precise values to the effects of cultural missions and cultural interaction on the relationship between the two countries and a general inclination to downplay the importance of cultural relations in international relations, but the importance of the cultural ties between the Soviet Union and Egypt during the period from 1954 to 1970 should be emphasized far more than it has been heretofore.

There were several important yet diverse elements which made up the cultural aspect of the relationship between Egypt and the Soviet Union which should be discussed. The two countries interacted through exchanges of students, religious personnel, films, newspapers, theatrical companies

and other performing artists. Tourism played an important role in the cultural interaction of the two nations. Another important element of the cultural relationship between the two was the educational element. The Soviet Union helped to improve Egypt's educational system by sending hundreds of academics to aid in the furthering of the Egyptian development of higher education and also by helping to build and develop technical training centers which emphasized the development of basic vocational skills, literacy and management skills.¹ Another important aspect of the educational interaction between the two countries was the aforementioned student exchange program which saw hundreds of Egyptians travel to the Soviet Union and receive their higher education there.

Leaving aside the more traditional aspects of the cultural relationship for the moment, a look at one element which has often been disregarded because of its predictable and, at times, ludicrous nature would be fruitful. Propaganda is the attempt by one culture to influence the mass views of another in such a way so as to improve its image in those views. It is a tool which has been commonly used by the Soviets throughout the world and one which has often been ridiculed by Westerners. Nevertheless, it has often been an effective tool in swaying the opinions of illiterate or unsophisticated audiences such as those which populate many of the nations in the Third World. It is also one of

the most nebulous aspects of the cultural relationship between the two countries and one for which it is difficult to ascertain the exact effects. In the case of Egypt, like most if not all other Third World countries where the Soviets have been active, it is one which has been used by the Soviets to influence Egypt and has not been used by Egypt to try to influence Soviet society in turn.

There are many tools which the Soviet Union used to disseminate propaganda in Egypt. Films, newspapers, and magazines are among the most common of these. However, the most common, and probably the most effective, method by which the Soviets attempted to influence Egyptian popular opinion was the use of radio broadcasts in Arabic.² Radio has several advantages to offer to a country wishing to disseminate a message. Two, however, do far outweigh all of the others. First, radio is a medium which can deliver a message which is uncensored by the government of the target nation. Second, radio can reach peoples with low literacy rates who could not otherwise be propagandized.

The medium of radio was used by the Soviet Union to try to convince its Arabic listeners that the Soviets were "progressive," "peace-loving," and "democratic."³ Much of the radio propaganda broadcast by the U.S.S.R. was also aimed at glorifying the so-called "Soviet model" of economic development. It was hailed as the most beneficial model of development for Third World nations. The economic develop-

ment of Soviet Central Asia was held up as an example of just how good a developmental model the Soviet model was for the nations of the Third World. In the words of Soviet propagandists, the non-capitalist path of the Soviet Middle East had "shown the whole world that all the oppressed peoples . . . can throw off the imperialist yoke forever The Soviet Eastern republics, like a bright torch, were an example to those countries where the labour of the peoples and the wealth of the country were still being⁴ plundered and looted by the Western monopolists."

The Soviets also used the medium of radio to try to discredit their adversaries. Not only were the U.S., Israel, and pro-Western Arab countries like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait castigated in Soviet radio broadcasts, but China was also villified, particularly when the Chinese attempted to exert their own influence in Egypt and the rest of the Arab world in the late 1960's. Karen Dawisha cites as an example of this a broadcast made in 1967 which condemns Mao Tse-Tung and China for advising Nasser to carry out a people's war against Israel and claims that this sort of advice only proves that the Chinese really come "out on the side of imperialism and⁵ Zionism."

Another use which the Soviets made of the medium of radio was to try to offset anti-Soviet propaganda which characterized the Soviet Union as atheistic and an "enemy of Islam." The Soviets used testimonials from Islamic leaders

from the Soviet Union and pro-Soviet nations in the Arab world to try to emphasize its "democratic" nature and "that religious freedom was one of the cornerstones of Soviet life."⁶ They also used this same sort of testimonial to try to establish the organic nature of the role that the Soviet Union played in the Middle East as a Great Power and supporter of the Arab cause.

Like radio broadcasts, the flow of printed matter and films between the Soviet Union and Egypt was one-sided: from the Soviet Union to Egypt. Sales of Soviet films and books steadily grew in Egypt after the flow began in 1955 when contacts between the Soviet agencies for books (Mezh-dunarodnaia kniga), printed media (Novosti and Tass), and films (Soviet-export-film), and the Soviet Writers' Union and the USSR Academy of Sciences and their Egyptian counterparts were established. While Soviet film and book sales never outweighed the combined totals of those from the West, Soviet sales were nevertheless impressive. The writings of Marx and Lenin were sold openly; Tolstoi's and Gorky's works were commonly available, as were those of many other Russian writers; and Arabic versions of Soviet scientific texts were⁷ used in many of Egypt's colleges and universities.

The Egyptians also showed quite a few Soviet films. In fact, there were several joint Soviet-Egyptian film festivals held in Cairo. However, the showing of Soviet films often caused problems between the two nations. One example of the

type of problems that were generated is the closure in October of 1957 of a film festival which was showing Maxim Gorky's Mother, a film which was based upon a story in which a woman's rejection of religion in favor of communism and atheism is lauded.⁸ Nasser closed the film down calling it blatant communist propaganda. Even a visit by the Soviet Minister of Communications was insufficient to get the festival reopened.

The educational dimension of the cultural relationship between Egypt and the Soviets was also quite one-sided, although perhaps slightly less so than either the propaganda or the printed matter and film dimension of it. The flow of scholars went each way. Egyptian scholars traveled to the Soviet Union and Soviet scholars came to Egypt. As mentioned earlier, Soviet academics who visited Egypt were often there as lecturers or instructors at Egyptian institutions of higher learning. Egyptian scholars who went to the Soviet Union on the other hand, were usually there to learn rather than to teach. The few exceptions to this rule were usually Egyptologists or specialists in Arabic culture or history.⁹

Although their numbers never approached the numbers of Egyptians who studied in the West (see figure 9), like older scholars many Egyptian students decided to take advantage of the educational opportunities that the Soviet Union offered. Supported by their government, Egyptian students went to universities in the U.S.S.R. to study in many different

fields. Usually, however, they concentrated upon either the sciences or engineering. Sending students to the Soviet Union offered many advantages to the Egyptian government, including the availability of more advanced training than was available in the Middle East. This sort of training was also available in the West, but Soviet universities had one advantage which their Western counterparts could not match: their graduates always returned to Egypt. Graduates from Western universities did not. In fact, 38 percent of all Egyptian students who graduated from foreign universities¹⁰ did not return to their native country. The percentage of emigres from Western universities was obviously higher since the graduates of Soviet universities invariably returned.

Although the advantages of sending students to study in the Soviet Union were manifest for the Egyptian government, there were also apparently significant drawbacks for students who attended Soviet universities. One necessarily had to learn to speak Russian, a language which few Egyptians had acquired. Western universities, on the other hand, usually taught their courses in English or French, languages with which many more Egyptians were acquainted. Some Western universities even established institutions in Egypt which meant that some courses were given in Arabic.¹¹ Another apparent drawback was political. From 1952 to 1969 none of the 131 Egyptian cabinet ministers who had received Bachelor of Arts degrees had received a degree from the

Soviet Union or had studied in the U.S.S.R. for any prolonged¹² period. This may have been due in part to the relatively short time span of the connection between Egypt and the Soviet Union, but it seems that it was due in large part both to a pro-Western cultural bent of the Egyptian elite and the scientific nature of the training which most Egyptians received in their studies in the Soviet Union.

The technical education centers which the Soviet Union helped to build in Egypt may in the long run prove to have been even more beneficial for Egypt than the training of its students in the U.S.S.R. Eventually, at least 43 institutions of the sort were established in Egypt and tens of¹³ thousands of Egyptians were trained in them. These centers provided human material with technical and managerial skills without which the Egyptian economy could not have expanded. The utilization of the capacities of the Aswan Dam in particular, and heavy industry in general, was aided immeasurably by having technically trained Egyptian managers available. What raises the value of these technical education centers over the value of educational exchanges which had similar benefits, is the fact that they would continue to train Egyptians long after the Soviet presence in Egypt had dwindled until it was only a memory.

Some of the other media which were used to promote cultural exchange between the Soviet Union and Egypt were much less undirectional than were radio and education. The

flow of contacts through these media went both from the Soviet Union to Egypt and from Egypt to the Soviet Union. This bi-directional nature was particularly apparent in the performing arts. Egypt sent ballet troupes, its puppet theater, its national folk dance troupe, the Cairo Symphony Orchestra, and famous singers like Om Kalthum to the Soviet Union.¹⁴ In return, the Soviets sent several ballet companies including the Bolshoi, Leningrad, Novosibirsk, and Tashkent troupes. They sent folk dance troupes from Moldavia, Armenia, Uzbekistan, Azerbaidzhan, and Georgia. They also sent the State Puppet Theater and the State Circus to visit Egypt. Beyond simply sending troupes of artists to Egypt, the Soviets were also instrumental in establishing a national folklore ensemble and a state circus in Egypt. They also helped to expand the Cairo Conservatory of Music.¹⁵ One of the more important contributions that the Soviet Union made to Egypt's cultural life was its aid in the establishment of the first ballet school in the Middle East or Africa which was established in Cairo in 1958.¹⁶

Exchanges of performing artists were, like so many of the other media of cultural exchange between the Soviet Union and Egypt, instrumental in the Soviets' attempts to show Egyptians the elements of their culture which they wished the Egyptians to see and appreciate. Ballet troupes, puppet theaters, circuses, and particularly folk dancers were essential in presenting the ethnic and cultural diversity of

the Soviet Union which the Soviets wanted to emphasize to the Egyptians. These types of groups also represented ethnic minorities, many of which were Muslim, that seemed, at least to some extent, to be thriving on the freedom to maintain and display their own individual cultures and also to develop other aspects of culture that were more European in their origin. Cultural and ethnic freedom and attainment was exactly the image of itself which the Soviet Union wished to project. The medium of the performing arts was the perfect medium through which to do so. It was much more credible than radio propaganda - or book or film propaganda - because it gave objective, if selective, evidence of its reality.

While the performing arts were perhaps the most easily controlled of the elements of the Soviet-Egyptian interchange, one that was not quite so easily controlled was tourism. Although both the Soviet Union and Egypt had controls on who could come and go to and from their countries, once a tourist had arrived at his destination, his interaction with the local populace was to a certain extent unpredictable and uncontrollable. Despite the unpredictability of tourism as a medium of cultural exchange, limited arrangements for the interchange of tourists between Egypt and the Soviet Union were instituted in May of 1956. Since that time, the exchange of tourists between the two countries grew to a peak in the last year of Nasser's life (see figure 10). The tourist trade, like the interchange of performing artists

offered a glimpse of cultural reality. Because of its unofficial nature, however, it is improbable that tourism made any major impact on the relationship between the two countries. Certainly there are no documented cases that can be cited which show any sort of impact. Nevertheless, tourism should not be completely discounted since it offered both cultural reality and economic interchange between the two nations.

Religious exchange was another of the elements of the cultural relationship between the Soviet Union and Egypt which, on the surface at least, showed a balanced flow between the two. Religious leaders from both Egypt and the Soviet Union visited their counterparts in the other nation. The effects of the exchange on Egypt seem to have been minimal. There were few if any changes in the practice of Islam that were attributable to the Soviet Union and the effect of the religious interaction between the two nations on Egyptian politics was minimal. For the Soviet Union on the other hand, the effects of the relationship have been strong and direct.

Before Egypt and the Soviet Union entered into a close relationship and the Soviet Union reformulated its policy toward the Third World, Islam was denounced by the Soviets as being the product of a class society which was being deliberately exploited by the West for "the enslavement of the Eastern peoples." Their criticisms of the religion were

harsh and consistent.

