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# The Struggle over Arab Hegemony after the Suez Crisis

ELIE PODEH

Since the Suez affair Nasser, the Egyptian president, has become something of a myth in the eyes of the public and scholars alike. Consequently, the facts concerning his political victories have, at times, been blurred by the magnitude of his image.<sup>1</sup> The material recently released in Western archives reveals that although he eventually established himself as the pre-eminent leader of the Arab world, this was achieved only after a fierce battle in regional Arab politics. The long-standing struggle between Egypt and Iraq over Arab hegemony did not peter out after the Suez Crisis, as some scholars have claimed; rather the old ruling oligarchy in Iraq temporarily succeeded in overcoming the internal strife, and re-asserting its dominance in Arab politics. The foundation of 'the Royalist coalition' (including Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Jordan) in 1957 was mainly directed against Nasser's rising prestige. However, the merger between Egypt and Syria in February 1958 – the United Arab Republic (UAR) – heralded a complete triumph for his brand of Arab nationalism, thus ensuring his superiority in the Arab world. The purpose of this article, then, is to analyze the struggle for Arab hegemony and to shed a new light on the fluctuations in regional Arab politics from the Suez Crisis until the establishment of the UAR.

The future of the Baghdad Pact was the main focus of the struggle between Egypt and Iraq before the Suez Crisis. On 24 February 1955, Iraq and Turkey signed a military pact, which served as the basis for the formation of the Baghdad Pact, including also Britain, Pakistan and Iran.<sup>2</sup> Originally, the pact was part of a Western build-up (in conjunction with NATO and SEATO), designed to protect the Middle East from the Soviet menace. However, Nasser, who saw Iraq's leading role in the pact as a challenge to Egypt's hegemony, relentlessly attempted to dissuade the Arab states from adhering to it. In the struggle which ensued between Iraq and Egypt, the latter succeeded in winning over Syria and Saudi Arabia; Syria vacillated for a short period before yielding to Egyptian pressure; Saudi Arabia enthusiastically supported Egypt, owing to the age-old rivalry between the Hashemites and the Saudis. Although Egypt

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succeeded in crystallizing a camp which opposed Iraq's role in the Baghdad Pact, she failed to establish a rival Arab pact, which would isolate Iraq. Thus Nasser had to content himself with signing interlocking military agreements with Syria and Saudi Arabia during October 1955.

Meanwhile, Britain and Iraq tried to persuade Jordan to join the Baghdad Pact. Such a venture – so it was hoped – would tip the scales in favour of Iraq, and stimulate other Arab states to follow suit. The struggle reached its climax in December 1955, when Britain and Iraq pressed King Husayn not to succumb to the Egyptian and Saudi pressure but to stick to his former decision to join the pact. The riots which spread across Jordan, hotted up by the Egyptian media and Saudi money, convinced Husayn that by adhering to the pact he would seal his own fate. His refusal proved to be a fateful turning point for the Baghdad Pact; for, even though the struggle in the Arab world over the pact did not cease, it was clear that no Arab state would dare join it. The Jordanian episode led to the isolation of Iraq, leaving her to face the tripartite coalition, while Jordan and Lebanon were straddling the fence. Yet, while the Egyptian-Syrian bond was slowly tightening, the Egyptian-Saudi axis was gradually disintegrating owing to the different nature of the two regimes. With Western encouragement, Iraq attempted to erode Nasser's influence by detaching Saudi Arabia from Egypt; however, the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company temporarily suspended this process, and ushered in a new era in inter-Arab relations.

Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal Company, on 26 July 1956, perceived as a victory of Arab nationalism over Western imperialism, was received with great enthusiasm throughout the Arab world. Syria was quick to call for a meeting of the Arab League political committee in order to obtain a declaration of unequivocal support for Egypt's action.<sup>3</sup> Iraq was the only Arab state to oppose vehemently the Syrian initiative; ironically, the news of the nationalization reached King Faysal and Nuri al-Said, as they were dining with the British Prime Minister, Anthony Eden. Nuri's spontaneous reaction, recorded by Hugh Thomas, the *Sunday Times*' correspondent, was 'hit him, hit him hard and hit him now'.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, Nuri perceived the nationalization as an excellent pretext for the British to eliminate the Egyptian leader,<sup>5</sup> but he was forced to yield to public opinion in the Arab world. Accordingly, the Iraqi cabinet issued a public statement declaring, *inter alia*, that the nationalization was Egypt's 'indisputable right', and expressed its hope for a reasonable settlement of the dispute.<sup>6</sup>

While Syria was exerting its efforts to convene the Arab League, Nuri was furiously working to undermine Syria's draft proposal.<sup>7</sup> His diplomatic skill was indeed manifested by his success in convincing Lebanon,

Saudi Arabia, Libya and Sudan to accept a more moderate resolution.<sup>8</sup> Considering the circumstances, the Political Committee's resolution, on 12 August was an impressive victory for Iraq: first, the Syrian proposal which was supported, if not initiated, by Nasser, was successfully blocked; second, the resolution did not explicitly support the nationalization, but expressed general support for Egypt's policy; and, finally, even if the severance of diplomatic relations with the West, and the imposition of an embargo, were discussed in the proceedings, these proposals were excluded from the final resolution.<sup>9</sup> This compromise satisfied both Egypt, enabling her to claim 'wide Arab support', as well as Iraq, which was not compelled to pay more than lip service to Egypt.<sup>10</sup>

On 16 August Eden opened the London Conference, convened by the Western powers, in order to find a diplomatic solution to the nationalization crisis. The Arab world noted it with five minutes of silence in protest and a general strike. The protest was meant to express their contempt for what Nasser called an 'imperialist conspiracy against freedom'.<sup>11</sup> This unprecedented demonstration of solidarity was a genuine expression of the widespread support Nasser enjoyed among the masses. Another expression of support was the creation of the 'Arab Syrian Committee for Aiding Egypt', formed by representatives from various political parties in Syria to coordinate aid for Egypt.<sup>12</sup> The committee invited delegations from different Arab organizations and political parties, who supported the Egyptian nationalization, to attend a conference in Damascus. The assembly, which met on 18 September in the Syrian Parliament building, chose the Lebanese Hamid Franjeh as its president, and decided to open branches in the Arab states, with a central liaison committee in Cairo. With the exception of declarations supporting Egypt, the conference did not achieve much else.<sup>13</sup>

In contrast to the vast support of the Arab masses, most of the leaders saw the nationalization as a dire threat to the stability of their regimes; yet, while they could hardly express any criticism publicly, they denounced Nasser's move behind the scenes. The most vehement opposition, as was to be expected, came from Nuri and the Royal Palace. Great anxiety concerning the Egyptian president's rising prestige was also expressed by King Saud, President Chamoun and to a lesser extent by King Husayn; even Quwatly, Egypt's staunchest ally, seemed to be occasionally dissatisfied with Nasser's independent decisions. This contradiction was a permanent feature of Arab politics: Arab rulers were forced to respond to public opinion by an overt expression of solidarity with Egypt, even though it undermined their own interests; these leaders were apprehensive lest the waves of enthusiasm would stimulate radical Arab nationalism, which would lead to their downfall. Thus, 'the power-

ful wave of Arab support for Egypt', as it is often portrayed by scholars,<sup>14</sup> was not joined by all Arab rulers.

