



The Road East: How John Foster Dulles Affected Egypt's Decision to Conclude the Czech Arms Deal in 1955.

Doğu Yolu: John Foster Dulles Mısır'ın 1955 Çekoslovakya Silah Anlaşması Kararını Nasıl Etkiledi.

*Mohaned Talib el-Hamdi**

Özet:

Mısır ve Sovyetler Birliği arasında fiilen bir anlaşma olan 1955 Çekoslovakya Mısır silah anlaşması ulusların dış politika ifadesinde yeni bir araç anlayışının başladığını işaret etti. Bu Endüstriyel güçten üçüncü dünya ülkesine başlıca ilk transfer olarak, uluslararası ilişkilerde yeni bir yöne doğru girişimdi. Bu dönemi kapsayan tarihi ve politik yazılarda anlaşmadan ne kadar bahsedilse de şaşkıncu bir şekilde, bu önemli olay konusunda kapsamlı bilgi ve analitik çalışmalar eksikliği mevcuttur.

1952 devriminden sonra Mısır iç ve bölgesel nedenler nedeniyle uygun bir orduya ihtiyaç duydu. Batının, Mısır'ın yeni hükümetini silahlandırmadaki gönülsüzlüğü istediği şeyi başka yerlerde aramasına engel olmadı. Bundan dolayı, Mısır kendisini ordusunun silahlanması için emsalsiz bir yoldan gitmeye zorlanmış olarak buldu. Batı, ihtiyacı olan silahları elde etmesi için kapıyı Mısır'a kapatınca, doğuya gitmekten başka bir yolu kalmamıştı.

Bu makale Çekoslovakya silah anlaşmasına dahil olan ulusların siyaset belirleyicilerinin dış politikaya karar verme sürecini çalışmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın amacı ABD dışişleri bakanı John Foster Dulles'nin Mısır'ın ABD den askeri ekipmanları satın almaktan kaçınması sonucu Mısır'ın kaybedilmesinde oynadığı rolü analiz etmektir.

Makalenin iddiası, Mısır'ın silah satın almak için doğuya gitmesinde ve Mısır ile Sovyetler Birliği arasındaki ilişkide yeni bir sayfa başlamasında temel nedeninin Dulles olduğudur. Birleşik Devletler, Sovyetler Birliği ve Ortadoğu- genel olarak Mısır arasında bir dönem buhranlı gelişmelerle devam eden bu seçilmiş olayı inceleyerek, dış güçler bu bölge hakkındaki siyasi kararları verirken, bölgesel konulara yaklaşımının önemini gösterebiliriz.

Anahtar kelimeler: Çekoslovakya silah anlaşması, Mısır Devrimi, Nasır, John Foster Dulles, Dwight Eisenhower, Bandung Konferansı.

Abstract

The Czech-Egyptian arms deal of 1955, which was really a deal between Egypt and the Soviet Union, signaled the beginning of a new instrumentality in the expression of the foreign policy of nations. As the first major transfer of arms from an industrial power to a Third World Country, it was a venture into a new direction in international

* Assiat. Prof. Dr.; Kansas State University Manhattan Department of Economics - USA

relations. As prominently as the mentioning of this deal is in historical and political writings that cover this period, surprisingly there is a lack of comprehensive information and analytical studies concerning this important event.

Egypt required a feasible military for domestic and regional reasons after the revolution of 1952. The West's unwillingness to arm Egypt's new government did not stop it from seeking what it wanted elsewhere. Thus, Egypt found itself forced to go in a unique way to acquire arms for its military. When the West closed the door on Egypt's efforts to obtain the weapons it needed, there was no other way to go but East.

This paper studies the decision-making process of the foreign policy makers of the nations who were involved with the Czech arms deal. The purpose of this study is to examine the role played by the then U.S. Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, to prevent Egypt from purchasing U.S. military equipments which caused the "Loss of Egypt". The argument of this paper is that Dulles was the main reason for Egypt to go East in buying weapons and the beginning of a new chapter in the relationship between Egypt and the Soviet Union. By examining this selected incident during a period which was critical to the following development of relations between the United States, the Soviet Union, and the Middle East—particularly Egypt—we can demonstrate the importance of understanding regional issues when outside powers make policy decisions regarding this region.

Keywords: Czech arms deal, Egyptian revolution, Nasser, John Foster Dulles, Dwight Eisenhower, Bandung Conference, Zhou Enlai, Nicolai Bulganin, Suez Canal, MEDO.

I - Introduction

The transfer of conventional arms from industrialized arms producing countries to the Third World is viewed as an accepted, even necessary component in modern aspect international politics. This was not the case in 1955 when Egypt conducted a major weapon purchase from the Eastern Bloc called the "Czech" arms deal. Before this deal, arms transfers primarily consisted of the sale or gift of weapons to countries readily identified as allies of the arms producer. The Czech-Egyptian arms deal, which was really a deal between Egypt and the Soviet Union¹ signaled the beginning of a new instrumentality in the expression of the foreign policy of nations.

Egypt and the Soviet Union concluded this transaction for a variety of reasons. Similar reasons or expectations echo through the years to the present each time an arms transfer occur. In general, an industrialized nation may transfer arms to a Third World Country for the following reasons: to establish or maintain influence in a country or region; to buy permission to use military facilities; to reduce the possibility of inviting local conflict from a stronger neighbor; or to improve its balance of payments; or to simply express friendship². The nations of the Third World seek arms to enhance prestige, to assert sovereignty, to maintain a balance or superiority in weapons strength with neighbors, and to facilitate influence over neighbors by retransferring imported arms³.

For security and economic reasons, the Middle East had always attracted the interest of the Soviet Union. This attraction was naturally magnified by Western efforts to prevent Soviet entry into the region. John Foster Dulles's Northern Tier (1953) and the formalization of the Baghdad Pact (1955) only heightened Soviet anxiety and resentment as being encircled by Western sponsored agreements. Ironically, Western designs to limit the scope of Soviet influence in the

¹ Dana Adams Schmidt. "Egypt-Soviet Arms Deal Upsets Mideast Balance", *New York Times*; October 2, 1955. E7.

² Andrew J. Pierre, *Arms Transfers and American Foreign Policy* (New York: New York University Press, 1979), 4.

³ Andrew J. Pierre. *The Global Politics of Arms Sales*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), 131.

Middle East actually spurred the Russians to make a brave new foreign policy leap; a leap over the Northern Tier, and a leap into new dimensions in foreign relations with Third World Countries.