After the Soviet Union and Egypt began to develop closer ties and the Soviets began to become more intimately involved in the Middle East as a whole, the U.S.S.R. began to come under increasing fire from Arab leaders for the lack of religious freedom and tolerance in its Central Asian re-

¹⁸
publics.

As the pressure from the Arab world began to mount, the Soviets slowly began to change their official position on Islam in order to improve their image in Arab eyes. They began to ease the strictures on the practice of Islam in the Soviet Union. ¹⁹ By 1970, over 30 million Muslims were inhabitants of the Soviet Union, almost all of them in Central Asia and the Transcaucasus. According to Karen Dawisha, reli-

gious freedom and belief was much more prevalent in Central Asia than in any other part of the nation. ²⁰ Soviet Muslims were allowed to visit Mecca in small groups. Soviet Muslim leaders visited Egypt and other Arab countries, and they held conferences in which "all Soviet Muslims were urged to take more active roles in the political and social life of the country in order to extend the influence of Islam and

²¹
protect the rights of believers."

Along with the improvements in the life of its Muslim population, the U.S.S.R. began to moderate the tone of its propaganda. Islam no longer came under attack for being one

of the world's main reactionary forces. By 1970, Soviet criticisms of Islam were as mild as they could realistically be, given the militant atheism which is integral to a Marxist world view.²²

The ties between the Arabs of the Middle East and the Muslims of Central Asia were largely responsible for the moderation of Soviet views and practices regarding Islam. The Soviets wanted very much to extend their influence into the Middle East deeply and securely. It was almost vital for them in terms of their own image of what a "Great Power" was. They felt that they had a religious tool in the Muslims in their own lands which could be used to help to wedge them into the Middle East, and one which could wedge them in to stay. This tool existed because of the cultural, religious, and historical ties between Soviet Central Asia and the rest of the Islamic world. These ties were reinforced by linguistic ones: according to Islamic law, the Koran could only be read in Arabic. This forced all Muslims to have at least a passing acquaintance with that language. The visits of Egyptian and other Arab clerics to the Soviet Union pushed the Soviet government to allow more religious freedom in Central Asia and thus made improvements in the lives of Soviet Muslims inevitable. How much positive effect this had on Soviet-Egyptian relations is debatable. Certainly, it didn't hurt them. At the very least, it partially removed one of the sore points which had made many

Arab and Egyptian leaders hesitant about increasing their ties to the Soviet Union.

The first two steps toward the opening of cultural interchange between the Soviets and Egypt during the Nasser years were religious in nature, and they occurred almost simultaneously. Interestingly enough, they involved the interchange of both Muslim and Christian personnel. In August of 1955, the month before the Czech Arms Deal was signed, Soviet Muslim pilgrims stopped in Cairo on their way to Mecca. At the same time, the patriarch of Alexandria was on his way to visit the Soviet Union's Eastern Orthodox churches and to confer with the leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow. These two journeys, while in themselves relatively insignificant in terms of world politics, signalled the beginning of the cultural relationship between Egypt and the Soviet Union. Their religious character was significant because it emphasized that religion would play an important role in the development of the cultural connection between the two nations.

A month after the religious connection between the Soviet Union and Egypt was established, a Soviet cultural center opened in Cairo. With the expansion of cultural contacts between the Egyptians and the Soviets that the opening of a Soviet cultural center in Cairo represented and the signing of the Czech Arms Deal, Soviet-Egyptian relations in the cultural realm settled into a pattern that was to be

maintained as long as Nasser was in power. During that time, the two nations consistently exchanged missions from each of the diverse areas that comprise culture.²⁴

After the pattern was established, the next step in solidly setting cultural interaction between the two countries into the pattern it had acquired was the May 1956 visit of a Soviet academic delegation to Cairo. In August, leading members of the Egyptian Teachers Union returned the visit. During November, another Egyptian delegation visited the U.S.S.R. These contacts between members of the educational communities of the two nations began the educational aspect of their relationship. Like religion, education was to play a key role in the development of ties between the two countries.²⁵

The pattern that had been established in the first year and one-half of the cultural relationship between the Soviet Union and Egypt continued in 1957. In February, Soviet nuclear physicists went to Egypt to help develop Egypt's nuclear energy program as part of the agreement that the two countries had entered into one year earlier, which called for a cooperative effort to give Egypt the ability to produce nuclear power. A secondary goal of the mission was to help to improve the capacities and abilities of Egypt's nuclear physicists.²⁶ In May, an Egyptian Trade Union delegation went to the Soviet Union to broaden contacts between the two nations. Two months later, Egyptian journalists

went to the Soviet Union and reaffirmed the connections with Tass and Novosti that had been developed in 1955. The connections were still tenuous at best. The lack of effective ties between the presses of the two nations is demonstrated by the continuing rancor which the official Soviet press demonstrated toward its Egyptian counterpart in articles in the Soviet press throughout the late fifties²⁷ and the early sixties.

In September, more Soviet scientists visited Egypt. The following month, Nikolai Psurtsev, the Soviet Minister of Communications, flew to Egypt, largely in response to the "crisis" which had evolved from Nasser's closing of the Soviet film festival which was being held in Cairo. Psurtsev had flown to Egypt to try to convince Egypt's leader that closing the film festival because of the nature of the Soviet film being shown which was based upon Gorky's Mother was unwise. Despite his best efforts, he was unable to con-²⁸vince Nasser to allow the film to reopen.

In 1958, the number of cultural contacts between the Soviet Union and Egypt increased. In January, another Egyptian Trade Union delegation visited the U.S.S.R., as did a delegation from an organization which was based upon the government's efforts to promote cooperatives in Egypt. A Soviet delegation came to Egypt in April to arrange for cultural exchanges between the two countries. Later in the year, in June, an Egyptian delegation returned the visit.

Like its Soviet counterpart, the Egyptian delegation was trying to arrange for increased cultural contact between the two nations.

In May, the first of many delegations of Egyptian scientists went to the Soviet Union. Unlike their counterparts from the U.S.S.R., the Egyptian scientists had left their country not to teach but rather to be taught. During July, a delegation of Muslim leaders went to the Soviet Union to visit their Central Asian opposite numbers. In September, another Egyptian Trade Union delegation was dispatched to the Soviet Union to strengthen the ties between the labor organizations of the two countries. A month later, Egyptian lawyers went to the Soviet Union to study its legal system.²⁹

In late November, another delegation came from Egypt to the Soviet Union in order to improve and broaden the cultural ties between the two. These delegations were the first steps in an effort to regularize and plan cultural contacts for a longer period of time. Up to that point, the contacts had been mostly one-shot connections. There were very few exchanges which had been set up in advance. The efforts to regularize contact did not immediately bear fruit. The negotiations between the two nations took until late 1959 before anything concrete came of them. At that time, an agreement between the Soviets and Egyptians was signed which outlined the course which the cultural interaction between

the two nations would take for 1960.

Cultural contacts for 1960 began in much the same fashion as they had left off. In January, a Muslim delegation from the U.S.S.R. journeyed to Egypt. An Egyptian Trade Union delegation visited the Soviet Union in May. Like those before it, the Egyptian delegation was there to broaden and deepen the contacts between the labor organizations which they represented and their Soviet counterpart. During November, another delegation of Egyptian journalists visited the U.S.S.R. despite the rancor with which the Soviet press was treating them and their campaign in support of Nasser and his efforts to suppress the Communist Party of Egypt.³¹

The agreement regarding cultural exchange which the Soviet Union and Egypt had signed in 1959 outlined a program of exchange in which a good deal less contact between the two nations was scheduled to take place than had taken place in 1958. The lull in cultural contact between the two countries was largely due to the temporary pall which had settled over the entire relationship between the two as a result of the harsh anti-Communist campaign which Nasser had been carrying out in Egypt since 1958. The only contacts of importance which occurred in 1960 were the November visit of a Soviet delegation headed by a Russian Orthodox patriarch in Egypt and the signing of an agreement between the two nations regarding cultural exchange for 1961 and 1962.

1961 was, like the year before it, a relatively slow year in terms of the number of contacts between the Soviets and the Egyptians. In April Soviet Minister of Communications, Nikolai Psurtsev, once more visited Egypt. His visit this time was, however, for a much less "dramatic" reason. He had journeyed to Egypt to arrange for broader film contacts between the two nations. His visit to Egypt was followed in July by the visit of a delegation of Soviet journalists to Cairo for the celebrations which marked the anniversary of the Egyptian revolution of 1952.³²

1962 was another relatively slow year in Soviet-Egyptian cultural relations. In February, the two nations signed a protocol which detailed their cultural exchanges for the year. An Egyptian Trade Union delegation visited the Soviet Union in June. Members of the U.S.S.R.'s labor organizations returned the visit for the first time in July when they came to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Egyptian revolution.³³

In 1963, the two nations returned to a more active pace in their cultural relationship. The political tension which had arisen from Nasser's suppression of the Egyptian Communists and his improved relationship with the West had eased for the most by then. In February, the Egyptian Minister of Education visited the U.S.S.R. to improve ties between the two nations in his sphere of responsibility. At the same time, the two nations reached agreement and signed

a protocol which outlined their cultural interchanges for 1963 and 1964. The following month, a Soviet delegation of educational specialists returned the visit of Egypt's Minister of Education to the Soviet Union the month before as the first step in increasing cooperation in the realm of education. During April, an Egyptian delegation visited the U.S.S.R. to study Soviet methods in radio. A month later, in May, A. I. Adzhubey, Khrushchev's son-in-law, and the Editor-in-Chief of Izvestia visited Egypt at Nasser's³⁴ invitation.

Like the first half of 1963, the second half was quite active. In July, a Soviet Trade Union delegation visited Egypt in connection with the anniversary of Egypt's revolution. The following month, the Soviet Minister of Social Affairs led a delegation to Egypt. During October, the Egyptians put on a major Soviet film festival which was attended by a delegation from Soviet cinema organizations. Unlike the festival in 1957, this film festival went smoothly. Cultural contact for the year closed in December with a visit to Egypt by the Soviet Minister of Health to arrange for cooperation between the two nations in the many areas³⁵ under his purview.

In 1964 and 1965, cultural contact between the Soviet Union and Egypt was at a minimum. During 1964, the first contact between the two nations came in January when a Soviet Trade Union delegation visited Egypt. In February,

a Soviet academic delegation went to Egypt to strengthen their ties with their Egyptian counterparts. For the rest of the year, the cultural front of the Soviet-Egyptian relationship was curiously quiet. Contact did not resume until February of the next year. At that time, the two nations signed a protocol on cultural exchange. In September 1965, an agreement was reached which outlined exchanges in the field of television. Finally, a month later, the Soviet-UAR Friendship Society was founded in Cairo.³⁶

In 1966, cultural contacts between the two countries picked up once more. There were a total of four important contacts in the cultural realm - as many as there had been during the previous two years combined. These contacts ranged from scientific cooperation, such as the agreement which the two countries signed in February which promised Egyptian aid in tracking Soviet satellites and orbital flights, to educational intercourse like the visits of the Soviet Minister of Professional Education and the well-known Soviet economist, Evsei G. Liberman, to Egypt. Contact for the year closed in December when an accord on cultural contacts between the two nations in 1967 was signed.³⁷

In February of 1967, an Egyptian delegation went to the Soviet Union to increase contacts between the two nations in radio broadcasting. At the same time, Yekaterina Furtseva, the Soviet Minister of Culture, was in Cairo for talks. One month later, an Egyptian Trade Union delegation

went to the U.S.S.R. During April, their visit was returned by a Soviet Trade Union delegation. In August, the Egyptian Minister of Tourism went to the Soviet Union. While there he arranged an agreement on the exchange of tourists between the two nations.