The reluctance of Nuri and the Palace to accept any compromise with Egypt was unequivocally expressed to British officials; the key sentence frequently repeated was that Nasser should not 'get away with it', or rather, be able to 'save his face'. There was no room for compromise, as this was the last possible ditch: 'Either Nasser was successful and British influence and Nuri were lost for ever,' concluded the British Chargé, 'or Nasser was got rid of and we and Nuri succeeded.'<sup>15</sup> The issue at stake was not just the fate of the Baghdad Pact, or the leadership of the Arab world, but the very survival of the Iraqi ruling elite and British influence. Nuri emphatically claimed that the operation against Nasser should be 'swift, short and successful'. He argued that Nasser was profiting from the passage of time as the possibility of a military response was gradually decreasing. He added that if the Egyptian president were to reject the proposals offered by the London Conference then Britain should resort to force (with or without the United States), and compel him either to surrender or to wage war. Nuri and the Minister of Interior were convinced that if force were applied against Egypt, they would be able to maintain internal order by imposing martial law.<sup>16</sup>

Nuri's interventions were not confined solely to Britain; he also attempted to diminish Nasser's stature in the Arab world by detaching Saudi Arabia from Egypt, and by drawing Jordan closer to Iraq. The idea of detaching Saudi Arabia from Egypt was proposed by the State Department as early as March 1956. The underlying assumption was that Egypt's ties with the Soviet Union, coupled with the disturbing influence of Arab nationalism, would create a solid basis for cooperation between Iraq and Saudi Arabia.<sup>17</sup> The nationalization gave greater impetus to the Iraqi-Saudi *rapprochement*, which had begun in spring 1956. Although Saud was compelled to support publicly Nasser's move, he was irritated by the decision which, in contrast to their military agreement, had not been coordinated with him. As Saud was dependent on Western aid, he was anxious lest the nationalization force him to support Egypt against the West.<sup>18</sup> Nuri, quick to take advantage of the widening rift between Saudi Arabia and Egypt, dispatched the Amir Zayd, Iraq's Ambassador in London, to Riyadh.<sup>19</sup> Sending Zayd, the fourth and only surviving son of King Husayn, who was evicted by the Saudis from the Hijaz, was intended to open a new era between the two dynasties.<sup>20</sup> The Iraqi-Saudi *rapprochement* was further consolidated after the meeting between the two kings in Dammam in September 1956. During the deliberations, Saud promised the young King Faysal of Iraq not to be drawn into hostilities against the West, nor to rely on 'dictators and presidents', but

rather to base his future policy on 'cooperation with the sister monarchy, Iraq'.<sup>21</sup> As soon as Faysal concluded the visit, the Syrian and Egyptian presidents unexpectedly arrived in Riyadh.<sup>22</sup> The timing of their visit was carefully planned; it was undoubtedly intended to diminish the tremendous impact of the meeting between the two kings; indeed, as the British Ambassador in Jedda, Parkes, lamented: 'I am afraid that the good effect from King Faisal's visit, if not entirely lost, was heavily overlaid.'<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, the meeting between Faysal and Saud was a handsome victory for Iraq, and later served as the basis for the Royalist axis in inter-Arab politics.

Simultaneously, Iraq attempted to patch up the differences with its fellow Hashemite state – Jordan. The latter's refusal to join the Baghdad Pact (December 1955), and its insistence on maintaining a neutral position in the Arab world, had soured relations between the two states, while a major obstacle for improving the relations was the amount of military and financial aid Iraq was willing to allocate to Jordan.<sup>24</sup> The nationalization, however, made Iraq more forthcoming in her willingness to aid Jordan; thus, when Husayn, alarmed by Israel's latest incursions into his territory, invited on 14 September 1956 an Iraqi division, his request met with approval.<sup>25</sup> Although the reply was considered an expression of Arab solidarity against the common enemy, Nuri made it plain to Israel through Wright, the British ambassador in Baghdad, that his primary goal was to detach Husayn from Nasser.<sup>26</sup> The Israeli Foreign Ministry estimated, therefore, that the dispatch of Iraqi forces was 'initially to prevent Egyptian domination of Jordan, and, at a later stage, to draw her into the Baghdad Pact'.<sup>27</sup> Nasser, however, was not deceived: in his conversation with Hare, the American ambassador, he remarked that he did not believe that the entrance of the Iraqi forces was aimed at defending Jordan from Israel, but part of a combined British-Iraqi conspiracy to detach Jordan from Egypt.<sup>28</sup> Despite the favourable Iraqi response, the negotiations with Jordan were stalled over the question of the expeditionary force's command. Consequently, Abd al-Ilah left for Amman on 14 October; his arrival, no doubt, was a genuine expression of Iraq's concern over the Jordanian question. Eventually, Jordan withdrew her request, as it was agreed that the Iraqi forces would stay near the Jordanian frontier, and move in only if Jordan were attacked and upon her formal request.<sup>29</sup>

As soon as the Israeli forces invaded Sinai, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Jordan offered Egypt military support. While expressing his appreciation, Nasser, who had already ordered his troops to retreat from Sinai, declined the offer, fearing that it might serve as a pretext for the Western powers to invade Syria, and to inflict further humiliation. The Egyptian

president preferred Quwatly to proceed with his planned visit to Moscow (1–3 November) in order to ensure Soviet assistance, if that should be required.<sup>30</sup> However, when the transmitters of *Sawt Al-Arab*, the main Egyptian propaganda station, were destroyed by the British Royal Air Force, Radio Damascus replaced the Egyptian Radio.<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile, in response to a formal invitation, Syrian, Saudi, and Iraqi units entered Jordan in order to protect her from a possible Israeli attack. In addition, Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia severed their diplomatic relations with Britain and France.

The main focus of criticism in the Arab world during and after the war was Iraq. From the beginning of the war, anti-Western demonstrations were held in Syria and Jordan, calling on Iraq to withdraw from the Baghdad Pact and demanding Nuri's resignation. The new Jordanian Parliament (under the nationalist Nabulsi's cabinet) even sent a telegram in this spirit to the Iraqi Parliament.<sup>32</sup> However, the most significant action was the Syrian blowing up of three pumping stations along the Iraqi pipeline from Kirkuk to Tripoli. This action, which stopped the oil flow for six months, severely damaged Iraq's economy.<sup>33</sup> Yet, under British pressure, the Iraqi Petroleum Company (IPC) allocated a credit of 25 million pounds, which enabled Iraq to overcome the budget deficit caused by loss of oil revenues.<sup>34</sup> Although the sabotage was coordinated with Mahmud Riad, the Egyptian ambassador in Damascus, it seemed that the Egyptian president opposed it.<sup>35</sup> According to Heikal, his closest advisor, 'in those days [of the war] everybody in the Arab world was acting on his own initiative; any attempt to coordinate strategy or tactics would have been impossible'. Moreover, such an action might trigger British or Iraqi intervention in Syria.<sup>36</sup> However, there was no doubt that the sabotage was aimed solely at Iraq and Britain, since the Tapline (a Saudi-American interest) remained intact.<sup>37</sup> Riad feared that Britain and Iraq would pump oil through the Kirkuk-Haifa pipeline, which had not been used since the establishment of Israel. Consequently, he convinced Haj Amin Al-Husseini, the Palestinian leader, to send a Fidayyin unit to discover whether it was indeed being used.<sup>38</sup>