Egypt required a viable, well armed military for political and domestic and regional security reasons. The West's inability or unwillingness to arm Egypt's new non-aligned government did not prevent that government from seeking what it wanted elsewhere. Thus, Egypt found itself forced to go in an unprecedented direction to acquire arms for its military. When the West closed the door on Egypt's efforts to acquire the weapons it needed to arm its military, there was no other way to go but East. The West's unwillingness to arm Egypt was sufficiently strong to assure the conclusion of this arms deal.

As the first major transfer of arms from an industrial power to a Third World Country, it was a venture into a new direction in international relations. As prominently as the mentioning of this deal is in historical and political writings that cover this period within studies of other events such as Egypt's quest for financing the Aswan High Dam and the Suez Canal Crisis, there is a surprising lack of comprehensive information and analytical studies concerning this important event. The few accounts available come through different versions depending on the people close to the events that led to the conclusion of the deal. The details of one account often disagree with the details of another and thus bring into question the authenticity of all accounts.

The declassification of many United States government documents provides new insight and understanding— at least from the U.S. point of view—for this arms transfer. In some cases these new sources provide fresh information and in others they serve to confirm or deny suppositions made by earlier authors about the deal.

In the literature, there are four views of what caused the loss of Egypt and pushing it to go east to conclude the arms deal with the Soviets. These views came as expected from the different parties involved in the process or affected by it.

The Egyptian version claims that Nasser was sincere about building his army with American weapons. He also wanted to build good relations with the U.S. but the constraints the U.S. was attaching to the sale of weapons to Egypt was not acceptable to him. Realizing that his army was in real need for modern weaponry and U.S. unwillingness to provide him with the weapons he needed, Nasser concluded that he had no choice but to buy the weapons from the Soviet Union⁴.

The American version states that the loss of Egypt was not the fault of anyone. Scholars who studied the case claim that Nasser was exaggerating his demand and wanted to be treated in a special way regarding arms deliveries. Scholars with this view believe that his personal and political ambitions to become a regional hegemon did not allow him to accept the usual strings on U.S. arms deals. All these factors led to the unsuccessful conclusion of weapons negotiations between Egypt and the U.S.⁵

⁴, Mohamed Heikal, *Nasser: The Cairo Documents* (London: New England Library, 1972), 59-70.

⁵ Mathew F. Holland, *America and Egypt: from Roosevelt to Eisenhower* (Westport, Conn.: Preager, 1996) 50-85.

The Israeli view is that the Czech arms deal was cleverly articulated by Egypt as a bargaining chip against the U.S. Israeli scholars argue that the negotiations for the deal started at the end of 1953 and not at the Bandung Conference⁶. They claim that the deal was not related to the Israeli raid on Gaza, but really concluded at the arrival of a Czech delegation at Egypt in February 1955. Nasser was just continuing the previous Egyptian government's attempts to seek arms from the Eastern bloc during the 1950-1952 period.⁷ Therefore Israel was not to blame.

Those who hold the that the Soviet Union was to blame assert that the USSR was willing to increase its prestige and influence at the expense of the West and to limit Western influence. Also the Soviet Union wanted to fulfill its needs for raw materials, which developing countries were willing to sell, to build its economy. The USSR took the chance that the West was unwilling to provide Egypt with arms in exchange for Egyptian products and provided Egypt with what it desired in terms of weapons⁸.

These view, as much they capture parts of the story, they fail to address the full range of historical events that led to the conclusion of the deal. Therefore they fall short of reaching a comprehensive conclusion about the cause of losing Egypt and its decision to go east.

This study attempts to examine the decision-making process of the foreign policy planners of the nations that were closely involved with the Czech arms deal. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to examine the role played by then U.S. Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, to prevent Egypt from acquiring U.S. military equipment which caused the "Loss of Egypt". It is the argument here that it Dulles was to blame for Egypt going East in buying weapons triggering a special relationship between Egypt and the Soviet Union. By examining this selected incident during a period which was critical to the subsequent development of relations between the United States, the Soviet Union, and the Middle East—particularly Egypt—we can demonstrate the importance of understanding regional issues when outside powers make policy decisions regarding this region.

II - Egypt Before 1955

The year 1955 was of great importance in the development of international relations between the newly emerging nonaligned nations and the solidified blocks of Eastern and Western powers. Egypt was to play a prominent role in the unfolding drama and would provide an example which other newly independent nations would emulate in varying degrees. Until the Egyptian Revolution on July 23, 1952, Egypt was closely aligned politically, economically, culturally, and militarily with Britain. Its army was British equipped and its policies were subject to the influence of a substantial British military force on its territory. The U.S. looked upon Egypt as a British preserve.⁹

⁶ Rami Ginat. "Origins of the Czech-Egyptian Arms Deal: A Reappraisal), in: *The 1956 War: Collusion and Rivalry in the Middle East*, ed. David Tal (London: Frank Cass, 2001), 147.

⁷ Ibid, p. 145-161.

⁸ R.K. Ramazani, "Soviet Military Assistance to the Uncommitted Counties," *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 3(4) (1959), 357-363.

⁹ Gail E. Meyer, *Egypt and the United States: The Formative Years* (Plainsboro, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1980), 36.

The base of the revolution was very narrow and selective. Of the approximately three hundred Free Officers, Nasser selected ninety of the most trusted to be active participants in the planned military coup.¹⁰ Through planning and good luck, this small group of individuals managed to capitalize on the degenerating state of affairs of the ancient regime and to wrest the reins of power from it. The fact that there was no immediate opposition to the military coup attests to the lack of popular support enjoyed by King Farouk and his regime. The few months preceding the coup had been particularly irritating for the old regime. The Egyptian masses were decidedly anti-British and were tired of waiting to rid their land of the British presence and of its control over the Suez Canal.¹¹ Nevertheless, the Egyptian masses had been denied any role in the coup d'état and their mood, immediately following the military takeover, could perhaps be better described as nervous anticipation rather than as "festive silence".¹²

Efforts to engender population support for the new regime were fairly successful. Within a few weeks of the Coup, the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) did away with archaic honorary and hereditary titles and positions. On September 28, 1952, the RCC instituted agrarian land reform which limited the size of agricultural land holdings. Newly freed lands were distributed to landless peasants who in many cases had been working the land as laborers or sharecroppers¹³. Other measures like reductions in rent and food prices, and the introduction of minimum wages for agricultural workers were designed to restore a measure of equity in the Egyptian economy¹⁴.