In 1968, an Egyptian delegation went to the Soviet Union in January to arrange for closer cooperation between the two nations in the realm of higher education. At the same time, Egyptian nuclear scientists went to the U.S.S.R. to participate in a conference there. During May, Egypt's Minister of Education went to Moscow. The result of his visit was a protocol detailing the two nations' cultural relationship with each other for 1969 and 1970. The Soviet Union opened two new cultural centers in Egypt in June. One was situated in Cairo and the other was located in Alexandria. In September, an Egyptian Trade Union delegation visited the U.S.S.R. September also saw the completion of the satellite tracking station in Egypt which was built under the auspices of the 1966 satellite tracking agreement. Cultural contacts for 1968 ended in December when the Deputy Minister of Social Affairs for Egypt went to the Soviet Union for talks.

In 1969, cultural contacts between Egypt and the Soviet Union began when Politburo member Aleksandr N. Shelepin led a Soviet Trade Union delegation to Cairo for a conference. At the same time, Soviet experts on space were in Egypt to discuss the uses and utilization of the new satellite track-

ing station. In February, a Soviet delegation went to Egypt where they negotiated a supplemental protocol on cultural contact for 1969. During the same period, members of the Soviet legal profession went to Egypt to observe the workings of its legal system and an Egyptian educational delegation was in the Soviet Union for talks. In March, Soviet writers and scientists visited Egypt. While they were in Egypt, high officials from Egypt's trade unions were in Moscow. During April, a delegation of teachers from Egypt went to the Soviet Union to enhance the relationship of the two nations in education. One month later, the Egyptian Minister of Youth went to the U.S.S.R. for talks with Komsomol leaders. While he was there, a Soviet Trade Union delegation visited Cairo. In June, an Egyptian Trade Union delegation reciprocated by visiting Central Asia, while Egyptian food workers toured factories in European Russia. The first half of 1969 ended when the Soviets sent a scientific mission to Egypt to aid in the continued development of the sciences there.³⁸

1969 was the most active year in the cultural relationship between the Soviet Union and Egypt during the Nasser era. Like that of its first half, the pace of cultural contact between the two in the year's second half was feverish. In July, the Egyptian Minister of Higher Education visited the Soviet Union for discussions. Religious contact resumed when the patriarch of Alexandria visited the U.S.S.R. July

also saw a visit to the Soviet Union by Egyptian woodworkers to observe the work of their Soviet counterparts. During September, an Egyptian radio delegation went to the U.S.S.R. and negotiated a protocol on broadcasting exchanges. A month later, the Minister of Education from the Soviet Union visited Egypt. While there he arranged a protocol which called for Soviet assistance in the training of Egyptian industrial instructors and the building of a labor university at Aswan.

In 1970, the pace of cultural contact between the Soviets and the Egyptians slackened somewhat. Contacts for the year did not open until May when Egyptian radio officials visited Moscow for the centenary of Lenin's birth. Shortly thereafter, the Egyptian Minister of Culture was in the Soviet Union for talks. May also saw the Lenin Peace Prize awarded to an Egyptian author for the first time. In September, a delegation of Egyptian Muslims visited Central Asia where they negotiated an agreement with Soviet leaders which provided scholarships to Egyptian universities for Soviet Moslems. The following month, October, the month that Nasser died, contacts in cultural areas went on as usual. Shortly after Nasser's death, an Egyptian educational delegation visited the Soviet Union for talks. Contacts closed between the two nations in November with a visit by officials from Egypt's Ministry of Culture to Georgia.

The cultural relationship between Egypt and the Soviet

Union is almost certainly the only facet of their relationship as a whole of which it can be accurately said that its effects on each nation were solely positive. Both nations had their cultural horizons broadened. Both were able to show themselves off in a generally positive light. The Egyptians almost certainly gained more in absolute terms in the way of aid, development, and cultural broadening from the Soviet Union than they gave to it in return, but that was based more upon the relative size of the economies and populations of the two countries than it was upon what culture each had to offer.

The cultural exchanges and contacts between the two countries ebbed and flowed with the changing attitudes of the leaders of the two countries toward each other. There were clear oscillations in the frequency of contact that were based upon displeasure or uncertainty toward the other nation. The 1959-1962 period is but one example. During that period, the Soviets demonstrated their displeasure with Nasser's anti-communist campaign by cutting down cultural contacts between the two countries. As a result, the cultural facet of the relationship was probably the most sensitive barometer of the short term political attitudes of the two nations toward each other. The reason for that is clear. The cultural relationship was the least vital element of the entire relationship. As such, it could be used as an instrument with which each country could demonstrate

its displeasure with the policies of the other.

Saying that there was a lack of negative effects in the cultural relationship between the Soviet Union and Egypt is not to say that there were no costs in the relationship. There were. Both sides expended time and money on the interchange. Both had to compromise their attitude on certain issues as well. The change in the Soviet attitude toward Islam is one example of such a change.

Despite the costs in time and money, and the necessities of changing long-held beliefs, the relationship ultimately did have many more positive effects than it did costs. Unlike other facets of the relationship between the Soviet Union and Egypt, the cultural aspect of that relationship is one where there was a balance of power and benefit. It was the one aspect of the relationship in which the Soviets were able to assert themselves without hurting their ally unduly. As a result, it was the one facet of their relationship in which the Egyptians were least able to flout Soviet desires, and it was the one aspect of that relationship in which they seemed the least willing to do so.

NOTES (Chapter V)

- 1) Karen Dawisha, Soviet Foreign Policy Towards Egypt, p. 195.
- 2) Radio broadcasts in Arabic had been transmitted by Soviet stations since 1943. In 1953, the Soviets transmitted ten hours a week (or one-seventieth of the total amount of broadcast time) in Arabic. By 1959, after the blossoming of Soviet relations with Egypt and other Arabic nations, that amount had risen to 42 hours a week. See Ivar Spector, The Soviet Union and the Muslim World, 1917-1958 (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1959), p. 252, Frederick C. Barghoorn, Soviet Foreign Propaganda (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 29, and Dawisha, *ibid*, pp. 186-188.
- 3) Dawisha, *ibid*, p. 187.
- 4) The "non-capitalist path of development" was proposed by the Soviets as an alternative method of development of economies to that followed by the Soviet Union and Western Europe. In a sense it was a throwback to pre-revolutionary arguments about whether or not conditions were ripe for revolution in the Soviet Union and what exactly the requirements for revolution were. It was also a throwback to the continuing attempts at the justification of the revolution in Marxists terms since Lenin had first tried to do that very thing. See Leopold Haimson, The Russian Marxists and the Rise of Bolshevism (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955); V. I. Lenin, Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii (Moscow: Gospolizdat, 1958-1966), Vol. 3 "Razvitie Kapitalizma v Rossii", Vol. IV "Retsenziia." Karl Kautsky. Bernstein und das Sozialdemokratische Programm. Eine Anti-Kritik.", and others. Also see Elizabeth K. Valkenier, The Soviet Union and the Third World: An Economic Bind (New York: Praeger, 1983), pp. 6-7, 77, 97-98, for a discussion of its role in Soviet policy.
- 5) Dawisha, *ibid*, p. 187.
- 6) *Ibid*, p. 188.
- 7) Dawisha, *ibid* p. 194. According to R. D. McLaurin, however, Western sources are much preferred to Soviet ones by Arab audiences. R. D. McLaurin, The Middle East in Soviet Policy (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1975), p. 137. See also Appendix A.
- 8) O. M. Gorbатов and L. Ia. Cherkasskii, Sotrudnichest-

vo SSSR so stranami Arabskogo Vostoka i Afriki (Moscow: n.p., 1973), pp. 300-306. This same information is presented in Dawisha, *ibid*, on p. 191.

- 9) In USSR and countries of Africa a discussion of exchanges between the Soviet Union and Egypt points out the exchanges which the countries had and all the benefits which accrued to Egypt from them. However, when they discuss the benefits that the U.S.S.R. gained they only mention ones related to archaeology. *Op cit*, p. 235-236.
- 10) Dawisha, *op cit*, p. 195.
- 11) The American University of Cairo is but one example of a Western-based institution which founded a Cairene branch.
- 12) R. H. Dekmejian, Egypt under Nasir (London: University of London Press, 1971), p. 187. This is a good measure of the lack of depth of Soviet cultural inroads into the Egyptian intelligentsia.
- 13) Dawisha, *op cit*, p. 195.
- 14) Gorbатов and Cherkasskii, *op cit*, pp. 300-306. The Egyptians sent other performers to the Soviet Union as well, including for example other singers and violinists.
- 15) *Ibid*, pp. 300-306.
- 16) *Ibid*, pp. 300-306.
- 17) "Islam", Malaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia, Vol. IV (Moscow: 1953), p. 221. Islam was also said to be infused with European bourgeois morals and ethics in its more modern tendencies.
- 18) The Soviets were often called "enemies of Islam." Dawisha, *op cit*, p. 188. Even more radical assaults of this sort have been put forward by Islamic fundamentalists in the Middle East more recently. See for example, Shahram Chubin, "The Soviet Union and Iran," Foreign Affairs, 61: 4 (Fall 1983), pp. 921-949.
- 19) Dawisha, *op cit*, p. 96.
- 20) Although government policy did cause a drastic decrease in the official number of mosques in the Soviet Union, there were still many unofficially sanctioned mosques and religious schools in existence there. The number of believers had also increased dramatically.

- 21) Dawisha, op cit, p. 96.
- 22) See for example the article on Islam in Bolshaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia Vol. 10 (Moscow: Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia, 1972).
- 23) For a discussion of religion's role in Soviet-Egyptian relations, see Dawisha, *ibid*, pp. 95-98. Also see Spector, op cit, pp. 255-257. Curiously enough, despite the large numbers of religious contacts between the Soviet Union and Egypt, and the obvious effects it has had on official Soviet attitudes toward Islam, it has been studied only in a cursory fashion by Western scholars. One of the few who does look at religion and Soviet foreign policy is William Fletcher in Religion and Soviet Foreign Policy (London: Oxford University Press, 1972). Soviet scholars are understandably loathe to discuss the subject as well.
- 24) See the tables in McLaurin, op cit, pp. 127-136. Also see Dawisha, *ibid*, pp. 191-202; Gorbatov and Cherkasskii, op cit, pp. 269-322; and USSR and countries of Africa, op cit, pp. 229-308, for discussions of the role of, and number of, cultural contacts in Soviet-Egyptian relations. Also see Appendix A.
- 25) For a discussion of the role of education in Soviet-Egyptian relations see Gorbatov and Cherkasskii, *ibid*, pp. 275-288; Dawisha, *ibid*, pp. 195-197; and McLaurin, *ibid*, pp. 126-137.
- 26) The experimental reactors and contact with Soviet experts were both extremely valuable to Egypt's scientists. They got hands on experience with nuclear reactors and the benefit of the theoretical expertise and practical knowledge of their Soviet counterparts. This sort of benefit is one of the avowed goals of Soviet scientific and economic aid to nations of the Third World. See USSR and countries of Africa, op cit, pp. 259-260.
- 27) See for example translations of articles in the Soviet press which appeared in The Current Digest of the Soviet Press, Issues XI: 33 (p. 14), XI: 38 (pp. 21-22), and XIII: 22 (pp. 17-18).
- 28) This incident is related by Ivar Spector in The Soviet Union and the Muslim World on p. 261.
- 29) McLane, Soviet-Middle Eastern Relations, p. 36.
- 30) Slusser and Ginsburgs, A Calendar of Soviet Treaties,

1958-1973, p. 70.