After the war started, the Lebanese president made efforts to convene a conference of all Arab leaders. Chamoun's motives were unclear; he either wanted to become a moderating power in the Arab world, or he strove to strengthen his position at home.<sup>39</sup> Eventually, the conference was convened in the aftermath of the war (13 November), with the participation of all the Arab kings and presidents, except Nasser who delegated the Egyptian ambassador in Beirut to represent him. The main topic on the agenda was the question of Arab diplomatic relations with Britain and France. Quwatly claimed that all the Arab states should



follow Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia in severing their diplomatic relations with Britain and France; King Faysal was adamantly opposed to severing relations with Britain, although he had done so with France; Lebanon, Libya and Sudan supported the Iraqi position by displaying a moderate stance; Egypt did not share Syria's extremist attitude as she was apprehensive of further alienating the Western powers. The resolution which was finally adopted by the conference was relatively moderate; it declared general support of Egypt's policy, denounced the tripartite collusion, and hinted that each Arab state could make any political step it deemed necessary.<sup>40</sup> At the conclusion of the conference, the general feeling was that its results 'could have been worse', and that in spite of Syria's extremism, the Lebanese president had succeeded in riding out the storm.<sup>41</sup>

As a consequence of the Suez War, Britain's allies in the Arab world found themselves in an extremely difficult position: not only had a Western power attacked a sister Arab state, but the attack was carried out in collusion with their arch-enemy – Israel. Of all the Arab states, Iraq's situation was the most difficult; its special ties with Britain as well as their joint membership in the Baghdad Pact made Iraq, and her rulers, the target of Arab attacks. The grave situation in Iraq led Western officials to believe that a coup was inevitable, and that her withdrawal from the Baghdad Pact was imminent. Nuri and the palace were not so much disturbed by the British attack as by the unexpected involvement of Israel in the operation. In order to cope with a deterioration of the internal situation, the cabinet decided on 31 October to impose martial law.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, Nuri remained skeptical as to his ability to maintain internal order; he told Wright that it was impossible to ensure Iraq's stability for more than 'five or six days' and emphasized that within this period Britain must achieve a ceasefire and demand Israel's retreat.<sup>43</sup> The ambassador was shocked by the repercussions of the war: 'almost all we have built up here over many years and with such pains', he exclaimed, 'has been shaken nearly beyond repair'.<sup>44</sup>

Troubles at home notwithstanding, Nuri did not neglect the Arab world; he now hastened, for instance, to respond to Husayn's request to send troops ('up to a division') to Jordan.<sup>45</sup> Previously, the question of command was one of the problems which had hindered the troops' entrance to Jordan; now, however, both parties were too troubled to disagree on this point. Nuri was weary of possible Arab accusations that he had refrained from assisting a sister state, while Husayn was perturbed by the possibility of an Israeli attack. Therefore, it was hastily agreed that the Iraqi forces would enter under joint command, headed by Jordan's deputy chief-of-staff, Ali Al-Hiyari.<sup>46</sup> Nuri assured Britain that the Iraqi



units would not fight Israel, unless the latter attacked Jordan, and that they would be stationed in Mafraq, far from the Israeli border.<sup>47</sup>

Arab criticism against Iraq was focused on her membership in the Baghdad Pact alongside Britain. Yet Nuri refused to surrender to demands voiced both in Iraq and the Arab world which required withdrawal from the pact; he also tried to use the pact as a lever to enhance Iraq's position in the Arab world. On 3 November Nuri left for Teheran in order to participate in a conference of the Muslim members of the pact. Nuri's visit, in spite of the tense situation in his country, clearly indicates the importance he attached to the results of the conference.<sup>48</sup> At Tehran, Nuri hoped to play an active role in ending the war, and to advance a solution for the Palestine problem – the everlasting panacea for shifting Arab attention. Nuri arrived with a four-point proposal, approved by his cabinet aiming: to ensure Egypt's sovereignty and territorial integrity; to ensure Israel's retreat to the ceasefire lines; to repatriate all prisoners of war; and to reach a comprehensive solution of the Palestine problem.<sup>49</sup> Nuri's purpose was twofold: first, to prove that the Baghdad Pact had played a crucial role in ending the war; second, to shift public attention from the Suez Crisis to the Palestine issue in which Iraq could play a major role. Much to Nuri's disappointment, the conference opened only on 8 November, by which time a ceasefire had already been declared. Nevertheless, in the final communiqué it was stated that the appeal of the Muslim members to Britain had influenced her decision to accept a ceasefire.<sup>50</sup>

Following the conference, Iraq decided to sever its diplomatic relations with France, and to restrict the Baghdad Pact's meetings to its Muslim members (that is, exclude Britain from the activities of the pact).<sup>51</sup> These decisions indicate that the Tehran conference achieved little in satisfying the Iraqi domestic and regional problems. The first move was primarily symbolic, as Iraq's ties with France were negligible; while the second move, made without prior consultation with the members of the pact, was rather surprising and revealed the sinister political implications of the Suez crisis on Iraq.<sup>52</sup> Britain and Turkey were reconciled to the Iraqi decision out of understanding for her predicament, while assuming that the suspension would be temporary (as Iraq privately admitted); Pakistan and Iran strongly protested against Iraq's unilateral decision, but were unable to change it.<sup>53</sup> By suspending Britain from the pact (even temporarily) Iraq achieved two goals: first, she averted public criticism; second, she presented the pact as a genuine regional defense organization made up of Muslim states, aimed against Israel (not only against the Soviets) and open to Muslim Arab members.

There was another drastic twist, however, in Iraqi foreign policy; on 13

November, Iraq adopted a new radical position concerning the Palestine question, calling for the liquidation of the state of Israel and the return of the Palestinian refugees.<sup>54</sup> It marked a radical shift from a fairly moderate stance, which accepted the Partition Plan (Nov. 1947) as a basis for the solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, to an Arab extremist attitude of eliminating Israel. The timing of this change was highly significant; Iraq exploited the fact that the Palestine problem had not been discussed at the Beirut conference, to demonstrate that she was the genuine representative of the Palestinians, who had been neglected by the Arab states.<sup>55</sup> Once again, the Palestine problem was used as a lever in inter-Arab politics in order to achieve internal and regional gains.