The Free Officers had come to power unified by strong anti-colonial, anti Royal sentiment. They felt that a change of leadership at the top would be sufficiently effective in remedying the economic, political and social ills which afflicted Egypt¹⁵. They focused on the international dimension of the problems in Egypt. They looked at the foreign domination of Egyptian policies, and the loss of the state's moral authority and anachronism of the traditional political parties, as the causes of the crisis¹⁶. The RCC ordered the disbanding of all political parties after it failed to purge them of corrupt elements and the fear of a plot against the new regime¹⁷.

Nasser was perceived as the power behind the scene, and the President General Mohammad Naguib, was just a figurehead. Gamal Abdul Nasser first assumed the position of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior. In his autobiography, Anwar Al-Sadat refers to Nasser as a suspicious, sometimes bitter man, who was concerned with the possibility of

¹⁰ Robert St. John, *The Boss* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960), 115.

¹¹ George Lenczowski, *The Middle East in World Affairs* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1962), 498.

¹² Anwar Al-Sadat, *In Search of Identity* (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), 107-108.

¹³ Lenczowski. *Middle East in World Affairs*,. 498.

¹⁴ Keith Wheelock, *Nasser's New Egypt* Frederick A. (New York: Praeger, 1960),. 21

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 21-23.

¹⁶ Mahmoud Hussein, *Class Conflict in Egypt: 1945-1970*, Michel Chirman, et. al. trans., (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973), 95.

¹⁷ Wheelock, 23.

counter revolutions taking place against the new regime¹⁸. Nasser showed additional political caution by obtaining a substantial pay raise for the military—the only true base of support upon which he could rely. He also promised to strengthen the army and to remedy its equipment and training problems¹⁹.

The new leaders had the intent to establish Egypt as a proud and independent nation. £70 million confiscated from King Farouk, who was the king of Egypt when the revolution took place, was then used to finance schools and hospitals, which were constructed at an unprecedented rate. In one year, such construction outpaced the total number built in the twenty years before²⁰. Ambitious attempts at land reclamation began. Its jewel was the Liberation Province, which was created in April 1953 to reclaim 600,000 feddans (approximately 622,800 acres) from the desert. With housing projects, produce packaging, and some manufacturing industries planned and built in the area, the new province became a symbol of the revolutionary regime's dynamic approach to social and economic problems²¹. Proof of the improvement in Egypt's economic status during the early period of the revolution was clear in Nasser's focus on rebuilding the shattered economy and providing services and jobs for people²².

Despite all this apparent progress, the need to bolster Egypt's military was still very much needed. From the beginning, the new rulers of Egypt tried to build a strong army.²³ Psychologically it was very important to the military and to Nasser personally, that improvement in the army's weaponry be made²⁴. The creation of a modern military force was an important symbol of independence and sovereignty in Egypt, contributing to the development of national identity²⁵.

Initial Egyptian efforts late in 1952 and early 1953 were designed to do this based on reworking a previously accepted shopping list submitted to the U.S. by the previous regime²⁶. However, before 1955, there was a surprising lack of emphasis placed on the quest for weaponry. According to Kennett Love, Nasser noted: "We want peace in order to spend money that is now being devoted to defense on our economic and social project."²⁷

¹⁸ Al-Sadat, 107-108.

¹⁹ P.J. Vatikiotis, *The Egyptian Army in Politics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 98.

²⁰ Al-Sadat, 129.

²¹ Wheelock, 143.

²² Kennett Love, "Nasser turns to Economic Reforms, Now Solidly in Power, He Seeks to Raise Living Standard," *New York Times*, November 21, 1954, E4.

²³ Raymond William Baker, *Egypt's Uncertain Revolution Under Nasser and Sadat* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978) 101.

²⁴ Heikal, 47-48.

²⁵ William J. Burns. *Economic Aid and American Policy Toward Egypt: 1955-1981* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), 10.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 47-49.

²⁷ Love, E4.

Nasser was performing a delicate balancing act during the period just prior to the Czech arms deal. He wanted a strong army because of his personal convictions that a weak, ill-prepared army had led to the humiliating defeat during the 1948 war in Palestine. A strong army was also necessary to satisfy the perceived needs of the military and its officers²⁸. Nasser still managed to maintain a balanced fiscal policy which allowed him to spend for domestic progress. He did not envision a large-scale conflict with Israel and therefore was conservative in estimating the amount of military hardware required to bolster Egypt's army²⁹. Nasser gained full and open control of Egypt on November 1954 when Naguib resigned as president.

III - Relations With the United States

From the early days of the 1952 revolution, the U.S. enjoyed a friendly position with the new regime. The leaders of the revolution wanted to build a good link with the Americans. In the early hours of the morning of July 23, 1952, contact was made with the American Ambassador who was informed of what had transpired and the goals and ideas of the revolution. There were two good reasons for this. First, the Free Officers wanted to establish a cordial link with the Americans which would block potential British moves or protest. Second, the Free Officers held the U.S. in high regards because they believed that it had never been a colonial power and they admired American principles like freedom and respect for sovereignty.³⁰

For the U.S., the overthrow of the monarchy was no great loss. The Royal regime was neither strong, nor stable, nor particularly sympathetic to Western interests, characteristics that were needed by the U.S. for the new plans envisioned for the region³¹. American Ambassador, Jefferson Caffery saw the Free Officers as friendly to the United States. Caffery was generally optimistic: "The United States should not rush Egypt toward an acceptance of MEDO (Middle East Defense Organization), he suggested, but it should help Cairo build an effective and inexpensive military force to protect the country"³².

The new government in Cairo began a move to gain American trust. General Naguib promised that American arms would not be used against Israel and he showed a willingness to solve the problem of Sudanese independence. He informed Caffery in August that "Egypt is a weak nation and needs a strong friend"³³." The continued amicable relations during the early months of the revolution fueled American dreams of an Egyptian-U.S. alliance. However, this was not to be. The Free Officers had a negative attitude toward joint defense or any collective security pacts. Nasser revealed that attitude during an interview with the *New York Times* a couple of years after the revolution. He said that it was natural for Egyptians to be cautious of treaties and

²⁸ John S. Badeau, "A Role in Search of A Hero: A Brief Study of the Egyptian Revolution," *Middle East Journal* 9(4) (1955), 373-384.

²⁹ Donald Neff, *Warriors at Suez*. (New York: The Linden Press/Simon and Schuster, 1981), 33.

³⁰ Al-Sadat, 108.

³¹ Burns, 11.

³² Barry Rubin, "America and the Egyptian Revolution, 1950-1957," *Political Science Quarterly* 97(1) (1982), 76.