- 31) See the aforementioned articles in the Current Digest of the Soviet Press, as well as those in Vol. XIII: 3 (p. 21) and Vol. XIII: 24 (pp. 23-24).
- 32) See CDSP, Vol. XIII: 29 (p. 23).
- 33) See the article on the visit which is translated and republished in CDSP Vol. XIV: 29 (pp. 19-20).
- 34) These exchanges were reported and praised in articles in Pravda on April 20, 21, 22, and 27 and on June 1 of 1953.
- 35) 1963 ended on a sour note in the Egyptian-Soviet relationship. Nasser was once again repressing the local communists and the Soviets were as usual displeased. The Soviet press was once again treating its Egyptian counterpart with rancor. See for example the article in Pravda on the 6th of September. One of the most noteworthy attacks was an article by E. Primakov in which he attacked an Egyptian journalist named Fikri Azbah for denouncing local communists as "agents of neo-colonialism." Mizan Newsletter, Vol 5, #9 (October 1963), p. 13. When dealing with other subjects such as exchanges between the two countries, the Soviet press was much less hostile. Pravda, September 3, 1963.
- 36) The trade union delegation was led by P. T. Pimenov, the Secretary of the All-Union Council of Trade Unions. His visit was reported in Trud on the 17th of January. The new friendship society was reported in a Moscow radio broadcast on November 6. See Mizan, Vol. 7, #11 (December 1965), p. 19.
- 37) The February agreement was reported on Moscow radio (February 3, 1966) and included the building of an observatory at Helwan. The April visit was designed to establish new relations with Egyptian experts in history, literature, and language. Moscow radio (April 26, 1966).
- 38) Slusser and Ginsburgs, op cit, pp. 483 and 521.

CHAPTER VI

THE LEVER AND THE FULCRUM: CONCLUSIONS

"I always tell my Arab friends and our own Egyptian people that, even if the Russians are slow, in the end they give us what we want. That is the important thing; and it is what makes them different from the Americans," Nasser told Alexander Shelepin in January of 1969.¹ This perception on the part of Nasser - and the reality that it reflected - is perhaps the most important key to understanding the relationship that developed between the Soviets and the Egyptians, why it developed, and how it developed during the period in which Nasser was the head of the Egyptian state.

Throughout the preceding pages of this thesis, it has been pointed out that, despite the relative disparities in size, economic might, military power, and diplomatic influence between Egypt and the Soviet Union, Egypt consistently showed the ability to use Soviet power and influence for its own ends. Nasser's statement to Shelepin points out two of the most important facets of the Soviet-Egyptian relationship: first, Nasser believed - and clearly he had strong grounds for his belief - that no matter what he asked the Soviets for, he would eventually get whatever he requested of them, whether the Soviets were ready to grant those requests immediately or

not. The grounds for his belief were and are obvious. He knew that Egypt - and, almost as importantly, he - was the key to the maintenance of a strong Soviet presence in the Middle East. The bases and port facilities that the Soviets had been provided with in Egypt and Nasser's prestige and influence in the rest of the Arab world were almost indispensable for the Soviets' policies in the Eastern Mediterranean basin. It was this fact which he used as the fulcrum upon which he used the lever of diplomacy - in both its persuasive and intransigent aspects - to maneuver the objectively more powerful U.S.S.R. into acquiescing to his demands, often against the best judgment of its leaders. Second, and almost as important, Nasser's statement reflected his belief that the United States could not be manipulated quite so easily for his own ends. It would not accede so readily to his desires. It was this belief - one learned through the often bitter experiences of both Nasser and his fellow Arab heads of state - that initially caused Nasser to turn to the Soviet Union, despite his own original bias toward the West.

The ends which Egypt sought did not necessarily show a one-to-one correspondence with Soviet goals and aspirations in the Middle East. The Egyptians were often capable of getting their own way despite Soviet aims which ran counter to the goals and intentions of Egypt.² The Egyptians were capable of manipulating the Soviets not because of any special political ability on their part - although Nasser was an ex-

tremely capable politician, as his humiliation of the British and the French in 1956 demonstrated - but rather because of the focus of the joint policies of the two countries.

Egypt nearly always had the upper hand when conflicts arose between the two erstwhile allies. This situation developed because the joint policies of the two countries were for the most part only those which were related to events and relationships in the Middle East, an area where Egypt was much more intimately concerned and therefore had more directly applicable political power. It was also because of the very fact that the resolutions to the situation which gave rise to Soviet-Egyptian cooperation were so much more vital to Egypt and to Nasser's own political power and survival. For the Egyptians the resolution of a problem on their own terms was frequently simply a matter of life or death. They needed to have problems in the area settled in their fashion. Often, it turned out that this was not a manner which jibed exactly with Soviet aims.

However, while necessity may be the mother of invention, in international politics it is frequently insufficient in and of itself to bring about a solution satisfactory to the country which feels its weight. There are ample historical examples of nations which have needed to have certain questions resolved in a specific way, but which have failed to successfully achieve their aspirations and have perished as a result. The losers of many European wars and the leaders of

the nations which fell victim to Western colonial expansion would certainly attest to that statement if they were still alive to be questioned. Fortunately for Egypt, over the nearly two decades during which Nasser held power, Egypt had sufficient might in both the Middle East and in its dealings with the Soviets to at least meet its "program minimum." It might not - and often did not - always achieve everything that it sought or gain all that it asked from the Soviet Union, but on any question which was vital to Nasser, the Soviet leaders eventually gave him what he requested. Nasser went along his own chosen path, particularly in situations where Soviet assistance was not requisite and Soviet disapproval was clear, still confident that their need of him was greater than any anger which his action might engender.

During the two decades which it spanned, the Soviet-Egyptian relationship became quite broad. As we have seen, it encompassed most of the diverse aspects through which states can interact with one another: military cooperation, diplomatic support, economic intercourse, and cultural exchange. The military aspect of the relationship was the first of these to really develop fully. The Czech Arms Deal of 1955 opened the door to Egypt for the Soviets, and through it that to the rest of the Arab Middle East.

By concluding the Czech Arms Deal with Egypt, the Soviet Union began to establish itself as a power to be reckoned with in the Mediterranean basin. While this achievement had

historical roots which stretch back far into the imperial
 period of Russian history,⁴ it was not until the post-World
 War II period that the Soviet government began to assiduously
 press its suit towards countries in the area.⁵

The first serious attempt by the Soviet Union to bypass
 the West's containment barrier of Greece, Iran, Iraq, and
 Turkey and assert its influence in the Middle East came with
 its attempts to court the Israelis in 1947. The creation of
 the state of Israel had been viewed with antipathy by the
 Soviets during the pre-war period. They saw it as the
 "expression of the exploiting and great power oppressive
 strivings of the Jewish bourgeoisie . . . (which) has turned
 itself into a tool of British imperialism to suppress the
 national liberation movement of the Arab masses."⁶ Soon
 after World War II ended, when it became apparent that the
 United Kingdom was not terribly pleased with the Zionists'
 aspirations in what was then Palestine, the Soviets began to
 perform a complete turnaround on the question of whether an
 Israeli state should exist. In May of 1947, when Andrei A.
 Gromyko made a speech at the U.N. supporting the partition of
 Palestine if it turned out to be "necessary", this turnaround
 began to fully manifest itself.⁷ The Jews in Palestine
 greeted the Soviets' new attitude with pleasure. It seems
 unlikely that it was simply coincidence that the change in
 the Soviets' attitude came at a time when they were first
 becoming aware of their role as an international superpower,

a superpower which needed to counteract its enemies' efforts to nullify its potency. Particularly when it was also a time when a new potential ally was becoming visible in the Middle East.

The Soviet Union had completed its turnaround on the Israeli question by December of that same year when the Arab government of Syria suppressed its Communist Party. By May 1948, the Soviets and the Americans were engaged in a race to see who would be the first to recognize the newly founded state of Israel.⁸

The friendship between the U.S.S.R. and Israel was shortlived. Lasting only one year, it was, however, in some ways both a model for the Soviet-Egyptian friendship which was to come and an indicator of the renewed interests of Russia in the area. In both the Israeli and Egyptian cases, their friendship with the Soviet Union blossomed after a sharp turnaround in Soviet bloc policy toward the new regimes. In both cases, the relationship entered its "honeymoon" period following an arms deal between the leaders of the Middle Eastern country and Czechoslovakia.⁹

After the Soviet-Israeli friendship ran aground, the Soviets needed a new partner if they were to establish a presence in the Eastern Mediterranean. Seven years later, after the death of Stalin and the Egyptian revolution had altered the patterns of both Soviet and Egyptian diplomacy,

the U.S.S.R. and Egypt "found" each other and began what turned out to be a mutually advantageous relationship that lasted nearly a score of years. Unlike its brief Israeli predecessor, the Soviet friendship with Egypt established a presence for the Soviet Union in the Middle East which still has an important impact on the region today.

Despite its superficial similarities with the transient ties between the Soviet Union and Israel, the Soviet-Egyptian friendship developed broad and what appeared to be deep interreliance between the two countries. The military relationship, which started with a simple if massive arms deal, grew into a series of connections which ended with Egypt dependent upon weaponry, training, strategic and tactical advice, and physical support from the Soviet military if it was to maintain its aggressive foreign policy stance vis-a-vis Israel.¹⁰ In its turn, the Soviet Union developed a more than passing reliance upon the bases and port facilities which Egypt provided, and to a lesser degree, upon the testing grounds which were provided by the Arab-Israeli wars.

It was the military aspect of the relationship in which Nasser's almost paradoxical ability to garner his needs from the Soviets, despite their own reluctance, was most evident. Perhaps it was because the military situation that Egypt found itself in was so often so precarious, but in the realm of military hardware and aid Nasser always eventually got what he wanted from the Soviets. The massive resupply of

Egypt after the Six Day War and the sophisticated technology with which it was provided in the last stages of the War of Attrition are convincing proofs of Nasser's nonpareil ability to overcome Soviet reticence. Even more persuasive evidence can be adduced from the unparalleled commitment of Soviet combat pilots to Egypt's defense just before Nasser died.

The interdependence which grew out of the ties between the militaries of the Soviet Union and Egypt brought with it from its inception an increase in the diplomatic contacts between the two states. And what started as a simple increase in the level of diplomatic intercourse between the Egyptians and the Soviets soon became much more. With the Suez Canal Crisis of 1956, Soviet political support became an important factor in the success of the political machinations of Egypt. Egyptian support of the U.S.S.R., while a negligible factor in many of the major international contretemps in which the Soviets were involved such as those which followed the crushing of the Hungarian revolt of 1956, the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, and the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, was instrumental in allowing the Soviet Union to cement its presence in the Middle East by aiding the development of Soviet ties with Syria, Libya, and the PLO. In a somewhat different fashion, Soviet-Egyptian friendship was also a factor in the growth of the connections between the Soviet Union and Iraq. Without the prestige of Egypt and that of Nasser himself, the Soviets might never have been able to

break the containment barrier of the West. As a result, it might never have become a factor in the political calculations in the Middle East. It almost certainly would not have become a staunch supporter of Arab nationalism. The Soviet friendship with Egypt, along with the similar relationships which it developed with India and to some extent with Cuba, also aided the Soviet position throughout the developing world by making the Soviets appear to be the friend of the Third World, something which the leaders of those countries felt was important if they were to throw off the colonial yoke¹¹ of the West.

Again, Nasser's extraordinary ability to convince the Soviets to aid him is readily seen in the realm of diplomacy. The high level of Soviet diplomatic support for Egypt after the June war (which rose still further in 1969 when Nasser committed himself to what the Soviets believed was a disastrous course of action, i.e. the War of Attrition) demonstrates the extent to which the Soviets became entangled in Nasser's webs of diplomacy.

The relationship between the Soviet Union and Egypt continued to blossom beyond its military and diplomatic aspects. The connections which had been developed for military and political reasons were soon used to institute wide economic interaction between the two states. Both low interest loans from the U.S.S.R. to Egypt and bilateral trade became important factors in the development of the Egyptian

economy. The rapid development of the Egyptian economy increased the prestige of Nasser and Egypt in the Third World in general and among Arab nations in particular. This, in turn, benefitted the Soviet position in world politics for a plethora of reasons as had Soviet diplomatic support of Egypt.