On 17 November, shortly after the Suez War ended, the Muslim members of the Baghdad Pact reconvened at Baghdad, to discuss the future of the pact. They concluded that Britain should remain a member of the pact despite her involvement in the war; furthermore, they agreed to invite the United States to join the pact, an offer which was politely rejected by the State Department.<sup>56</sup> As before, Nuri hoped to utilize the conference to promote Iraqi interests; yet the conference was a disastrous mistake, as student demonstrations, fueled by the Egyptian propaganda, spread across the country.<sup>57</sup> In addition, on 23 November Syria announced the uncovering of an Iraqi plot to topple the Syrian government.<sup>58</sup> The conspiracy, which was ineptly planned and doomed from the start,<sup>59</sup> had a disastrous effect on Iraq: the very fact that she had plotted with Western allies against an Arab state, and especially the timing of the coup (planned innocently for 29 October, the day the Suez operation began), justified unprecedented attacks by Syria and Egypt, which claimed that Iraq had colluded with the Western powers and Israel against Syria.<sup>60</sup>

While Iraq was gradually becoming isolated in the Arab world, the Egyptian president astonishingly discerned that the Baghdad Pact – despite so many blunders – had not as yet withered away; rather, the new tactic – the pact as a seemingly Islamic organization – posed a new threat to Egypt, as it could theoretically induce other Arab states to adhere to the pact. This fear was clearly shown in Nasser's letter, dated 19 November, to King Saud, who was considered by many as a potential candidate for joining the pact. Although the pact was apparently frozen, the Egyptian president wrote, 'Britain and her allies are thinking of trying to convert it into an Islamic pact which will attract all Islamic countries not already members of the pact.' In this context, he expressed his fear that this policy was intended to isolate Egypt from Saudi Arabia, Syria and Jordan.<sup>61</sup> Actually, this fear was quite justified the members of the pact sent the Pakistani president to Riyadh and his prime minister to Beirut in

order to advance cooperation with these countries, mainly against communism, but also to hear their position (especially the Saudi stance) concerning the adherence to the 'Islamic Pact'.<sup>62</sup> Saud, claimed Heikal, promised Nasser that he would not even contemplate such a venture.<sup>63</sup>

Iraq's isolation in the Arab world led Nuri, for the first time since their talks in September 1954, to send feelers to Nasser. Tawfiq Al-Suwaidi, Iraq's former prime minister and Nuri's confidant, was instructed to send a discreet message to Nasser, proposing a private meeting. Nuri justified this move to the British ambassador by saying that 'after all, disputes between nations seldom lasted indefinitely'. He added that it was undesirable to neglect the possibility of convincing the Egyptian president to cooperate against communism and towards the solution of the Palestine problem.<sup>64</sup> Although Nuri's initiative, no doubt, stemmed from his growing isolation in the Arab world, he approached Nasser at a time when various Arab sources reported that the mounting resentment within the Egyptian army, and Egypt's financial problems could endanger the latter's rule.<sup>65</sup> In light of these difficulties, Nuri thought that the Egyptian president would become more flexible.

The Foreign Office, and Eden in particular, were alarmed by the possible reconciliation between the two; in a telegram bearing Eden's personal imprint, it was emphasized that there was no reason to believe that Nasser's ambition 'to become the dictator of the Arab world' has changed, and that in order to achieve this goal, he seeks to destroy the Iraqi regime which he regards as the biggest stumbling block in his path. The British emphasized that Nuri should not rely on Nasser but rather should await his downfall, which would enable Iraq to emerge 'as the leader of the Arabs, a position in which we should like to see her'.<sup>66</sup> This last sentence, written in late December 1956, showed more than anything else Eden's lack of insight regarding Iraq's position in the Arab world. However, the British need not have worried; Nuri had not changed his position towards the Egyptian president, but was exploring a new device in order to circumvent his own problems in the Arab world. Yet, the issue never came to a head as Nasser ignored Suwaidi's message.<sup>67</sup>

Although Nuri effectively subdued the domestic strife, his abortive manoeuvres in the Arab world contributed to Iraq's isolation and made him the most despised Arab leader. The change of policy regarding the Palestine question and the endeavour to turn the Baghdad Pact into a Muslim pacts were intended to arrest the decline in Iraq's influence in the Arab world. However, these actions did not improve her position; Iraq was in dire need of external intervention, and it came with the Eisenhower Doctrine.

At the end of 1956 Iraq was almost completely isolated in the Arab

world; yet, as early as February 1957 the most prominent Arab newspaper, *Al-Hayat* predicted the formation of a new axis: 'the Saudi-Iraqi-Jordani-Sudani axis'.<sup>68</sup> By March 1957 it seemed that Nuri had regained much of his confidence, as he assured Wright that Nasser was now losing ground in the Arab world',<sup>69</sup> and he agreed to resume the Baghdad Pact's meetings on all levels. At the same time, Hare, in Cairo, assessed that one of the targets of the Egyptian president was 'to counter growing Egyptian isolation'.<sup>70</sup> How, then, did the new coalition emerge so swiftly, and what were the dynamics which brought about Egypt's and Syria's isolation in the Arab world in early 1957?

At the beginning of 1957 Egypt found itself increasingly isolated; given the political ramifications of the Suez Crisis, this development was unexpected and was related to the greater involvement of the United States in the Middle East. The Americans became increasingly involved in the region owing to their fear that the Soviets would seize the opportunity to fill the power vacuum caused by the British withdrawal. As a result, in January 1957 the Eisenhower doctrine was proclaimed, which was in essence intended to deter communist aggression in the Middle East, and which made provision for a special economic and military grant in the sum of two hundred million dollars. At the heart of the proposal was the declaration that 'overt armed aggression from any nation controlled by international communism would be met by the armed forces of the United States'.<sup>71</sup>

The Eisenhower Doctrine divided the Arab world into two camps: one included Egypt and Syria, who rejected Western support, being more inclined towards neutralism; while the other consisted of the rulers who feared communist penetration and were convinced that their future was tied up with the West, both ideologically and economically. The formation of the Royalist axis, however, was neither easy nor swift; the first actual sign was in early February 1957, when the Iraqi crown prince met King Saud in Washington. The meetings between Abd Al-Ilah and Saud (6–7 February), more than anything else, symbolized the conclusion of a long and bitter conflict between the two royal dynasties.<sup>72</sup> The discussions considerably improved Iraqi-Saudi relations and led Saud to adopt a more conciliatory approach towards the Baghdad Pact. Saud's favourable attitude towards the Eisenhower Doctrine as well as his willingness to extend the Dhahran Airbase lease for five years left the impression that the deliberations in Washington had succeeded in distancing further Saud from Nasser.<sup>73</sup>

The Saudi drift away from Egypt was also manifested by her growing interest in Jordanian affairs; this was clearly shown by the dispatch of a Saudi contingent to Jordan during the Suez War. Even more signi-

ificantly, Saud signed the 'Arab Solidarity Pact' in January 1957, in which he committed himself to pay Jordan (at this stage still cooperating with Egypt and Syria) an annual subsidy of LE 12.5m for a period of ten years to replace the British subsidy.<sup>74</sup> The rift became evident during the Cairo conference in February 1957 which was divided upon the question of the Eisenhower Doctrine; while Nasser and Quwatly opposed it, Saud and Husayn enthusiastically endorsed it.<sup>75</sup> However, Jordan was not yet free to become party to a Royalist coalition; though Husayn had already shown his sympathy for Saud's position, his freedom of action was somewhat circumscribed by the nationalist cabinet, headed by Suleiman al-Nabulsi. The friction between the King and his cabinet came to a head in April 1957 when Husayn, with American and Saudi support, succeeded in ousting Nabulsi.<sup>76</sup> This episode ushered in a new period for Jordan; her short-lived flirtation with Egypt and Syria ended and Husayn was free to take his place in what a British official termed as 'the Monarchistic Trade Union'.<sup>77</sup>