³³ Ibid. 77.

alliances with outside powers since the history of such agreements had always resulted in deleterious effects on the Egyptian population.³⁴

Another reason that caused the relationship between the U.S. and Egypt to wane was a worry on the part of the American administration of Nasser's influence over the larger Arab population in the Middle East. Eisenhower was displeased that Nasser's "activities ranged far outside the borders of Egypt".³⁵

In the beginning, the new Egyptian leadership likewise harbored some naive dreams. Mohamad Heikal, the Chief Editor of the official news paper *Al-Ahram* and close confidant of Nasser, indicated that the original atmosphere at the RCC was one of hope and expectation that "the riches and strength of the New World were going to help one of the world's oldest countries emerge from the cocoon of colonialism".³⁶ The new regime quickly asked the U.S. for armament. Nasser made it clear to Caffery that any sale of weapons by the U.S. to Egypt would enhance the prestige of the United States and that such weapons would be for defensive purposes only.³⁷

The two nations were not on the same page regarding Egypt's arms request. Nasser had not formulated a concrete list of required weapons to build up the Egyptian army. The nature and size of the list changed during the various stages of negotiation and confrontation in which the two countries were engaged. At first it was based on a five million dollar figure from a request of the Farouk regime³⁸. The final list submitted to the Eisenhower administration consisted essentially of a request for one hundred medium tanks and fifty aircraft. This list was the last request for arms from Egypt before the Czech arms deal³⁹.

President Eisenhower considered the package as "peanuts"; that is, as strictly defensive quantities when it first came up. The original U.S. offer of the twenty-seven million dollar package had apparently been made in earnest and accepted as such by Nasser after the Israeli raid on Gaza which effectively dashed all hopes for a normalization of Egyptian-Israeli relations⁴⁰.

The U.S. decided to delay any delivery of the list requested by Egypt. After France, Britain, and Israel objected to any transfer of American arms to Egypt, Eisenhower reconsidered his intentions and delayed acting on the Egyptian request. Israel objection was to be expected. France objected because of Egypt's assistance to the Algerian resistance. Britain objected in a message from Churchill to Dulles on May 7, 1953, because of fear that some of the weapons would be turned against British troops still in the Suez Canal zone⁴¹.

³⁴ "Cairo Asks Patience on West-Arab Pacts," *New York Times*, August 20, 1954, 1

³⁵ Dwight Eisenhower, *Waging Peace* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965), 23-24.

³⁶ Heikal, 47.

³⁷ Muhammed Abd el-Wahab Sayed-Ahmed, *Nasser and American Foreign Policy: 1952-1956* (London: LAAM Ltd., 1989), 78-81.

³⁸ Heikal, 47.

³⁹ Eisenhower, 25.

⁴⁰ Meyer, 49-53.

⁴¹ Neff, 71.

Besides these objections there were other serious reasons for Eisenhower's hesitation regarding Egypt's request for arms. First, official U.S. military policy at the time recognized the primacy of the British in defending the region.⁴² Second, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles was generally opposed to such a transaction on the grounds that conciliatory gestures should not be made to abominable nonaligned nations. Third, and probably most important, the Tripartite Declaration of 1950, in which the U.S., the United Kingdom, and France pledged themselves to cooperate in restricting the flow of arms into the Middle East, was still in effect and appeared to be functioning relatively well⁴³. Eisenhower did not want to be thought of as being the one responsible for disrupting the status quo. Two other significant issues, the Baghdad Pact and the concept of nonalignment, were fueling the divergence of the two countries.

In May of 1953, Dulles made his Middle East trip. He met with Nasser on May 11, and discussed the possibility of Egypt joining the MEDO. Dulles discovered that the Arabs were not interested in such move.⁴⁴ During the visit, Dulles found very little support among most Middle Eastern nations for defensive pacts with Western Powers to form the "Northern Tier." Nasser was diametrically opposed to Egypt and other Arab counties participating in military alliances with the West or any other outside power. He claimed that they were not popular with the masses and they were actually dangerous to any leader who would go against the will of the people⁴⁵. Dulles was certainly cognizant of Nasser's strong feelings regarding pacts with the West but he was apparently willing to risk losing Egypt in order to fulfill his plans.

During their meeting, Nasser made his case to Dulles for Egypt's need of modern arms, but his argument fell on ears deafened by the "communist roar". As mentioned earlier, because the British objected to any kind of arms shipment to Egypt, Dulles informed Churchill that he would leave the situation as it was so he could give the Egyptians no definite answer to their request⁴⁶.

The other issue that tended to separate Egypt and the U.S. was the question of nonalignment. Given the history of domination of the colonial powers in Egypt and the Middle East, Nasser was anxious to distance himself and his nation from entanglements with the West. This did not mean that this stance of anti-imperialism would necessarily eliminate the possibility of Egypt pursuing a truly neutral course, but this was how many in the West interpreted such a policy⁴⁷.

Nasser's desire to steer an independent course in the arena of international relations did not set well with Dulles. The American Secretary of State shared the fear of Communism espoused by many of his era. It was a world in which neutralism was considered virtually akin to hostility to

⁴² Peter L. Hahn, *The United States, Great Britain, and Egypt 1945-1956: Strategy and Diplomacy in the Early Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 323.

⁴³ Pierre, *Global Politics of Arms Sales*, 203.

⁴⁴ Neff., 43

⁴⁵ Miles Copeland, *The Game of Nations: The Amoral of Power Politics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970), 210.

⁴⁶ Reply from the Secretary to the Personal Message From British Prime Minister and Acting Foreign Minister, May 8, 1953. *FRUS* 1952-54, 2061.

⁴⁷ Elie Podeh, "The Drift Towards Neutrality: Egyptian Foreign Policy During The Early Nasserist Era, 1952-55," *Middle Eastern Studies* 32(1) (1996), 159-178

the West⁴⁸. Therefore, any move by neutral nations to normalize relations with the Soviet Union was seen as a step in the direction of disaster. Egypt, like most of the nations of the Middle East viewed Israel and internal turmoil as the most immediate threats to stability in the region and not the impending advance of the Soviet Union. These ideas did not fit well into the West's picture of the world and in particular they did not facilitate Dulles plan for containment of the Soviet Union⁴⁹.