The low interest economic loans with which the Soviet Union had provided Egypt had helped it to modernize rapidly. They made Egypt, and by extension Nasser's regime, a model of what was needed to throw off the chains of Western imperialism and to develop a strong independent nation. The building of the Aswan Dam was crucial (particularly when combined with Egypt's success in forcing a positive outcome of the Suez crisis) in building an image of a strong, able Arab regime in Egypt which was capable of accomplishing almost anything. After all, hadn't it overcome the military efforts of the West to unseat it and accomplished its most grandiose economic projects despite the "perfidious" attempts of the U.S. and Great Britain to stop it? It was this image which allowed Nasser to overcome the nascent internecine hostilities which plague the Arab world and forge the ill-fated unions with Syria, and with Syria and Iraq. Other later loans helped to broaden this strong, newly visible economic base which had been constructed in Egypt with the help of Soviet loans for the Aswan High Dam.

If Soviet loans were the basis for the construction of

a more modern economy in Egypt, its trade with the Soviet Union was the basis for the exploitation of its new economic strength. Bilateral trade with the Soviet Union posed several problems and provided many benefits for Egypt, many of which were discussed in Chapter IV. Bilateral trade provided only a limited number of commodities available for exchange. It inhibited overall trade expansion by its very nature and occasionally resulted in a glut of Egypt's main money crop, cotton, on the world market when the Soviets resold excess cotton which they had received from Egypt. This caused a drop in world prices and the lowering of Egypt's hard currency income. In general, however, bilateral trade was not a drain on either Egypt's currency reserves or those of the U.S.S.R. In fact, the opposite was true. In the same manner that long term Soviet loans to the Egyptians lowered the outflow of Egypt's hard currency supply, one of the primary benefits of bilateral trade between the Soviets and the Egyptians was its currency saving effect. Trade with the U.S.S.R. was barter trade which ensured that both Egypt and the Soviet Union would be able to save their hard earned currency reserves instead of spending them on trade goods, something that would have been impossible if similar sorts of commerce had been carried on with the West.¹²

Soviet loans to and its trade with Egypt increased over the years. As the economies of the two countries became more intertwined, the Soviet Union became Egypt's main

customer and supplier of goods. The Soviets occasionally helped Nasser's regime to stave off crises in its grain supply by buying excess rice or by providing low cost or even no cost wheat and barley in years of drought and famine. They went so far as to sell Egypt grain at below market prices even when there were major grain shortages in their own nation.

Nasser's ability to manipulate the U.S.S.R. was less apparent in the economic sphere than it was in either diplomacy or in military matters. Perhaps this was so because it was generally less crucial than the military and diplomatic aspects of their relationship. Still, the Soviets did provide Nasser with grain even when there were shortages of grain at home and they did cancel large amounts of Egypt's debt to them when those debts and Egypt's other economic burdens began to approach crisis proportions. As in diplomacy and military interaction, it appears that Nasser could convince the Soviets that in economic affairs their most important mission in the Middle East was to maintain and/or step up their support to him even in situations where it appeared that their short-term interests lay elsewhere.

With the broadening of trade and aid over the years, there came increases in the Soviet-Egyptian tourist trade and in other cultural contacts. Unlike trade, the cultural interaction between the U.S.S.R. and Egypt was subject to the political vicissitudes of their relationship. Because it was

affected by the vagaries of the political situation between Egypt and the Soviet Union, the cultural aspect of their friendship was something of an anomaly. It was also anomalous in that there were few if any negative aspects which were manifest in it for either side. The results of their cultural interaction in fields like ballet, archaeology, physics, drama, and film only benefitted each in the long run.

The anomalies of the cultural relationship between the two countries stemmed mainly from a single factor: it was the facet of their relationship which the two countries valued least. It was the last element of the friendship to develop and the one in which the least time and money were spent upon development. Because it had relatively little intrinsic worth to either Nasser or the Soviet leaders, their cultural interaction became curiously important in the overall relationship. It became the one aspect of their relationship in which the two countries both felt comfortable when they chastised one another in some relatively concrete form. Through cultural interaction, the two nations were able to communicate with each other in a much more tangible manner¹³ than private words between diplomats could achieve. It was also less awkward than more or less public attacks in the presses of the two nations. As a result, it was usually the chosen venue of communication because it was: a) private; and b) palpable.

Because they were a means of communicating displeasure, changes in the cultural aspect of the Soviet-Egyptian relationship was the one in which Nasser was unable to induce the Soviets to accede to his whims when they ran counter to the Soviets' own goals. It also seems to have been the one - and this is not surprising given the lack of intrinsic value of culture in the friendship - in which he made the fewest attempts to do so.

When looked at over the course of nearly two decades, Nasser's ability to control the Soviet-Egyptian relationship is striking. Given the relative might of the two states and Egypt's apparent dependence upon Soviet armaments one almost certainly would have expected the Soviets to be in command of the situation, not the Egyptian leader. Most American politicians and many Western analysts believed that the Soviets were actually the dominant force in the relationship¹⁴ at that time. However, such was not the case. The guiding hand in the relationship was clearly Nasser's despite the heavy dependence of Egypt's economy, its military, and its foreign policy upon Soviet largesse. There are relatively¹⁵ few explanations for the situation which developed. The most sensible seems to be that the Soviet Union was willing to pay heavy costs in terms of time, money, and effort in order to gain a relatively small advantage in its strategic maneuvers for power on the world stage. It was even willing to give up a great deal of control over the way in which its

money and influence was used if that was what was necessary to maintain its advantage over the West in Egypt. Of course, the Soviets did try to attach as many strings to the aid as was possible. Those attempts were, however, ineffective in the relationship as it had developed.

The Soviet Union's behavior in its relationship with Egypt may well present a lesson in power in interstate politics to students of international relations. It would seem from the Soviet-Egyptian case that in a tightly bipolar world such as that which developed after World War II, influence in small states around the world is at a premium. In such a situation, Great Powers often may be willing to give a great deal more money, time, effort, and influence than would otherwise be deemed reasonable in order to gain their requirements. Certainly, American behavior toward dictators like Diem and Thieu in Vietnam, Batista in Cuba, and even the Shah in Iran would seem to confirm that something of the sort may well be true, especially in cases where there is significant competition between the two superpowers for influence. In such instances, maneuvering for power through aid packages reaches the point of diminishing returns. This is because in situations of that sort the small state can successfully play the more powerful nations off on one another, particularly if it is led by an extremely capable politician such as Nasser.

In Egypt's case, its ability to manipulate the Soviet

Union and follow an independent path in both its foreign and domestic affairs was certainly enhanced by the political situation in the Middle East. The region had been polarized by the Arab-Israeli conflict. Nasser's hardline stance on the Palestinian question in its broadest formulation and his determination to avenge Egypt's defeats at the hands of the Israelis helped to bring hostilities to pass even in situations where he did not wish to initiate them. The resulting hostilities brought about crises in Egypt's political life and necessitated further bolstering of Nasser's regime by the Soviet Union because of the perception of its leaders that he was the key to their presence in the Arab world. The need to bolster Nasser was heightened further by the need to offset American and French military sales to Israel. These factors combined with the specter of the return of American influence in Egypt to form a vicious escalating cycle which produced rising levels of arms expenditures and economic support, and ever lessening prospects of political control of Nasser and his policies for the U.S.S.R. and its leaders.

The Soviet willingness to go to great lengths to aid Nasser seems to have been a consciously, albeit reluctantly, accepted commitment. Despite the high costs of their chosen course of action, Soviet leaders seemed to respect Nasser's political acumen. According to Mohammed Heikal, "The Soviets' relations with President Nasser had been very

close: they had had their difficult times together, but there had never been any secrets between them." ¹⁶ Certainly Khrushchev, and later both Brezhnev and Kosygin followed suit, developed a close personal relationship with Egypt's leader.

The relationship between Nasser and the Soviets was close, but as we have seen, it was not always the most cordial of relationships. Storms of political controversy gathered and broke. The conflict over Nasser's suppression of the ECP which erupted between the two allies in November 1958 and lasted until early 1960 is but one example of the great variation that existed in the levels of friendship between the two countries.

The outbreaks of discord, as well as the more common high level of cooperation and cordiality, are important elements in the relationship between the U.S.S.R. and Egypt. No understanding of the growth of Soviet-Egyptian friendship, its role in Middle Eastern and world politics, its effects on each nation involved, and its internal dynamics can be considered complete without taking into account - and explaining the existence of - the conflicts which arose between the two allies.

In one sense explaining the existence of the discord between the Soviet Union and Egypt is easy. Conflict between the two participants is natural in any alliance in

which neither actor is completely dominant. Over the course of decades countless policy decisions are made by both sides. During such an extended period at least a few issues are bound to arise on which the interests of the two nations diverge. This, however, explains very little about their relationship. It is necessary therefore to understand the genesis of the periods of discord.

In the Soviet-Egyptian instance, conflict nearly always arose when the Soviets tried to exert some influence over Egyptian policies of which they disapproved. Their efforts were never successful. The Egyptians, always in control of their situation with regard to the Soviets, continued on their chosen path. The reason that the Egyptians were able to flout Soviet wishes was simple: the arena in which the two were involved was Egypt's home territory. As a result, the U.S.S.R. had no effective means of coercing Egypt into
17
complying with its wishes.

The reasons behind the consistent pattern of resolution to the outbreaks of disharmony between the Soviet Union and Egypt confirm the insights into the relationship between the two states which are presented by Nasser's equally consistent wish to gain what he felt were his needs from the Soviets. The alliance was one from which both sides benefitted. The Egyptians received a large influx of military hardware, as well as training, advice, and limited physical support. They also obtained high levels of economic aid,

a good trading partner, international diplomatic assistance and cultural broadening. They gained the aid of one of the two most powerful nations in the world with only minimal outlays of money and effort and the acceptance on their part of only a few political and economic limitations.

The costs to the Egyptians from their ties with the U.S.S.R. were low in economic terms because what they offered the Soviet Union was intangible. Merely allowing the Soviet Union to establish a presence in the Middle East was Egypt's payment for all of the concrete aid which it received from the Soviet Union. Connections with the Soviet Union presented Moscow with an alliance with the most populous, politically and culturally important, and militarily powerful nation in the Arab world. Even more, Egypt was an advantageously located nation which was anxious to develop, and develop upon progressive, quasi-socialist lines. Beyond the intrinsic value of ties with such a nation, cooperation with, and aid to, Egypt offered the Soviet Union a golden opportunity to escape the "containment barrier" of the West which surrounded it and to extend its international involvement and power over a much broader portion of the world than had theretofore been possible. It allowed Moscow to become intimately and legitimately involved in all sorts of questions - in both the U.N. and other less public forums, such as diplomatic tete-a-tetes with the U.S. - throughout the world in ways that might well have still seemed laughable in other world capitals

in the years immediately following World War II. Given the tremendous advantages which were offered by an alliance with Egypt, it seems to present little wonder that the Soviets allowed Nasser to have the guiding hand in their relationship in order to avoid its loss.

Looked at in this light and in the lights which it shed by the circumstances from which it arose, the development of a close-knit alliance between two such sociopolitically disparate nations as Egypt and the Soviet Union becomes understandable. In fact, given the hostility which the West exhibited toward Egyptian aspirations - in seemingly legitimate instances like N.E.A.C.C.'s refusal to rearm the Egyptians with newer, better, and more numerous weaponry after their war with Israel in 1948-49, in more questionable situations such as the renege on the Aswan loans, and in cases of naked aggression such as the Suez Canal Crisis - it seems that it was the almost inevitable outcome of the political circumstances of the world and the Middle East in the 1950's and 1960's.