Saud's arrival for his first official visit in Baghdad since the beginning of the *rapprochement* (May 1957) was a further step towards the consolidation of the Royalist coalition. The Arab press attached great significance to this meeting in terms of inter-Arab relations. The belief that great changes were about to occur led an Iraqi official categorically to deny rumours about the alleged intention of Iraq to withdraw from the Baghdad Pact and to form a 'new Arab Alliance' with Saudi Arabia, Jordan and, eventually Lebanon.<sup>78</sup> During his visit, Saud left no room for doubt concerning his position towards Nasser, especially after having discovered an Egyptian plot to assassinate him a few days earlier.<sup>79</sup> 'I gave him [Nasser] forty million dollars and other help besides,' complained Saud, 'and in return he tried to assassinate me.'<sup>80</sup> The latter asked Nuri to convey unofficially to the British that he wished them to refrain from lending financial or economic support to the Egyptian president; as Saud stated, Nasser must remain 'as poor as possible'. He hoped that the latter would then be compelled to turn to him for assistance, a scenario which would allow Saud to use his financial leverage to mitigate Nasser's pro-Soviet leanings.<sup>81</sup>

During his deliberations, Saud also expressed his willingness to establish a 'new alignment' in the Arab world; he proposed to convene an Islamic conference in which Nasser – if he agreed to come at all – would be in a minority. Saud proposed that, 'among the objects would be agreement upon [the] collective right of self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter, and recognition that the Baghdad Pact was in accordance with this principle and was of advantage to the Muslim world'. Saud further clarified that although he had no intention of committing his

country to this pact, he now understood its *raison d'être* and its aims. Moreover, he hoped to achieve some cooperation in the conference between the Islamic countries against communism.<sup>82</sup> However, Saud made it clear that, owing to his fear of Nasser's propaganda machine, his new policy would have to be developed 'cautiously and slowly'.<sup>83</sup>

The crystallization of the new alignment, which included the three monarchies and Lebanon (and to a lesser degree Morocco, Tunisia, Sudan and Libya), indicated Egypt's and Syria's isolation in the Arab world.<sup>84</sup> This process reached its climax in June 1957, with Saud's visit to Amman, and Husayn's to Baghdad.<sup>85</sup> In his assessment of the developments, Charles Johnston, the British ambassador in Amman, concluded that Saud's visit was 'a further step towards the new alignment in the Arab world by which Jordan is linked with Saudi Arabia, and less strictly with Iraq and the Lebanon, in opposition to Egypt and Syria'. 'The new "Arab caravan",' he added, 'is a much more homogeneous collection of animals than the group which came together with such enthusiasm last January and February [in the Cairo conferences] and disintegrated so spectacularly in April and May.'<sup>86</sup>

The new atmosphere in the Arab world was clearly manifested by the replacement of Nuri who had been prime minister during the previous three years; in June 1957, at the climax of this process, the palace felt secure enough in its position, as Wright wryly lamented, 'to revert to the normal Iraqi system of allowing the fruits of office to be enjoyed from time to time by different groups of politicians.'<sup>87</sup> Although in his own country and throughout the Arab world Nuri was unpopular, in Western eyes he was still considered a prominent leader: 'Nuri is not dead yet, either physically or politically,' Wright remarked in early July 1957 and added that if Egypt would 'regain some of the impetus that it has now lost in the hearts of Arab Nationalists, not only Iraq but the Western world as a whole may well need him.'<sup>88</sup> His evaluation proved to be a prophecy. Thus Egypt's first bid for the dominance of the Arab world in the wake of the Suez War had been thwarted.

It should be emphasized, however, that the Royalist coalition was never a homogeneous body; Saudi Arabia's attachment to this alignment was tenuous, sometimes even dubious; as long as Saudi interests were not jeopardized, Saud saw himself as part of the alliance. At the same time he refrained from taking any steps that would expose his vulnerable monarchy to Egypt's subversive activities. Therefore, Saud preferred not to take a stand in inter-Arab conflicts but rather served as the eternal mediator enjoying the trust and support of all the parties involved. In this context, one must view Saud's visits to Damascus and Beirut in September 1957, born as they were out of the desire to allay tensions in Syria,



which had deteriorated nearly to the point of open hostilities.<sup>89</sup> 'Despite his growing bitterness against the Egyptian and Syrian regimes,' Wright concluded, 'King Saud appears still to wish to maintain his position somewhat *au dessus de la mêlée* and to keep his lines out to all the Arab countries.'<sup>90</sup>

By mid-1957 Nasser's position had completely changed; internally, the repercussions of the Suez crisis were still strongly felt, at least economically; while externally, the Eisenhower Doctrine brought about Egypt's isolation in the Arab world. An illustrative example was the absence of Arab-country contingents in the annual military parade held in Cairo on 23 July 1957.<sup>91</sup> Just the year before, even Iraq had to send a token representation in order to arrest Arab criticism.<sup>92</sup> In addition to Nasser's isolation among the Arab leaders (except Quwatly), there was some measurable decline in his popularity among the masses. In fact, Dekmejian has clearly shown that Nasser's 'centrality' in the media at that time was the lowest since mid-1954, while he also observed a slight decline in the manifestations of Arab nationalism.<sup>93</sup> It seemed, therefore, that the influence of the Egyptian leader had been 'contained' – a phrase taken from the cold war terminology – at least in the Arab world. 'Nasser has confined his recent efforts in the Arab field to trying to mend his fences with Saudi Arabia', wrote a British official, 'and to trying to keep Syria aligned with him without accepting commitments there.' However, the African Department correctly judged that Nasser's ultimate aim of achieving hegemony in Egypt's three circles (Arab, African and Muslim) remained unchanged, and that 'he is simply waiting for suitable opportunities to pursue his old objectives.'<sup>94</sup> The assessment proved to be accurate, for within six months the Egyptian president partially accomplished his aims, at least in the Arab circle.

A new threat loomed over Egypt during the summer of 1957, as her only ally – Syria – fell victim to the struggle between East and West over control in the Middle East. On 12 August the Syrians expelled three American diplomats after an American plot to overthrow the regime in Damascus was uncovered. The United States, with the cooperation of Turkey and Iraq, tried by different means to bring down the pro-Soviet regime, fearing that Syria might become a 'victim of international Communism' – a phrase in accordance with the conditions set out for activating the Eisenhower Doctrine.<sup>95</sup> Just as Syria was the hinge around which the struggle between the superpowers turned, so was she also the focus of the struggle over Arab hegemony. Nasser understood perfectly that any Western victory there would likely end Egypt's claim for Arab hegemony and that only by controlling Syria could he aspire to regional leadership.<sup>96</sup> Consequently, on 13 October Egyptian troops landed in Latakia, and



thereby formally activating the Defence Pact signed in 1955.<sup>97</sup> Although by that time much of the crisis had dissipated, the Egyptian president firmly re-established that he was the sole arbiter of the Syrian question in the Arab world, and he clearly showed that Syria was still within Egypt's sphere of influence.