IV- Climate For an Arms Deal:

American arms found their way to the Middle East region when Greece and Turkey became major recipients of military assistance under the general rubric of the Truman Doctrine announced in the spring of 1947⁵⁰. However, the U.S. demonstrated a general reluctance to promote or respond to requests for arms transfers to the region because no immediate threat of Soviet intrusion was envisioned⁵¹. The Tripartite Declaration of 1950 formalized and intensified this reluctance. In a Talking Paper prepared by the U.S. State Department for President Eisenhower in the fall of 1955, the U.S. position was not to allow an arms race to happen in the region⁵².

American foreign policy at that time was deeply rooted in the concept of anti-Soviet defense pacts that included the attempt to establish an Allied Middle East Command that would ideally include Egypt. As badly as Nasser needed modern arms for the Egyptian army, it was politically and personally unthinkable for him to formally align Egypt with the West in order to gain the arms. When Dulles met Nasser personally in 1953, he realized the hopelessness of creating such alliance⁵³.

Throughout the course of the diplomatic fencing which took place between the U.S. and Egypt, Nasser continued to seek American Arms. At times, the U.S. appeared to be ready to transfer arms to Egypt. The U.S. was aware that if "Egypt could not buy from them, they might buy in the Soviet Union". President Eisenhower was inclined to agree on that point of view⁵⁴. On August 2, 1954, Ambassador Caffery presented Foreign Minister Mahmoud Fawzi with a draft proposal of \$20 million in military aid and an equal amount in economic assistance⁵⁵.

⁴⁸ See Anthony Nutting, *Nasser* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, 1972).

⁴⁹ Townsend Hoopes, *The Devil and John Foster Dulles* Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1973), 315.

⁵⁰ Lenczowski, 147-150.

⁵¹ Pierre, *Arms Transfers and American Foreign Policy*, 23-27.

⁵² Talking paper for President Eisenhower. Re. the American Perspective on the Soviets Supplying Egypt with Modern Arms. Washington D.C. October 28, 1955. Dwight Eisenhower Library, John Foster Dulles papers 1951-1959. JFD Chronological Series, Box No. 14.

⁵³ Peter L. Huhn, "Containment and Egyptian Nationalism: The Unsuccessful Effects to Establish the Middle East Command," *Diplomatic History* 11(1) (1987), 25.

⁵⁴ Memorandum of Conversation with the president At the White House. August 5, 1955. JFD Chronological Series. D.E. Library Box No. 12.

⁵⁵ Foreign Relations of the U.S. (FRUS) 1952- 54. Vol. 9, 2288.

This proposal fell on hard times almost immediately. Egypt could not accept the normal congressional strings associated with arms transfers, particularly that American arms should be used for internal security or for defense purposes only. Nor could it accept the associated presence of American Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) to help the Egyptian personal in the use and maintenance of U.S. arms⁵⁶.

The status of the American arms transfer to Egypt never attained the desired expectation of either country. The U.S. even stalled in answering Nasser's frantic requests for arms after the Israeli raid on Gaza in February 1955, and only showed renewed interest in providing Egypt with weapons after information about the Czech arms deal began to leak out.

Between the time of the Egyptian revolution and the Czech arms deal, Nasser had attempted to obtain arms from other Western sources, but his success was limited.⁵⁷ There were several reasons why Nasser preferred to modernize the Egyptian army with Western weapons. First, the Egyptian military was unfamiliar with Soviet weaponry. Second, he felt that it could be difficult to communicate with a country with a language and culture that was unknown in Egypt. Third, Nasser expected a negative reaction from conservative countries in the Arab world about associating Egypt with a communist country.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, by the middle of 1955, Nasser felt compelled for personal, political and security reasons to look to the Eastern bloc for arms.

The transfers of weapons from the Soviet Union to Third World countries were very limited and were given to socialist regimes. The Soviet publically criticized the type of military and economic aid the West provided to developing countries because of the unavoidable supplier-recipient relationships which developed. The Soviets insisted that the West was motivated solely by the desire to acquire control over the policies of the recipient countries⁵⁹.

The prospect of Egypt receiving arms from the Soviet Union evolved during the three years since the revolution in Egypt. At first it appeared to be completely out of question. The Soviets viewed the new regime with suspicion. They initially saw the development of the Egyptian relationship with the U.S. as an alarming sign. But after a year or two, relations between the two nations warmed as both countries' policies converged on a number of issues like the rejection of the Baghdad Pact and acceptance of neutralism as a legitimate national policy.⁶⁰ This warming trend was assisted by the emerging shift in foreign policy which appeared with Khrushchev's consolidation of power throughout 1954. The new foreign policy of the U.S.S.R. was more open and began to allow for initiatives and peaceful coexistence with noncommunist countries.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Burns, 16-19

⁵⁷ Heikal, 26.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 58-59

⁵⁹ Uri Ra'anani, *Soviet Arms Transfers and the problem of political Leverage*. In: *Arms Transfers to the Third World: The Military Build up in Less Industrial Countries*, ed. Uri Ra'anani, Robert L. Pfahzgraff, Jr., and Geoffrey Kemp (Boulder, Co.: West view, 1978), 131.

⁶⁰ George Lenczowski, "Evolution of Soviet Policy Toward the Middle East," *The Journal of Politics* 20(1) (1958), 172-177.

⁶¹ Ibid, 177.

Thus the stage was set for Egyptian-Soviet rapprochement when, in April 1955, Nasser confided to Zhou Enlai, the Chinese Premier, at the Bandung Conference that he was in need of modern arms which the West seemed unwilling to provide.

V-The Deal: Chronology and Analysis:

Nasser began his quest for modern arms for the Egyptian army soon after the Free Officers came to power in July of 1952. It is important to have an understanding of the sequence and the critical events after the revolution and before the Czech arms deal to be able to better judge the causes of this historic, precedent setting event.

Britain was the main supplier of arms to Egypt before the revolution. The British wanted to create an Egyptian force that was sufficiently strong to provide assistance in case of Soviet aggression, but it had to be sufficiently small as not to provoke hostilities in the region⁶². This relation came to an end with the revolution and the Egyptian demand that the British forces leave the Suez Canal base. The Egyptian army was ultimately left with no supplier of arms and spare parts. Despite his attempts to improve economic conditions, Nasser could not keep his base of power without improving the capabilities of the army.

The Egyptian need for arms was communicated to the American Ambassador in Cairo as early as September 1952.⁶³ On November 24, 1952, Caffery communicated to General Naguib a conciliatory letter from the Department of State indicating the American intention of "making available to the Egyptian Government certain equipments for the armed forces of Egypt which had previously been intended for use by the Egyptian police"⁶⁴. The U.S. wanted to make a positive gesture to foster the development of good relations between Egypt and the U.S., and to accomplish the "desire to be of maximum assistance in attainment West objectives to link interim arms program with defense negotiations"⁶⁵.