Why the relationship developed in the manner in which it did is also easy to comprehend. Given the needs and strengths of both countries, they were ideally mated. Given their arena of action, it is little surprise that Egypt, led by a man as politically astute as Nasser proved himself to be, was dominant in the overwhelming majority of the decisions which involved the two countries.

The relationship between the Soviet Union and Egypt was one of immense value for both participants. It shaped the development of Egypt domestically and internally and the development of the Soviet Union in world affairs. By altering the political futures of these two nations (one the most Arab nation in the world and one of the two most important nations in the Middle East, the other one of the world's two dominant superpowers) the Soviet-Egyptian relationship helped to shape directly the politics and history of the world and its Middle Eastern region for nearly two decades.

Notes (Chapter VI)

- 1) Mohammed Heikal, The Road to Ramadan, p. 67. Nasser was expressing gratitude to the Soviets on the occasion of the deliveries of the first SAM-7 anti-aircraft missiles to Egypt.
- 2) Again the Egyptian entry into the War of Attrition and its suppression of the Communist party at various times are perfect examples.
- 3) By the end of the Nasser period, Soviet-Egyptian cooperation had broadened from its narrow regional focus and begun to operate on extraregional issues. Egypt's recognition of the German Democratic Republic and its support of North Vietnam in its war with the United States are cases in point. For other examples of the sorts of issues that Egypt and the Soviet Union cooperated upon outside of the Middle East, see Alvin Rubinstein's appendices in Red Star on the Nile.
- 4) For a fairly good synopsis of Russia's historical attempts to penetrate into the Middle East, see Aaron Klieman, Soviet Russia and the Middle East (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1970), pp. 27-37.
- 5) For example, in what almost seems to have been a flight of whimsy, Stalin requested a Soviet trusteeship over Libya at the Potsdam Conference. U.S. Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, Conference of Berlin, Vol. II (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960), pp. 253-255 and 264-266. Also see Herbert Feis, Between War and Peace: The Potsdam Conference (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), pp. 307-308.
- 6) Arnold Krammer, The Forgotten Friendship: Israel and the Soviet Bloc, 1947-1953 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), p. 7.
- 7) Ibid, p. 22. Also see Mary Newcomb Allen, The Policy of U.S.S.R. towards the State of Israel, 1948-1958 (London: n.p. [dissertation], 1961) for a good chronological account of early relations between the Soviets and Israel.
- 8) The question of who won the race is still a point of mild contention. Succinctly put, the U.S. was the first state to extend de facto recognition to the Israelis - it did so within fifteen minutes of the Israeli declaration of independence - and the U.S.S.R. was the first to

extend the new Israeli regime de jure recognition. See Krammer, *ibid*, pp. 28-30 and Philip M. Brown, "The Recognition of Israel," The American Journal of International Law, XLII (July, 1948), pp. 621-623.

- 9) In the Israeli case, the arms deal with Czechoslovakia had come through still another party (Nicaraguan leader Anastasio Somoza) before Israel had even become a state. Krammer, *ibid*, p. 59.
- 10) For a summary of the costs of the military relationship to both the Soviets and Egypt, see Chapter II.
- 11) The Soviet concern for the nations of the Third World, like that of most states for one another, was motivated more by self-interest than by altruism. The Soviets clearly believed that by supporting anti-colonialist nationalist movements of the world's developing nations they were weakening the West. That had been a clear theme of Soviet foreign policy in the Middle East and the rest of the world since at least 1956. For a look at its current role in Soviet Middle Eastern policy, see Michael Lenker, "The Effect of the Iran-Iraq War on Soviet Strategy in the Persian Gulf" in Gulf Security and the Iran-Iraq War edited by Thomas Naff (Washington: National Defense University Press, 1985). Whether this goal was being pursued for traditional Great Power motives or for ideological reasons such as weakening the foundation of world capitalism, thus hastening its collapse and the subsequent reorganization of the world along the lines that Marx envisioned, is unimportant from the point of view of this work. What is important is its effect: it helped speed the development of the U.S.S.R. as a world superpower.
- 12) For a discussion of the effects of bilateral trade on Third World nations, see Carole Sawyer, Communist Trade with Developing Countries, 1955-1965 (New York: Preger, 1966), pp. 57-63.
- 13) Egypt's withdrawal of its students from study in the universities of the Soviet Union is an example of how cultural interchange was used as an avenue of communication. In turn, the Soviets used decreases in tourism levels and in cultural contacts to let the Egyptians know that they were pursuing a policy of which the Soviets disapproved.
- 14) Dulles is certainly one example of an American politician who feared that the "red menace" was about to become entrenched in Egypt. His memoirs are filled with foreboding about the prospect. Scholarly work in the West from the fifties, sixties, and seventies is no less

inaccurate in its perception of the nature of the Soviet-Egyptian relationship. See for example, Michel Salomon, Mediterranee Rouge: un nouvelle empire Sovietique? (Paris: Laffont, 1972); Lawrence L. Whetten, The Soviet Presence in the Eastern Mediterranean (New York: National Strategy Information Center, Paper #10, 1971); and Jaan Pennar, "Moscow and Socialism in Egypt," Problems of Communism, Volume XV, #5 (May 1966).

- 15) For instance, Soviet leaders might have been extremely selfless individuals who were willing to give Egypt nearly unlimited amounts of aid out of sheer altruism. They might have been naive blunderers of whom advantage was easily taken. Nasser might have been a political genius who could easily manipulate the leadership of the U.S.S.R. It might have been a fluke brought about by a chance confluence of random events. There is probably a modicum of truth in each of these explanations. It seems likely, however, that the overwhelmingly dominant factor in causing the situation to develop as it did was that the Soviet position was based upon a conscious decision which had been reached from their calculations of the long-term benefits of solid entrenchment in the Middle East.
- 16) Heikal, op cit, p. 113. Khrushchev confirms both the respect and the personal closeness in his memoirs. See Khrushchev Remembers, pp. 435-438.
- 17) The key word is effective. Although the Soviets did have the availability of the threat of an aid cut as a weapon, the Egyptians had several effective counters to such a suggestion, i.e., ejection of Soviet forces from their bases or a turn toward the U.S.

APPENDIX A

Figure # 1. The official trade of the Soviet Union with Egypt, 1917-1971 (millions of rubles).

<u>Year</u>	<u>Imports</u>	<u>Exports</u>	<u>Deficit</u>
1913	30.2	20.7	-9.5
1918	0.0	0.0	0.0
1919	0.0	0.0	0.0
1923/24	7.12	0.551	-6.649
1924/25	21.6	80.0	58.4
1925/26	10.2	92.6	82.4
1926/27	20.5	72.5	52.0
1927/28	33.1	113.6	80.5
1928(Oct.- Dec.)	6.2	35.1	28.9
1929	31.5	76.7	45.2
1930	31.6	64.2	32.6
1931	12.8	69.0	56.2
1932	21.5	3.30	-18.2
1933	14.1	0.0	-14.1
1934	10.8	0.0	-10.8
1935	15.9	0.01	-15.89
1936	11.2	0.0	-11.2
1937	9.36	0.0	-9.36
1938	9.05	0.211	-8.859
1939	1.10	0.001	-1.009
1940	0.675	0.0	-0.675
1946	1.5	0.0	-1.5
1947	3.3	0.0	-3.3
1948	41.6	47.9	6.6
1949	3.5	35.9	32.4
1950	19.3	24.7	5.4
1951	21.8	6.1	-15.7
1952	26.9	27.6	0.7
1953	11.3	10.8	-0.5
1954	7.6	8.0	0.4
1955	9.9	13.8	3.9
1956	34.6	45.3	10.7
1957	74.0	99.8	25.8
1958	78.9	96.4	17.5
1959	79.2	83.4	4.2
1960	62.8	109.2	46.4
1961	97.8	86.6	-11.2
1962	93.0	65.7	-27.3
1963	121.7	111.2	-10.5
1964	140.1	111.2	-28.9
1965	187.8	147.1	-40.7
1966	178.8	135.0	-43.8
1967	253.2	130.6	-122.6
1968	178.2	153.6	-24.6
1969	214.4	205.3	-9.1
1970	326.9	279.5	-47.4
1971	343.2	300.7	-42.5

Sources: Roger A. Clark, Soviet Economic Facts, 1917-1970; and, Vneshniaia Torgovliia (various years).

Figure # 2. Egyptian Armaments as of June 1967.

2410 Tanks, Armored Personnel Carriers, and Assault guns:

Soviet supplied:

350 T-34 medium tanks
500 T-54/55 medium tanks
60 IS-III heavy tanks
150 SU-100 self-propelled guns
1160 BTR-40, BTR-152, and BTR 50(P) Armored Personnel Carriers

Also:

30 Mark 3 Centurion medium tanks
20 AMX 13 light tanks
90 Sherman medium tanks

1,600 artillery pieces

540 field guns
130 medium guns
200 120mm mortars
695 anti-tank guns
a few Snapper (Shmel) anti-tank missile units
some Katyusha-type tactical rocket launchers
a few other tactical surface-to-surface rockets

500 combat aircraft

30 TU-16 medium bombers
40-43 IL-28 light bombers
120-163 MiG-21 C/D interceptors
40-80 MiG-19 all-weather fighters or fighter-bombers
15-55 SU-7 fighter-bombers
100-150 MiG-15 and MiG-17 fighter-bombers
also:
150 SAM-2 Guideline surface-to-air missile installations

Major naval combat vessels

4 "Skoryi" destroyers	5 "Romeo" submarines
8 "S.O. 1" Subchaser/corvettes	6 "W" submarines
8 "OSA" Guided-missile patrol boats	1 "MV" submarine
7 "Komar" Guided-missile patrol boats	36 "P6" Motor torpedo boats
1 "Shershem" Motor torpedo boats	6 "T43" Fleet minesweepers
2 "T301" Inshore minesweepers	
also:	
6 Yugoslav-made motor torpedo boats	4 British-made destroyers

Sources: Jon Glassman, Arms for the Arabs; Wynfred Joshua and Stephen Gilbert, Arms for the Third World; the Military Balance, 1967-1968; and, Edgar O'Ballance The Third Arab-Israeli War.

Figure # 3 Soviet-Western Detente and qualitative changes in Russian military involvement in Egypt and the Middle East, 1953-1974.

<u>Periods of Detente</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Qualitative changes</u>
	1953	
	1954	
Spirit of Geneva	1955	Czech Arms Deal. Provides second-line Soviet equipment and small strategic bombing capability.
	1956	
	1957	
	1958	
	1959	
Spirit of Camp David	1960	
	1961	
	1962	
Post Cuban Missile Crisis/ Test Ban	1963	Provision of first-line Soviet military equipment and enlarged strategic bombing capability
	1964	
	1965	
	1966	
	1967	
	1968	
	1969	
	1970	Commitment of Soviet air-defense personnel
	1971	
Post-XXIV Party Congress	1972	
	1973	Provision of assured penetration strategic weapons and resupply during war
	1974	

Source: Jon Glassman, Arms for the Arabs, p.180.

Figure # 4. Equipment and materials supplied for works being built in Egypt through Soviet assistance, 1955-1972 (millions of U.S. dollars).

<u>Year</u>	<u>1955</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1972</u>
Total expenditures going to Egypt	10.8	68.9	206.4	363.0	287.4
Total machinery	0.04	23.2	136.2	165.3	139.4
Category 16 (project aid)	neg.	17.4	86.0	78.5	*

* Project aid ceased to appear as one of the elements of Soviet-Egyptian trade in Vneshniaia Torgovliia after 1970.

Sources: Vneshniaia Torgovliia SSSR; and Karen Dawisha, Soviet Foreign Policy Towards Egypt.

Figure # 5. Egyptian Trade, 1955-1970 (Millions of U.S. Dollars).