The establishment of the United Arab Republic in February 1958, which came to many as a surprise, transformed the Arab political system. From 1955, and especially through 1957, Egypt and Syria had negotiated various unification schemes, yet it was not expected that Syria would completely surrender her sovereignty to Egypt. Moreover, the merger was not in accordance with the traditional Egyptian policy, which preferred to maintain the independence of the Arab states under her influence.<sup>98</sup> The conventional explanation was that the Syrian officers and the Ba'th Party forced the union on Nasser as a result of the chaotic situation in Syria. This explanation, propagated by the Egyptian president and his advisors, has been accepted by some scholars.<sup>99</sup> Nevertheless, it seems that the importance of the Syrian pressure has been overestimated, while Egypt's motivation for the merger, which was no less significant, has been played down. Analysing the reasons for the creation of the UAR is beyond the scope of this article; however, in order to comprehend the change in the Arab political pendulum in favour of Egypt, it is necessary to explain Nasser's motivation for the merger.

The military intervention in Syria did not extricate Egypt from her isolation in the Arab world; moreover, the Egyptian president regarded the Eisenhower Doctrine and the Baghdad Pact as potential threats to his position. No wonder, therefore, that the annual conference of the Baghdad Pact in Ankara (January 1958), attended by Dulles, intensified Egypt's fears concerning the revitalization of the pact or its association with NATO.<sup>100</sup> This anxiety was clearly manifested in the Egyptian media: the editor of the weekly *Al-Mussawar*, for example, wrote that the reasons for the merger were the Suez War, the NATO conference in Paris, 'and after that, the most salient factor is the Baghdad Pact [conference] in Ankara'.<sup>101</sup> Ahmad Said, in his propaganda broadcasts, claimed that 'every meeting of the Baghdad Pact is followed by a plot against the Arabs, and the union between Syria and Egypt is the shield which protects Arabism against any aggression'<sup>102</sup>. Nasser's growing isolation in the Arab world, and his fear of an American and a Baghdad Pact conspiracy against him, perhaps by using NATO or by implementing the Eisenhower Doctrine, compelled him – among other things – to unite with Syria. The UAR, therefore, was not only a 'shield' for protecting Arabism and Syria, but also for protecting Egypt.

In addition to the above-mentioned considerations, the creation of the

UAR, like the military intervention, was intended to maintain Egypt's influence over Syria and display Nasser's leading role within the Arab world. As Syria, on the verge of collapse as a political community, was falling prey to super power rivalries, Egypt grasped the opportunity to counteract her isolation in the Arab world by 'rescuing' Syria. Furthermore, the Egyptian president saw the union as a means of obtaining a stronger foothold in the Fertile Crescent against the Hashemites in Iraq and Jordan.<sup>103</sup> It is true that the union was not in accordance with Nasser's traditional policy of maintaining the independence of Arab states; however, it was consistent with his policy 'to hold tenaciously to the initiative, to counter-attack whenever in danger of being out-manoeuvred and isolated within the Arab world.'<sup>104</sup>

The establishment of the UAR undoubtedly displayed Nasser's great tactical skill; first, he finally succeeded in breaking Egypt's isolation, and in coming out victorious in the struggle for Arab hegemony; second, he reasserted himself as the eponym of Arab Nationalism in the eyes of the masses. 'In early 1958,' wrote Dekmejian, 'all indications were that Abd al-Nasir was at the zenith of his popularity among Arab masses.'<sup>105</sup> The last efforts of Arab conservative elites to struggle against the tide of Arab nationalism were doomed: the establishment of the 'Arab Union' between Iraq and Jordan on 14 February was no more than a poor imitation of the UAR; Saudi Arabia was quick to abandon the sinking Royalist ship; the military coup in Iraq (July 1958), which eliminated the Hashemite dynasty, and the civil war in Lebanon (May 1958), were all sparked by the Nasserist wave which flooded the Arab world. Thus 1958 marked the climax of Nasser's quest for power in the Middle East. A new era in Arab politics had begun, but the struggle between Egypt and Iraq for Arab hegemony – although with different protagonists – remained a central feature of inter-Arab relations for years to come.

#### NOTES

1. Rashid Khalidi, for example, in a recent study, wrote that after the Suez crisis Abd Al-Nasser firmly established himself as 'the pre-eminent Arab leader until the end of his life, and Arab nationalism as the leading Arab ideology for at least that long'. See 'Consequences of the Suez Crisis in the Arab World', in R. Louis and R. Owen (eds.) *The Suez 1956, the Crisis and Its Consequences* (Oxford 1989), p.377; see also M. Shemesh, 'Egypt: From Military Defeat to Political Victory', in S. I. Troen in M. Shemesh (eds.), *The Suez-Sinai Crisis 1956: Retrospective and Reappraisal* (London, 1989), p.160.
2. Most of the details concerning this period are taken from my doctoral thesis. 'The Quest for Arab Hegemony: The Struggle Over the Baghdad Pact. 1954–58', (Dec. 1990), Tel Aviv University [Hebrew].