In the early months of 1953, after having received encouraging messages from the U.S., the Egyptians sent a military mission to the United States in order to push for support for Egypt's request for American arms. The mission, headed by Ali Sabri, a trusted member of the Free Officers, was avoided and side-tracked by American Officials. After two months of this undiplomatic treatment, the mission returned to Cairo with little to show for their efforts. Nasser was frustrated and humiliated by this episode which demonstrated that Washington's real intentions were not reflected by the charm of Caffery and other American diplomatic officials⁶⁶.

On July 27, 1954, the British and the Egyptians signed an agreement concerning the withdrawal of British troops from the Suez Canal. As a result, Dulles moved on with a proposal for the transfer of American arms to Egypt as part of an overall assistance program. However, the

⁶² "If War Comes to the Middle East," *U.S. News and World Report*, November 11, 1955, 24.

⁶³ Nuffing, 46.

⁶⁴ Jefferson Caffery. Letter to General Mohamed Naguib. November 24, 1954. *FRUS* 1952-54, 3828.

⁶⁵ Department of State. Outgoing Telegram to American Embassy London, January 17, 1953. DE Library, papers a president 1953-61. Ann Whitmen File- Dulles-Herter Series, Box. 1.

⁶⁶ Al-Sadat, 127.

Eisenhower administration was not sufficiently motivated to overcome the problem of the MAAG to which Nasser objected⁶⁷.

On February 24, 1955, the Baghdad Pact, which would eventually include Britain, Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Pakistan, was announced. Iraq's membership in the agreement was particularly difficult for Nasser to accept because of Egypt's traditional rivalry with Iraq for the position of supremacy in the Arab world. As an ally with Britain in a defensive pact, Iraq now became eligible for arms transfers from the West. This situation was a tangible threat to Nasser's ambitions for the region. Nasser's extremely vocal protestation alienated the British and encouraged the Soviets to deal with Egypt.⁶⁸ Four days later Israel raided the Gaza strip and humiliated Nasser and the Egyptian army. The raid proved the strong need for immediate improvements in the Egyptian army. The seriousness of the raid in Egyptian thinking can hardly be over stated. Al-Sadat, then the Chairman of the Egyptian parliament, insisted that the incident held a "historic significance" and that it was a "turning point in the history of Egypt".⁶⁹ Nasser immediately came under pressure from all directions to do something about the raid. The next day a changed of rhetoric was easily discernible from Nasser as he talked about war to a crowd of cadets at the Military Academy. The incident was particularly galling for Nasser because he had, just few days before, paid a visit to the Gaza strip and assured his troops that they were in no danger and that all would remain quiet.⁷⁰ The raid showed clearly the extent of Egypt's military weakness. It was unconscionable to Nasser and must have presented him with all the shock he required to dramatically alter the direction of Egyptian foreign policy to pursue his quest for arms from any supplier.

The U.S. was very concerned with the raid. Dulles felt that it seriously jeopardized the Egyptian position in the Gaza strip. He informed the President of indications that Israel was prepared to take the territory by force and he recommended to Eisenhower that "in the event of action of this sort, the United States might unilaterally take economic sanctions, including cutting off remittances of funds to Israel"⁷¹.

In response to the raid, the Eisenhower administration dutifully dusted off the latest arms shopping list which Nasser had previously sent to Washington and offered to sell the Egyptians the items on the list. According to Eisenhower, the State Department suspected that Egypt was short

⁶⁷ Memorandum of Conversation with the President. August 7, 1954. D.E. Library papers of John Foster Dulles. White House Memoranda Series. Box.1.

⁶⁸ Memorandum of Conversation between Soviet Ambassador to Egypt D.S. Solod and the Egyptian Prime Minister G. Nasser. May 21, 1955. [Source: AVPRF fond87,opis18, papka 36, delo 3, Listy 176-180 obtained and translated for Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) by : Guy Laron]. Attached to: Cutting the Gordian knot: the Post WWII Egyptian Quest For Arms and the 1955 Czechoslovak Arms Deal. CWIHP working paper 55. Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, D.C. February 2007. [Solod Memorandum 1 hereafter].

⁶⁹ Al-Sadat,53.

⁷⁰ Neff, 35.

⁷¹ Memorandum of Conversation with the president Secretary of States to the President. June 15, 1955. John Foster Dulles papers 1951-1959. JFD chronological Series. Box. 12, A67-28. DE Library, Abilene, KS.

of money and rebuffed Nasser once again by requesting payment in cash, some twenty seven million dollars, rather than in barter⁷².

On April 9, 1955, Nasser departed to the Bandung Conference where he reportedly discussed his need for modern arms with China's Prime Minister Zhou Enlai who in turn transmitted the request to the Soviet Union⁷³. The Soviet Ambassador to Egypt, Daniil Solod, met Nasser regarding the results of the Bandung Conference and the possibility of arms transfers on May 21, 1955 according to prior arrangement. Solod told Nasser that the Soviet Union was ready to start negotiation on this subject and these conversations would be conducted in Prague rather than Moscow. Nasser agreed and said he "will send his representative tomorrow to negotiate"⁷⁴.

Feeling that his position with the Soviet Union was secure, Nasser notified the U.S. Ambassador Henry A. Byroade on June 9, 1955 of the impending transaction and expressed his preference for American arms⁷⁵. Secretary of State Dulles ignored Nasser's request for the U.S. to reconsider the standing \$27 million shopping list, feeling that it was a shallow attempt at blackmailing the United States into offering more acceptable terms⁷⁶. On numerous occasions during the months of June and July, and for the last time on August 15, 1955, Ambassador Byroade communicated Nasser's willingness to deal with the West rather than with the Soviet Union in his quest for arms⁷⁷. Even at this date, Dulles and Anthony Eden of Great Britain had convinced themselves that Nasser's maneuvering was nothing more than a bluff. They believed that Khrushchev had spoken the truth at the Geneva summit conference when he assured the Western leaders on July 20, 1955, that no such deal was under consideration⁷⁸.

In September 1955, the Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov confirmed the imminence of a Czech-Egyptian arms arrangement to Dulles in New York when both men were attending the opening session of the United Nations General Assembly⁷⁹. Dulles tried in vain to halt the inevitable by dispatching first Kermit Roosevelt, a CIA Middle East expert who was acquainted with Nasser, then later George Allen, Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs, to Cairo in an attempt to dissuade Nasser from going through with the deal⁸⁰.