<u>Year</u>	<u>Imports</u>			<u>Exports</u>			<u>Total Trade</u>		
	<u>World</u>	<u>USSR</u>	<u>CPE</u>	<u>World</u>	<u>USSR</u>	<u>CPE</u>	<u>World</u>	<u>USSR</u>	<u>CPE</u>
1955	539	6.63	*	419	20.15	*	957	26.78	*
1956	535	22.64	*	409	16.60	*	944	39.24	*
1957	547	53.38	*	493	99.77	*	1040	142.16	*
1958	667	79.38	*	478	82.05	*	1145	161.44	*
1959	639	85.72	*	461	81.51	*	1099	158.41	*
1960	667	76.90	*	568	88.63	*	1235	165.53	*
1961	701	80.88	*	486	60.73	*	1187	153.79	*
1962	740	60.42	*	398	60.73	*	1138	121.15	*
1963	916	49.08	*	520	101.80	*	1436	150.89	*
1964	953	74.08	*	537	96.37	*	1490	170.45	*
1965	934	84.16	*	604	30.38	*	1538	214.52	*
1966	1070	94.77	*	604	42.55	*	1674	237.73	*
1967	792.00	165.19	323.91	566.12	41.07	276.42	1358.12	306.26	700.32
1968	665.96	106.23	260.72	621.68	74.69	297.81	1286.64	280.92	558.53
1969	637.64	86.48	195.69	745.05	246.17	392.88	1382.68	332.65	588.58
1970	786.60	95.56	242.54	761.71	281.61	448.76	1548.31	377.17	691.20

Source: U.N. Statistical Trade Yearbook (applicable years)

Figure # 6. Soviet Trade, 1955-1970 (millions of U.S. dollars).

<u>Imports</u>	<u>1955</u>	<u>1956</u>	<u>1957</u>	<u>1958</u>	<u>1959</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>1962</u>	<u>1963</u>
Developed Market Economies	430	*	*	610	710	1168	1050	1270	1270
Centrally Planned Economies	2289	*	*	3200	3780	3817	3850	4310	4720
Developing Market Economies	185	*	*	325	425	638	710	710	730
Egypt	15	26	90	92	83	121	87	66	111
World	3061	3264	3639	4140	4930	5623	5610	6290	6840

* Figures not kept for 1956 & 1957

	<u>1964</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1966</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1972</u>
Developed Market Economies	1750	1919	1720	1870	2190	2540	3070	4472
Centrally Planned Economies	4890	5074	4860	5350	5880	6290	6862	9699
Developing Market Economies	850	638	1060	1060	1060	1220	1788	1857
Egypt	111	163	135	131	154	229	311	299
World	7590	8057	7640	9280	9110	10050	11719	13753

Figure # 6 (continued).

<u>Exports</u>	<u>1955</u>	<u>1956</u>	<u>1957</u>	<u>1958</u>	<u>1959</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>1962</u>	<u>1963</u>
Developed Market Economies	553	*	*	760	940	1069	1130	1220	1360
Centrally Planned Economies	2723	*	*	3090	4080	4000	4470	4600	4900
Developing Market Economies	91	*	*	450	425	970	1350	1300	1320
Egypt	11	23	53	79	79	70	98	93	122
World	3468	3610	4390	4300	5440	5559	6000	7030	7270

* Figures not kept for 1956 & 1957

	<u>1964</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1966</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1971</u>
Developed Market Economies	1460	1639	2000	2230	2420	2580	2717	3080
Centrally Planned Economies	4900	5031	5180	5530	6220	6810	7389	8023
Developing Market Economies	1320	1496	1660	1880	2000	2260	2682	2002
Egypt	140	209	188	179	253	239	363	321
World	7680	8166	8840	9650	10630	11660	12787	15631

Sources: Karen Dawisha, Soviet Foreign Policy Towards Egypt; U.N. Statistical Trade Yearbook (various years)

Figure # 7. Egyptian Book and Film Imports (Tons).

<u>Year</u>	<u>Books (USSR)</u>	<u>Films (USSR)</u>	<u>Books (US & UK)</u>	<u>Films (US & UK)</u>
1956	4	640	244	16120
1959	5	2031	151	9076
1962	11	1061	127	8502
1966	n.a.	n.a.	166	18000

Sources: Karen Dawisha, Soviet Foreign Policy Towards Egypt; and, R.D McLaurin, The Middle East in Soviet Foreign Policy.

Figure # 8. Egyptian Students abroad (1959-1972).

<u>Year</u>	<u>USSR</u>	<u>UK</u>	<u>US</u>	<u>Total (USSR, UK, & US)</u>	<u>At Home</u>
1959	138	725	577	1440	92941
1961	240	923	344	1507	107789
1963	240	1217	452	1909	145651
1965	240	1059	426	1733	177123
1966	203	993	328	1524	179100
1969	450	1015	178	1643	197055
1972	1351	1148	362	2801	272259

Sources: Karen Dawisha, Soviet Foreign Policy Towards Egypt; R.D. McLaurin, The Middle East in Soviet Policy; and, Charles B. McLane, Soviet-Middle Eastern Relations.

Figure # 9. Major cultural missions exchanged between the USSR and Egypt, 1952-1970 (number per year).

<u>Year</u>	<u>Soviet to Egypt</u>	<u>Egyptian to the USSR</u>	<u>Total</u>
1952	0	0	0
1953	0	0	0
1954	0	0	0
1955	2	1	3
1956	1	2	3
1957	3	2	5
1958	1	8	9
1959	1	2	3
1960	1	0	1
1961	2	0	2
1962	1	2	3
1963	5	2	7
1964	2	0	2
1965	0	0	0
1966	3	0	3
1967	2	3	5
1968	3	5	8
1969	4	13	17
1970	12	9	21

Sources: Charles B. McLane, Soviet-Middle Eastern Relations; Robert Slusser & Jan Triska, A Calendar of Soviet Treaties, 1917-1957; Robert Slusser & George Ginsburgs, A Calendar of Soviet Treaties, 1957-1973; Alvin Z. Rubinstein, Red Star on the Nile; and Sbornik deistvuiushchikh dogorov, soglashenii i konventsii, zakliuchennykh SSSR s inostrannymi gosudarstvami (various years).

Figure # 10. Soviet Tourists in Egypt, 1955-1970.*

Year	# of Soviet tourists crossing Egyptian borders
1955	*
1956	744
1957	1074
1958	2678
1959	1798
1960	*
1961	*
1962	*
1963	*
1964	*
1965	*
1966	*
1967	*
1968	9034
1969	12838
1970	*

* Figures for Soviet tourists entering Egypt are only infrequently available. Usually Soviets entering Egypt are classified as visitors from "other countries" by the Egyptian government. Although they are sketchy the figures which are available do seem to show the expected overall rising trend and they also seem to be reflective of changes in the level of cordiality in the relationship between the U.S.S.R. and Egypt (e.g., The decrease in Soviet tourism in 1959 would be the expected result of the increased hostility which followed Nasser's suppression of the ECP in late 1958 and 1959. The rising rate of tourism in 1968 and 1969 would seem to be indicative of the high level of cooperation which followed the June 1967 between Israel and the Arab nations).

Sources: United Arab Republic State Tourist Administration, Trends of the Travel Movement (Cairo: U.A.R. Tourist Administration, 1960); and International Travel Statistics (London: International Union of Official Travel Organizations, 1953-1971).

APPENDIX B: MAPS

EGYPT AND THE SOVIET UNION

MAP 1

BIBLIOGRAPHY

DICTIONARIES AND ENCYCLOPEDIAS

- Bolshaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia, Vol. 10 (Moscow: Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia, 1972)
- Malaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia, 10 volumes (Moscow: Bolshaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia, 1958-1962)
- Goode's World Atlas (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1978)
- Who's Who in the Arab World, 1971-1972 (Beirut: Publitec Publications, n.d.)
- Who's Who in the Arab World, 1967-1968 (Beirut: Les Editions Publitec, n.d.)
- Who's Who in the USSR, 1961-1962 (New York: The Scarecrow Press, 1962)
- Who's Who in the USSR, 1965-1966 (London: The Scarecrow Press, 1966)

STATISTICAL COLLECTIONS

- Clark, Roger A. Soviet Economic Facts, 1917-1970 (New York: Wiley and Sons, 1972)
- International Trade Statistics (London: International Union of Official Travel Organizations, 1953-71)
- Jane's Fighting Ships 1967/68 (London: Jane's, 1967)
- The Military Balance, 1967-1968 (London: The Institute for Strategic Studies, 1968)
- Sel'skoe Khoziaistvo SSSR: Statisticheskii Sbornik (Moscow: Statistika, 1971)
- Strategic Survey 1970 (London: The Institute, 1975)
- The U.A.R. Yearbook, 1954-1972 (Cairo: Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics, 1952-1973)
- Trends of the Travel Movement (Cairo: United Arab Republic State Tourism Administration, 1960)
- U.N. Monthly Bulletin of Statistics, 1955-1972 (New York: United Nations Press, 1955-1972)

U.N. Yearbook of International Trade Statistics, 1954-1971
(New York: United Nations Press, 1955-1972)

Vneshniaia Torgovliia (Moscow: Vneshtorgizdat, 1954-1971)

DOCUMENTS AND DOCUMENTARY SURVEYS

DeGras, Jane. Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy (London: Oxford University Press, 1951-1953)

DeGras, Jane. The Communist International, 1919-1943
(London: Oxford University Press, 1956-1965)

Eudin, Xenia Joukoff and Robert North. Soviet Russia and the East, 1920-1927: A Documentary Survey (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957)

Nasser, Gamel Abdel. Addresses, 1963-1968 (Cairo: Information Department, 1963-1968)

R'oi, Yaacov. From Encroachment to Involvement: A Documentary Study of Soviet Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1973 (New York: Wiley, 1974)

Republique Arabe Unie. Encyclopedie Politique Arabe: Documents et Notes (Le Care: Centre de Documentation et Recherche, Service de L'Etat Pour L'Information, 1969)

Sbornik deistvuiushchikh dogorov, soglashenii i knoventsii, zakliuchennykh SSSR s inostrannymi gosudarstvami, vyp. xv - vyp. xxvii (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1956-1974)

Slusser, Robert and George Ginsburgs. A Calendar of Soviet Treaties, 1958-1973 (Rockville, MD: Sitjen & Nordhoff, 1981)

Slusser, Robert and Jan Triska. A Calendar of Soviet Treaties, 1917-1957 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959)

Summary of World Broadcasts: The Middle East & Africa [SWB]
(London: British Broadcasting Service, 1965-1970)

The Suez Canal Problem, July 26 - September 22, 1956
(Washington: United States Department of State, 1956)

U.N. Treaty Series (New York: United Nations Press, 1956-1973)

U.S. Department of State. Foreign Relations of the United States: Conference of Berlin, Volumes I & II
(Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960)

MEMOIRS, AUTOBIOGRAPHIES, AND FIRST HAND ACCOUNTS

- Dulles, John Foster. War or Peace (New York: Macmillan, 1957)
- Eden, Anthony. Full Circle (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960)
- Georges-Picot, Jacques. The Real Suez Canal Crisis (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanich, 1978)
- Heikal, Mohammed. "Egyptian Foreign Policy", Foreign Affairs Vol. 56, #4 (Fall 1978)
- Heikal, Mohammed. The Sphinx and the Commissar (New York: Harper & Row, 1978)
- Heikal, Mohammed. The Cairo Documents (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1973)
- Heikal, Mohammed. The Road to Ramadan (New York: Quadrangle, 1975)
- Khrushchev, Nikita S. Khrushchev Remembers (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1970)
- Nasser, Gamel Abdel. "The Egyptian Revolution", Foreign Affairs, Volume 33, #2 (January, 1955)
- Neguib, Mohammed. Egypt's Destiny (London: Gollancz, 1955)
- Nutting, Anthony. No End of a Lesson (New York: Potter, 1967)
- Nutting, Anthony. Nasser (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1972)
- Pineau, Christian. Suez, 1956 (Paris: Laffont, 1976)
- Sadat, Anwar. In Search of an Identity: An Autobiography (New York: Harper & Row, 1978)
- Sadat, Anwar. Those I Have Known (New York: Continuum, 1984)