3. *Al-Hayat*, 1 Aug. 1954, p.2: see also *Mudhakkirat Khaled Al-Azm* [The Memoirs of Khaled Al-Azm], Vol.2. Ch.12.
4. H. Thomas. *The Suez Affair* (London, 1986), p.38.
5. On Nuri's views in this respect, see Wright's minute [Wright was British ambassador in Baghdad], 30 July 1956, VQ1051/43, FO371/121662. Henceforth, unless otherwise mentioned, all the documents are taken from FO371. See also; Wright to FO, Tel. 914, 20 Aug. 1956, JE10393/2, 118857; Tel. 951, 29 Aug 1956, ES1021/53, 120756. This was also the view of the Crown Prince, see Amery to Lloyd, 1 Aug. 1956, VQ1051/44, 121662.
6. *Al-Hayat*, 7 Aug. 1956.
7. Gardner (Damascus) to FO, Tel. 452, 11 Aug 1956, JE14211/632, 119100; for a slight different version, see *Al-Hayat* 10 Aug. 1956.
8. Wright to FO, Tel. 876; 11 Aug. 1956, JE14211/632, 119099.
9. *Al-Hayat*, 14 Aug. 1956, Trevelyan (Cairo) to FO, Tel. 1526, 12 Aug. 1956, JE14211/660, 119100; Tel. 1551, 13 Aug 1956, JE4211/691, 119101.
10. More details on the Arab League meeting, see Trevelyan to FO, Tel. 1545, 13 Aug. 1956, JE14211/687, 119101.
11. *Al-Hayat*, 17 Aug. 1956.
12. *Ibid.*, 15 Aug. 1956; 25 Aug. 1956.
13. For the names of the delegates, see *al-Hayat*, 19 Sept. 1956.
14. Khalid. p.377, is just one recent example.
15. Wright to Ross. 29 Aug. 1956, JE10393/5, 118857; Wright to FO, Tel. 955, 31 Aug. 1956, JE10393/3, 118857.
16. Wright to FO, Tel. 914, 20 Aug. 1956, JE10393/2, 118857; Tel. 951, 29 Aug. 1956, ES1021/53, 120756.
17. W. Gallman, *Iraq Under General Nuri: My Recollections of Nuri As-Said, 1954-1958* (Baltimore, 1964), p.151; see also Shuckburgh's Minute, 6 March 1956, VQ10325/3, 121655.
18. Parkes (Riyadh) to FO, Tel. 241, 8 Aug. 1956, JE14211/474, 119094; Parkes to Lloyd, Despatch No.57. 11 Aug. 1956, ES10316/10, 120759; see also M. H. Heikal, *Cutting the Lion's Tail: Suez Through Egyptian Eyes* (London: 1986), pp.133, 155-7 (henceforth Heikal).
19. Parkes to FO, Tel. 249. 18 Aug. 1956, ES1021/49, 120756; Parkes to Lloyd, Despatch No.65, 3 Oct. 1956, ES1021/102, 120758.
20. Wright to FO, Tel. 29 Aug. 1956, ES1021/53, 120756; Tel. 970, Sept. 1956, ES1021/57, 120756. On Zayd's visit to Riyadh, see Wright to FO, Tel. 951. 29 Aug. 1956, ES1021/53, 120756; Tel.954, 30 Aug. 1956, ES1021/55, 120756; Walmsley's Minute, 10 Sept. 1956, ES1021/75, 120757.
21. Accounts concerning the Saud-Faysal meeting, see Wright to FO, Tel. 1049, 15 Sept 1956, ES1021/72, 120757; Tel.1085, 23 Sept. 1956, ES1021/81, 120757; Parkes to FO, Tel.303, 23 Sept. 1956, ES1021/84, 120757; Parkes to Lloyd, Despatch No.65, 3 Oct. 1956, ES1021/102, 120758.
22. Most of the material concerning the tripartite meeting is taken from Heikal, pp.158-9.
23. Parkes to FO, Tel. 318, 2 Oct. 1956, ES1021/94. 120757.
24. Duke (Amman) to FO, Tel.1138, 18 Aug. 1956, VJ10393/54, 121486, Wright to FO, Tel.945, 28 Aug. 1956, VJ10393/55, 121486.
25. FO to Baghdad, Tel. 1948, 28 Sept. 1956, VJ10393/69, 121486.
26. Wright to FO, Tel. 1097, 27 Sept. 1956, VJ10393/68, 121486.
27. 'Israel and the entrance of Iraqi army to Jordan' [Hebrew], 18 Oct. 1956. The Israeli Archives, File 2453/10.
28. Trevelyan to FO, Tel.2480, 17 Oct. 1956, JE1053/87, 118865.
29. On the results of Abd Al-Ilah's visit, see Wright to FO, Tel. 1187, 17 Oct 1956, VJ10393/146, 121489; Duke to FO, Tel. 1490, 18 Oct. 1956, VJ10393/161, 121489; Duke to FO, Tel. 1490, 18 Oct. 1956, VJ10393/161, 121489; Wright to FO, Tel. 1187, 17 Oct. 1956, VJ10393/146, 121489.
30. M. Riad, *Mudhakkirat Mahmud Riad: al-Amn al-Qaumi bayna al-injaz wal-fashal*

- [The Memoirs of Mahmud Riad: National Security between Success and Failure] (Cairo, 1986), p.155 (henceforth Riad).
31. BBC, No.92, 8 Nov. 1956, II.
  32. Riad, p.155; BBC, No.93, 9 Nov. 1956, I.
  33. *Al-Hayat*, 4 Nov. 1956, 7 Nov. 1956.
  34. Wright to Lloyd, Despatch No.181, 11 July 1957, VQ1051/34, 128057.
  35. Riad, pp.155–7; Heikal, pp.189–91.
  36. *Ibid.*, p.191.
  37. Riad, p.157.
  38. *Ibid.*
  39. Middelton (Beirut) to FO, Tel. 1074, 8 Nov. 1956, VL1022/8, 121608.
  40. Middelton to Lloyd, Despatch No.188, 27 Nov. 1956, VL1022/13, 121608; Wright to FO, Tel. 1416, 17 Nov. 1956, VL1022/11, 121608.
  41. Middelton to Lloyd, Despatch No.188, 27 Nov. 1956, VL1022/13, 121608.
  42. BBC, No.87, 2 Nov. 1956, II.
  43. Wright to FO, Tel. 1263, 2 Nov. 1956, VQ1015/94, 121646; Tel. 1250, 2 Nov. 1956, VR1091/484, 121785.
  44. Wright to FO, Tel. 1287, 4 Nov. 1956, VR1091/523, 121786.
  45. Wright to FO, Tel. 1238, 1 Nov. 1956, VJ10393/176, 121489.
  46. Wright to FO, Tel. 1268, 3 Nov. 1956, VR1091/557, 121787.
  47. Wright to FO, Tel. 1280, 3 Nov. 1956, VJ10393/182, 121489.
  48. Wright to FO, Tel. 1307, 6 Nov. 1956, VR1091/650, 121790.
  49. Stevens (Tehran) to FO, Tel. 871, 4 Nov. 1956, VR1091/590, 121788; Stevens to Lloyd, Despatch No.125, 15 Nov. 1956, V1073/405, 121266.
  50. See the text of the final communiqué, Stevens to FO, Tel. 920, 8 Nov. 1956, VR1091/766, 121793.
  51. *Al-Hayat*, 10 Nov. 1956; Wright to FO, Tel. 49 Saving, 10 Nov. 1956, VQ1094/3, 121682; Tel. 1476, 26 Nov. 1956, VQ1015/108, 121647.
  52. Wright to FO, Tel. 1348, 9 Nov. 1956, V1073/387, 121265.
  53. On Iran's reaction, see Stevens to FO, Tel. 932, 10 Nov. 1956, V1073/387, 121265; concerning Pakistan's reaction, see High Commissioner (Karachi) to Commonwealth Relations Office, Tel. 1878, 13 Nov. 1956, 121265; and, Turkey's reaction, see Bowker (Ankara) to FO, Tel. 954, V1073/399, 121266.
  54. *Al-Hayat*, 14 Nov. 1956; BBC, No.98, 15 Nov. 1956, pp.7–8.
  55. *Al-Hayat*, 16 Nov. 1956;
  56. See the text of the final communiqué. *Ibid.*; 24 Nov. 1956.
  57. BBC, No.105, 23 Nov. 1956, p.8; No.106, 24 Nov. 1956, I
  58. P. Seale, *The Struggle for Syria: A Study of Post-War Arab Politics 1945–1958* (New Edition, London: 1986), pp.270–82 (henceforth Seale).
  59. For more details concerning the Iraqi plot, see the memoirs of W. C. Eveland, *Ropes of Sand: America's Failure in the Middle East* (New York, 1980), pp.181–233; and, FO to Baghdad, Tel. 2255, 11 Sept. 1957, VY1015/186, 128227. See also two articles, recently published: D. Little, 'Cold War and Covert Action: The United States and Syria, 1945–1958,' *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 44, No.1 (Winter 1990), pp.51–75; A. Gorst and W. S. Lucas, 'The Other Collusion: Operation Straggle and Anglo-American Intervention in Syria, 1955–56,' *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 4, No.3 (July 1989), pp.576–95.
  60. *Ibid.*, pp.224–7.
  61. Heikal, p.209.
  62. Wright to FO, Tel. 1444, 21 Nov. 1956, V1022/2, 121223; Tel. 1449, 21 Nov. 1956, V1022/3, 121223.
  63. Heikal, pp.210–11.
  64. Wright to FO, Tel. 1655, 24 Dec. 1956, JE1015/107, 118835.
  65. See for example, Middelton to FO, Tel. 1513, 24 Dec. 1956, JE1015/106, 118838; Wright to FO, Tel. 9, 2 Jan. 1957, JE1015/2, 125411; Tel. 74, 17 Jan. 1957, JE1023/3, 125426; Tel. 20, 4 Jan. 1957, JE1015/6, 125411; Bailey to Watson, 19 Jan. 1957, JE1015/41, 125412.