⁷² Eisenhower, 24

⁷³ Heikal, 57.

⁷⁴ Solod Memorandum 1.

⁷⁵ Byroade to Dulles. Telegram From the Embassy in Egypt to the Department of State. June 9, 1955. Cairo. *FRUS*: 1955-1957. Volume XIV, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1955. 237-240.

⁷⁶ Memorandum From the Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs to the Secretary of State. Jernegam to Dulles. June 131, 1955, Washington D.C. *FRUS*: 1955-1957. Volume XIV, 242-245.

⁷⁷ Byroade ToDulles. Several Telegrams from the Embassy in Egypt to the Department of State. Volume XIV, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 240-362.

⁷⁸ Herbert Hoover, Jr. to Wilson. Letter From the Acting Secretary of State to the Secretary of Defense. July 21, 1955, Washington, D.C. *FRUS*: 1955-1957, Volume XIV, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 307-308.

⁷⁹ Dulles to Byroade, Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Egypt. September 20, 1955. Washington, D.C. *FRUS*: 1955-1957. Volume XIV, 482-483.

⁸⁰ Dulles to Hoover. Telegram from the Secretary of State to the Department of State. September 27, 1955. New York. *FRUS*: 1955-1957, Volume XIV, p. 482-483.

President Eisenhower suffered a heart attack on September 24, 1955 while vacationing in Denver. Eisenhower directed that Dulles be left alone regarding the conduct of foreign affairs. At this moment, and during the President's convalescence, Dulles was in nearly complete control of the conduct of U.S. foreign policy. It was his judgment that guided the American reaction to the Czech-Egyptian arms deal⁸¹.

On September 27, 1955, Nasser publicly announced that Egypt and Czechoslovakia had successfully concluded an arms deal of substantial size. As noted earlier, this deal was really between the Soviet Union and Egypt. This fact was understood by the West even in the early hours after the announcement⁸².

In an attempt to block the deal, Dulles convinced President Eisenhower to write a letter to Nicolai Bulganin, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union. On October 11, from Denver the President sent the letter. The text of the letter says:

I am concerned about the new prospective arms shipments to Egypt. I fear that they will not promote the goals which, I hope, we have in common—that is a relaxation of tensions between us and peacefully constructive solution of the Arab-Israel problem⁸³.

Bulganin responded that there were no grounds for concern. Dulles questioned Molotov about the meaning of Chairman Bulganin's assertion that there were no grounds for concern regarding the furthering of commonly held goals in the Middle East. Molotov said that the Soviet Union had done nothing wrong in permitting Czechoslovakia to negotiate a purely commercial deal with Egypt and insisted that the "small" quantity of weapons involved in the deal would amount to but a drop when compared to the ocean of arms which the U.S., the U.K., and France had provided to the region⁸⁴. Thus, the arms deal went on and the Eisenhower Administration was not able to stop it.

The value of arms involved was estimated to be approximately \$200 million and they were to be delivered over a period of five years. The agreement called for payments to be made in cotton and rice on a normal commercial basis. There would be no string attached and to make this point clear, the Soviet news agency TASS reported that "the Soviet government believes that every state has the right to fend itself and to purchase weapons for its defense from other states". Soviet personnel were soon on hand in Egypt to assist in putting the equipment into operation⁸⁵.

Regarding the question of motivations, we can cite some general reasons for Egypt to seek arms from any country that was willing to provide them that fit with Nasser's views. First, Nasser had a personal, psychological need to improve the readiness posture of the Egyptian army. This

⁸¹ John, Donovan, *U.S. and Soviet Policy in the Middle East: 1945-1956* (New York: Facts on File, 1972), 371.

⁸² Thomas J. Hamilton, "Egypt to Obtain Arms of Soviet: West Concerned," *New York Times*, September 28, 1955, 1.

⁸³ Eisenhower to Bulganin. Meetings with the president. October 11, 1955. JFD papers 1951-1959. JFD Chronological Series. Box # 12, A67-28.

⁸⁴ Memorandum of Conversation with Foreign Minister Molotov. Geneva, Switzerland. October 31, 1955. Eisenhower papers as president: 1953-1961. International Series, Ann Whitman File. Box. 20.

⁸⁵ Ra'anan, *The USSR Arms the Third World*, 38-85.

need arose from his experience in an Egyptian army which he felt had been betrayed by the poor leadership of the Egyptian government during the 1948 war. Second, Nasser required arms to pacify the demands of the military officers' corps in order to assure their support for the new regime. Third, Egypt's nationalistic pride and delicate sense of sovereignty required a visible symbol around which to rally. Fourth, as a result of Western arms shipments to Iraq which began after Iraq had become a member of the Baghdad Pact, Egypt's prestige required a military boost to offset Iraq's growing military might; and fifth, for security and political reasons, Egypt needed to be able to assert its ability to repel any and all Israeli incursion into Egyptian territory.

The basic chronology of the events related to the arms deal supports of these general motivations. Additionally, Nasser had at least three reasons for seeking arms from the Soviet Union rather than from Western Countries. First, the West could not or would not provide arms to Egypt free of strings. Second, the Soviet Union agreed to favorable financial terms and the West did not. Third, it is highly likely that Nasser and the Soviets concluded an arms agreement with the view of destroying the Western domination of arms transfers in the Middle East, and by extension, this would destroy much of the political influence of the West in the region⁸⁶.

VI- The Soviet Circulation Dilemma Effect on Dulles's Decision Toward Nasser:

With no prior political experience, President Eisenhower was cut from a different mold than other American presidents. His first touch with foreign affairs started when he became the Supreme Allied Commander but his philosophy as president was heavily influenced by his military leadership experience⁸⁷. Based on that, some authors contend that there is evidence that President Eisenhower would bow to the influence of Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, when faced with a very delicate situation⁸⁸. As an example, he adopted, in his campaign for presidency, some of Dulles's concepts such as liberation of nations enslaved by communism and massive retaliation.⁸⁹

John Foster Dulles was strongly influenced by the conservative, religious environment in which he was raised (His father was a Presbyterian minister). This was clear in his approach to foreign affairs⁹⁰. Dulles was a staunch anti-communist. In this first public address as Secretary of State he said "We have enemies who are plotting our destruction. These enemies are the Russian Communists and their allies in other countries."⁹¹

As Secretary of State, it was clear that he had a preeminent position with the president with regard the formation and execution of American foreign policy. President Eisenhower

⁸⁶ Ibid, 34-36.