BOOKS AND MONOGRAPHS

- Allen, Mary Newcomb. The Policy of the U.S.S.R. Towards the State of Israel, 1948-1958 (London: n.p. [dissertation], 1961)
- Andashev, V. and P. Ogloblin. Soviet-Arab Friendship: What it Means in Practice (Moscow: Novosti, 1972)
- Barghoorn, Frederick C. Soviet Foreign Propaganda (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964)
- Becker, Abraham S. and A. L. Horelick. Soviet Policy in the Middle East (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, 1970)
- Becker, Abraham S. The Super Powers in the Arab-Israeli Conflict (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, 1973)
- Beloff, Max. The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia, 1929-1941, 2 volumes (London: Oxford University Press, 1947-1949)
- Berliner, Joseph S. Soviet Economic Aid (New York: Praeger, 1958)
- Borkenau, Franz. History of the Communist International (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1962)
- Carter, James Richard. The Net Cost of Soviet Aid (New York: Praeger, 1969)
- Confino, Michel and Shimon Shamir. The U.S.S.R. and the Middle East (Jerusalem: Israel University Press, 1973)
- Cooper, Chester L. The Lion's Last Roar: Suez, 1956 (New York: Harper & Row, 1978)
- Dawisha, Karen. Soviet Foreign Policy Towards Egypt (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981)
- Dekmejian, R. Hrair. Egypt Under Nasir (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1971)
- Donovan, John. U.S. & Soviet Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1956 (New York: Facts on File, 1972)
- El-Barawy, Rashid. The Military Coup in Egypt (Cairo: Renaissance Book Club, 1952)
- Feis, Herbert. Between War and Peace: The Potsdam Conference (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960)

- Fletcher, William. Religion and Soviet Foreign Policy (London: Oxford University Press, 1972)
- Freedman, Robert O. Soviet Foreign Policy in the Middle East Since 1970 (New York: Praeger, 1975)
- Glassman, Jon. Arms For the Arabs (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1975)
- Golan, Galia. Soviet Involvement in the Middle East (Jerusalem: Achua Cooperative Press, 1971)
- Goldman, Marshall. Soviet Foreign Aid (New York: Praeger, 1967)
- Gorbatov, O. M. and L. Ia Cherkassikii. Sotrudnichestvo SSSR so stranami Arabskogo vostoka i Afriki (Moscow: Nauka, 1973)
- Gould-Adams, Richard. John Foster Dulles: A Reappraisal (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1962)
- Govrin, Yosef. Israel-Soviet Relations: 1964-1966 (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Research Paper #29, 1978)
- Haimson, Leopold. The Russian Marxists and the Rise of Bolshevism (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955)
- Hitti, Phillip K. History of the Arabs (London: MacMillan, 1970)
- Hunter, Robert. The Soviet Dilemma in the Middle East (London: Institute for Strategic Studies, 1969)
- Hurewitz, J. C., ed. Soviet-American Rivalry in the Middle East (New York: Praeger, 1969)
- Israeli Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The USSR and Arab Belligerency (Jerusalem: Information Division, Israeli Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 1967)
- Israeli Ministry of Defense. The Six-Day War (Tel Aviv: Israeli Ministry of Defense Publishing, 1967)
- Joshua, Wynfred and Stephen Gilbert. Arms for the Third World (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1969)
- Joshua, Wynfred. Soviet Penetration into the Middle East (New York: National Strategic Information Center, 1971)
- Kabbara, Mahmoud Farouk. Abd Al-Nasir's Egypt and the Soviet

Union: An Egyptian View, 1952-1970: The Impact of Differences Between Arab Socialist and Marxist-Leninist Ideologies (Tucson: n.p. [dissertation], 1981)

Kass, Ilana. Soviet Involvement in the Middle East: Policy Formulation, 1966-1973 (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1978)

Kiernan, Thomas. The Arabs (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1975)

Klieman, Aaron. Soviet Russia & the Middle East (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1970)

Krammer, Arnold. The Forgotten Friendship: Israel and the Soviet Bloc, 1947-1953 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974)

Lacouture, Jean. Nasser (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1971)

Laqueur, Walter Z. The Struggle for the Middle East (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972)

Laqueur, Walter Z. Communism & Nationalism in the Middle East (New York: Praeger, 1956)

Laqueur, Walter Z. The Soviet Union and the Middle East (New York: Praeger, 1959)

Laqueur, Walter Z., ed. The Middle East in Transition (New York: Praeger, 1958)

Lederer, Ivo and Wayne Vucinich, eds. The Soviet Union and the Middle East (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1974)

Lenczowski, George. Soviet Advances in the Middle East (Washington: American Enterprise Institute for Policy Research, 1972)

Lenin, V.I. Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii, 56 volumes (Moscow: Gospolizdat, 1958-1978)

Lockwood, David. The Black Coated Worker: A Study in Class Consciousness (London: Allen & Unwin, 1958)

Love, Kennet. Suez: The Twice Fought War (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969)

Mansfield, Peter. Nasser's Egypt (Baltimore: Penguin, 1965)

Marlowe, John. A History of Modern Egypt and Anglo-Egyptian Foreign Relations (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books,

1965)

- McLane, Charles B. Soviet-Middle Eastern Relations (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973)
- McLaurin, R. D. The Middle East in Soviet Policy (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1975)
- Muller, Kurt. The Foreign Aid Program of the Soviet Bloc and Communist China: An Analysis (New York: Walker & Co., 1967)
- Naff, Thomas, ed. Gulf Security and the Iran-Iraq War (Washington: National Defense University Press, 1985)
- Neff, Donald. Warriors at Suez (New York: The Linden Press, 1981)
- Nove, Alec and Desmond Donnelly. Trade with Communist Countries (London: Hutchinson, 1960)
- O'Ballance, Edgar. The Third Arab-Israeli War (London: Faber, 1972)
- O'Ballance, Edgar. The Electronic War in the Middle East, 1968-1970 (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1974)
- Ponomarev, Boris. History of Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-1970, 2 volumes (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974)
- R'oi, Yaacov and David Ronel. The Soviet Economic Presence in Egypt and its Political Implications (Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Research Paper #9, 1974)
- R'oi, Yaacov and Ilana Dimant-Kass. The Soviet Military Involvement in Egypt, January 1970-July 1972 (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Research Paper #6, 1974)
- Ra'anan, Uri. The USSR Arms the Third World (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969)
- Robertson, Terence. Crisis: The Story of the Suez Conspiracy (New York: Atheneum, 1965)
- Rubinstein, Alvin Z. Red Star on the Nile (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977)
- Rubinstein, Alvin Z., ed. Soviet and Chinese Influence in the Third World (New York: Praeger, 1975)

- Safran, Nadav. From War to War: The Arab-Israeli Confrontation, 1948-1967 (New York: Pegasus, 1969)
- Salomon, Michel. Mediterranee Rouge: un nouvelle empire Sovietique? (Paris: Laffont, 1972)
- Smolansky, Oles M. The Soviet Union and the Arab East under Khrushchev (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1974)
- Spector, Ivar. The Soviet Union and the Muslim World, 1917-1958 (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1959)
- St. John, Robert. The Boss (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960)
- Stephens, Robert. Nasser: A Political Biography (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1971)
- Stokke, Baard. Soviet and Eastern Trade and Aid in Africa (New York: Praeger, 1967)
- Tatu, Michel. Power in the Kremlin (New York: Viking Press, 1969)
- Teller, Judd L. The Kremlin, The Jews, and the Middle East (New York: Yosseloff, 1957)
- The Policy of the Soviet Union in the Arab World (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973)
- Thomas, Hugh. Suez (New York: Harper & Row, 1967)
- U.S. Congress, Subcommittee on Foreign Economic Policy of the Joint Committee. New Directions in the Soviet Economy, 89th Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, 1966)
- USSR and Countries of Africa (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1980)
- Ulam, Adam. Expansion and Coexistence: A History of Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-1973 (New York: Praeger, 1975)
- Ushakova, N. A. Arabskaia Respublika Egipet: Sotrudnichestvo so stranami sotsializma ekonomicheskoe razvitiie, 1952-1972 gg (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1974)
- Valkenier, Elizabeth Krindl. The Soviet Union and the Third World: An Economic Bind (New York: Praeger, 1983)
- Whetten, Lawrence L. The Soviet Presence in the Eastern Mediterranean (New York: National Strategy Information

Center, Paper #10, 1971)

Yahya, Ali M. Egypt and the Soviet Union: A Study in the Power of the Small State (Bloomington: n.p. [dissertation], 1981)

Yodfat, Aryeh. Arab Politics in the Soviet Mirror (Jerusalem: Israel University Press, 1973)

PERIODICALS AND PERIODICAL ARTICLES

Bissel, Richard E. "Soviet Use of Proxies in the Third World: The Case of Yemen", Soviet Studies, Volume XXX, #1 (January 1978)

Brown, Philip M. "The Recognition of Israel", The American Journal of International Law XLII (July 1948)

Chubin, Shahram. "The Soviet Union and Iran", Foreign Affairs, Volume 61, #4 (Fall 1983)

Current Digest of the Soviet Press, Volumes 4-23 (New York: Joint Committee on Slavic Studies, 1952-1972)

"Differing Views on the UAR", Mizan Newsletter, Volume 10, #4 (April 1968)

Izvestia (Moscow: Izvestia, 1955-1971)

Krasnaia Zvezda (Moscow: Krasnaia Zvezda, 1964-1971)

London Daily Telegraph (London: Daily Telegraph, 1956)

Middle East Journal (Washington: Middle East Institute, 1954-1972)

Middle Eastern Affairs (New York: Council for Middle Eastern Affairs, 1952-1956)

Mikhailov, A. "An Important Milestone in Egypt's History", International Affairs #8 (August 1977)

Mirskii, Georgi. "The UAR Reforms", New Times, #4 (January 1962)

Mizan Newsletter (London: Central Asian Research Centre, 1958-1970)

Mizan Newsletter Supplement A, 1966 (London: Central Asian Research Centre, 1966)

New York Times (New York: New York Times, 1955-1971)

Ofer, Gur. "The Economic Burden of Soviet Involvement in the Middle East", Soviet Studies, Volume 24, #3 (January 1973)

Pajak, Roger F. "Soviet Arms and Egypt", Survival, Volume XVIII, #4 (July-August 1975)

Pennar, Jaan. "Moscow and Socialism in Egypt", Problems in Communism, Volume XV, #5 (May 1966)

Ponomarev, Boris. "O gosudarstve natsionalnoi demokratii", Kommunist, Volume XXXVIII, #8 (May 1961)

Pravda (Moscow: Pravda, 1955-1971)

Qureshi, Yasmin. "A Review of Soviet-Egyptian Relations", Pakistan Horizon, Volume 35, #1 (Spring 1982)

Roberts, Cynthia. "Soviet Arms-Transfer Policy and the Decision to Upgrade Syrian Air Defenses", Survival, Volume XXV, #4 (July-August 1983)

Sergeev, V. "Sovetskii Soiuz i Razvivaiushchiesia Strany", Mezhdunarodnaia Zhizn', Volume 18, #4 (April 1971)

Singh, K. R. "Soviet-UAR Relations", India Quarterly: A Journal of International Affairs, Volume 25, #2 (Summer 1969)

Smolansky, Oles. "Moscow-Cairo Crisis, 1959", Slavic Review, Volume XXII, #4 (December 1963)

Trud (Moscow: Trud, 1958-1971)

Yodfat, A. Y. "Arms and Influence in Egypt - the Record of Soviet Military Assistance Since June 1967", New Middle East, #10 (July 1969)