66. Eden's Minute, 26 Dec. 56, JE1015/115, 118836; see also the text sent to Baghdad, Tel. 3182, 27 Dec. 1956, 118836. On this version Eden wrote 'Excellent'.
67. Wright to FO, Tel. 9, 2 Jan. 1957, JE1015/2, 125411; Tel. 74, 17 Jan. 1957, JE1023/3, 125426.
68. *Al-Hayat*, 16 Feb. 1957.
69. Wright to FO, Tel. 299, 7 March 1957, VB1072/46, 128823.
70. FO to Washington, Tel. 1030, 4 March 1957, V1022/13, 127724.
71. On the Eisenhower Doctrine, see Seale, pp.285–9.
72. Wright to FO, Tel. 62, 15 Jan. 1957, VQ10325/1, 128047; Morris (Washington) to Hadow, 26 Jan. 1957, VQ10325/2, 128047.
73. On the visits of Saud and Abd al-Ilah, and the meeting between them, see Caccia (Washington) to Lloyd, Despatch No.42, 15 Feb. 1957, ES10345/18, 127155; Bailey to Rose, 13 Feb. 1957, VQ10325/7, 128052; Beaumont to Lloyd, Despatch No.116, 10 May 1957, VQ10325/7, 128047.
74. For the text of the Arab Solidarity Pact, see Khalil, pp.287–9.
75. Most of the details concerning the 'second Cairo Conference', are taken from *Al-Hayat*, 11 March 1957; Having no other available source, even the foreign ambassadors had to base their accounts on *Al-Hayat's* version. See, for example, Middleton to FO, Tel. 8 Saving, 1 March 1957, V1022/11, 127724; For the text of the official communiqué, see BBC, No.185, March 1957, pp.1–2; Khalil, pp.921–2.
76. For an account of the Jordanian crisis, see the memoirs of the British Ambassador in Amman, C. Johnston, *The Brink of Jordan* (London: 1972), pp.34–74.
77. Beaumont (Baghdad) to Lloyd, Despatch No.116, 10 May 1957, VQ10325/7, 128047.
78. *Al-Hayat*, 8 May 1957.
79. On the attempt on Saud's life, see the summary of the Lebanese newspapers, 4 May 1957, ES1015/4A, 127150; Wright to FO, Tel. 39 Saving, 8 May 1957, ES1015/5, 127150.
80. Wright to Lloyd, Despatch No.140, 30 May 1957, VQ10325/13, 128047.
81. Wright to FO, Tel. 632, 15 May 1957, JE1152/13, 125471. The Foreign Office duly promised that he had no intention of helping Nasser, FO to Baghdad, Tel. 1326, 21 May 1957, JE1152/13, 125471.
82. Wright to FO, Tel. 633, 15 May 1957, VQ10325/8, 128047.
83. Wright to Lloyd, Despatch No.140, 30 May 1957, VQ10325/13, 128047; See also, Wright to FO, Tel. 633, 15 May 1957, VQ10325/8, 128047.
84. *Al-Hayat*, 16 June 1957.
85. On Saud's visit to Jordan, see Johnston to FO, Tel. 1046, 14 June 1957, VJ10325/11, 127892; Johnston to Lloyd, Despatch No.37, VJ10325/14, 127892; on Husayn's visit to Iraq, see *al-Hayat*, 23 June 1957.
86. Johnston to Lloyd, Despatch No.37, 14 June 1957, VJ10325/14, 127892.
87. Wright to Lloyd, Despatch No.42, 11 March 1958, VQ1015/28, 134198.
88. Wright to Lloyd, Despatch No.176, 9 June 1957, VQ1015/34, 128041; on Nuri's stature in Western eyes, see the article in *Time* magazine, quoted in *Al-Hayat*, 16 June 1957; and J. Alsop's article, 'The Pasha', *New York Herald Tribune*, 27 May 1957.
89. Most of the details concerning the Syrian crisis in Summer 1957 are not publicly available yet; a good account is found in Seale, pp.289–306. See also Little, pp.69–74.
90. Wright to Lloyd, Despatch No.301, 28 Dec. 1957, VQ10325/1, 134039; Crawford (Baghdad) to FO, Tel. 143, 31 Jan. 1958, VY10316/17, 134386.
91. K. Wheelock, *Nasser's New Egypt: A Critical Analysis* (London: 1960), p.252.
92. Wright to FO, Tel. 665, 14 June 1956, VQ10316/61A, 121651.
93. H. Dekmejian, *Egypt Under Nasir: A Study in Political Dynamics* (London: 1972), p.112 (Figure 6), pp.94–5 (Figures 4–5).
94. 'A General Survey of Nasser's Foreign Policy', 30 Aug. 1957, JE1023/24, 125427.
95. Wheelock, p.254.
96. Seale, p.313.
97. *Ibid.*, p.305; Riad, p.188.
98. Seale, pp.312–4; Riad, p.199.

99. Seale, pp.307–21; Riad, pp.193–223; Heikal, *Malladhi jara fi Suria* [What Happened in Syria] (Cairo, 1962), pp.15–40.; E. Childers, *The Road to Suez: A Study of Western-Arab Relations* (London, 1962), pp.337–42; N. Safran, *From War to War: The Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948–1967* (New York, 1969), p.72.
100. For examples of such allegations in the Egyptian propaganda, see: BBC, No.420, 6 Dec. 1957, p.3; No.426, 13 Dec. 1957, I; No.429, 17 Dec. 1957, p.4; No.437, 31 Dec. 1957, pp.2–3; No.439, 2 Jan. 1958, p.3.
101. *Al-Mussawar*, No.1738, 31 Jan. 1958.
102. BBC, No.458, 24 Jan. 1958, p.1.
103. P. J. Vatikiotis, *Nasser and His Generations* (New York, 1978), p.228.
104. M. Kerr, *The Arab Cold War: Gamal Abd Al-Nasir and His Rivals* (3rd edn., London: 1981), p.32.
105. Dekmejian, p.58; see also, Vatikiotis. pp.234–6.