⁸⁷ David B. Capitaichik, *The Eisenhower Presidency and American Foreign Policy* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), 1-7.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 10.

⁸⁹ Robert H. Ferrell. ed. *The Eisenhower Diaries* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1981), xi.

⁹⁰ Andrew H. Berding, *Dulles on Diplomacy* (Princeton, NJ: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1965), 10-11.

⁹¹ Speech of the Secretary of State. John Foster Dulles papers, 1951-1959. JDF chronological Series, Box 2, A 67-68. DE Library, Abilene, KS.

acknowledged in his memoirs the high place that Dulles occupied in the arena of foreign affairs. The President delegated to Dulles, with "complete confidence," an unusual degree of flexibility as his representative at international conferences⁹². Dulles's method of advising the president contributed to the way in which Eisenhower saw the world. In describing the way he advised the President, Dulles said: "I select the approach I think best and recommend this to him for his approval, giving my reasons for the selection"⁹³.

Dulles saw the Middle East as an area of the world which was extremely susceptible to Soviet expansion. To support his view, he pointed to the historical Russian maneuvering to gain access to a warm water ports in the area, and their reluctant to retreat from their foothold in Northern Iran at the end of WWII. Their proximity to Middle Eastern oil, which was of strategic importance to the West, was also a matter of concern to Dulles. Other issues that may have affected the American positions in the Middle East were subordinated by Dulles in his quest to pursue his "New Look" policy of building anti-Soviet defense pacts. This policy which was adopted by the Eisenhower administration in 1953, called for a new, positive method of dealing with the threat of communism. In an effort to take the struggle to the doorsteps of the communists rather than to wait for them to expand their influence before taking any action, Dulles worked hard to form anti-Soviet defense pacts around the world.

In this policy, Dulles expressed the goal of building a world that was more secure for freedom-loving people. He operated on the principle that American interests were enlightened and that those of the Soviet Union were founded on principles of darkness.⁹⁴ His attitude about the absolute requirement for all enlightened governments to actively resist communism was unmovable. Thus, it was difficult for him to accept and deal efficiently with the newly emerging block of nonaligned nations which could not be persuaded to see things his way⁹⁵. Heikal compared Dulles's enthusiasm for containing communism to missionary fanaticism⁹⁶.

The opinions and feeling Dulles held concerning Nasser varied over the course of their relationship. At times, Dulles seemed to understand the point of view of the Egyptian leader and the political realities which directed Nasser in his actions. For example, Dulles's public statement after the conclusion of the Czech arms deal indicated his reserved acceptance of Egypt's right to obtain arms believed necessary for its own protection, but he showed disapproval of Nasser as a leader⁹⁷.

In a confusing move, Dulles sent a letter the day after his public statement, to Nasser and warned him of dire consequences if the deal went through. When Nasser learned about the letter, he was infuriated and contemplated breaking diplomatic relations with the United States. The letter was never shown to Nasser because American diplomats in Cairo convinced Assistant

⁹² Eisenhower, 637.

⁹³ Berding, 16.

⁹⁴ Richard Goold-Adams, *The Time of Power: A Reappraisal of John Foster Dulles* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962), 14.

⁹⁵ Hoopes, 315.

⁹⁶ Heikal, 50.

⁹⁷ Donovan, 179.

Secretary of State, George Allen who was dispatched to Cairo to deliver the letter, that it would bring only negative results⁹⁸.

In a personal letter to Eisenhower, Dulles described Nasser as not a moderate kind of person, and trying to gain help from both the U.S. and the USSR by playing one against the other. He was totally against giving Nasser any help because he believed that would lead Nasser to merely move on, and not to moderate his ambitions⁹⁹.

All of these actions show that Dulles was totally inflexible in his plan for meeting the menace of communism. This and his overt dislike of Nasser interfered with his ability to accept the Egyptian leader as a viable authority and to treat him accordingly.

VII-Conclusion:

As noted in the introduction, the reasons for countries to engage in the business of arms transfers are many and compelling. In the case under study, the Soviet Union, an industrialized country, shipped great quantities of arms to Egypt, a newly emerging Third World country. The goals of each country were met to varying degrees depending on the expectations held by each.

One of the major goals of any country which supplies arms to a Third World country appears to have been attained by the Soviets through the Czech arms deal: the goal of establishing influence in the region. The Soviet Union had indeed been interested in gaining a foothold in the Middle East, an area in its own regional sphere which had long been dominated by the West. The sale of arms to Egypt in 1955 provided the first substantial evidence of Soviet influence in the region. Additionally, this venture neutralized to great extent the efficacy of the Baghdad Pact and the general influence of the West over political, military, and economic matters in this region. The arms deal seemed to establish the beginning of a long and profitable relationship between the Soviet Union and Egypt.

As far as Egypt was concerned, the immediate and perhaps most important goals associated with its reasons for seeking arms from the Soviet Union were apparently achieved. The prestige of Egypt and Nasser was enhanced in domestic and international realms. The psychological boost to Egypt's sense of sovereignty was certainly very real and the substantial improvement in the status of Egypt's armed forces helped Nasser achieve his desired military balance-and perhaps superiority over Israel. Additionally, the very important political goal of breaking the Western hold over military supplies to the region was extremely successful.

Terms and motivations for obtaining arms for Egypt were closely linked in Nasser's mind. Regardless of his need and desire to provide the Egyptian army with modern arms, he refused to accept arms shipment which were tied to participation in Western, anti-communist defense pacts or to the presence of foreign military personnel on Egyptian territory. He also sought favorable financing arrangements to ease the need for using large portions of Egypt's foreign currency

⁹⁸ Copeland, 165.

⁹⁹ Letter from the Secretary to the President. August 14, 1955. John Foster Dulles papers 1951-1959. JFD chronological series. Box 14, A67-28. DE Library, Abilene, KS.

reserves for the purchase of arms¹⁰⁰. The Western countries had found it difficult to provide Egypt with the quantities Nasser desired without infringing upon one or more of these stipulations.

The major foreign policy goal for the Eisenhower administration was to thwart the spread of Soviet influence throughout the world. Regional or local considerations were generally subordinated to the global strategy employed by Eisenhower and Dulles in pursuit of this goal. The Middle East, because of its oil resources and its geographic position, was recognized as a critical area in which their global policy would be implemented and tested. Although the President and the Secretary of State demonstrated moments of insight into problems and requirements encountered by the individual leaders in the region, they habitually returned to their global view of the world in formulating their plans and actions.

¹⁰⁰ Heikal, 48.

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