

Pan-Arabism and the United Arab Republic

by

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis seeks to analyze Pan-Arabism through the lens of the United Arab Republic. I argue that even though the UAR faced many internal issues, it ultimately failed due to external pressures. I argue this to provide a new perspective on the Middle East and the Arab world, by showing how it came to be as it is. I organize my thesis into four chapters: I. Introduction: Arab Unity and its Limits, II. The Marriage of Syria and Egypt, III. The UAR and the Cold War IV. The Collapse of the United Arab Republic. I analyze the factors that brought both Egypt and Syria together to create the first democratically united state in the Arab World, and how it had lasting affects upon the Arab World.

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Chapter 1: Introduction: Arab Unity and its Limits

On Friday, November 13th, 2016, there were a series of terrorist attacks throughout the city of Paris. Each of these attacks targeted popular venues, such as the Petit Cambodge, the Bataclan, and the Stade de France. Needless to say, these attacks left the city of Paris, as well as the world, in a state of shock. The group which claimed responsibility for these odious acts was Da'esh, more commonly known as ISIS.¹ When the role of Da'esh came to light, it was no surprise. It seems that ever since the attack on the World Trade Center on September 11th, 2001, terrorist attacks in the West have, more often than not, been perpetrated by those who hail from the Arab World.

Consideration of growing number of violent attacks coming out of the Islamic World/Arab World, gives rise to the question why is the Arab world such a breeding ground for terrorist activity? Or, why do the West and the Arab world seem to be constantly at odds with one another? The answer may lie in the fact that a great part of the Arab world is victim to rampant ignorance and poverty. UNESCO recently did a study looking at illiteracy across the Arab World and found that 31.3% of Arab individuals above the age of fifteen are illiterate.² Illiteracy helps make these uneducated masses vulnerable to infiltration by Islamic extremists. These extremists use their funding to lure in new recruits with such basic needs as food and clothing and in the

¹ Adam Nossiter and Rick Gladstone, "Series of Shootings and Blasts, Apparently Coordinated," *The New York Times*, November 14, 2015, National Edition ed.

² "Literacy and Adult Education in the Arab World," *UNESCO-BEIRUT, REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EDUCATION IN THE ARAB STATES UNESCO INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION (UIE), HAMBURG*, September 2003, accessed November 17, 2015, http://www.unesco.org/education/uiie/pdf/country/arab_world.pdf. 10.

process they deliver a very perverted version of the Quran in order to forward their agenda of violence.

The Arab world we see today is a chaotic and turbulent place, but it was not necessarily meant to be that way. Many plans for economic and social change could have transformed the face of this region radically. Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser (1956-1970) dreamed of a united Arab state that could have radically improved the Arab world as we know it. Though Pan-Arabism was not Nasser's original brainchild, he championed this ideology during the late 1950's and 1960's. In this thesis, I will analyze the concept of Pan-Arabism through the lens of the United Arab Republic (UAR). I argue that even though the UAR faced many internal issues it ultimately failed due to external pressures. I will examine the topic in three stages: (1) the history leading up to the creation of the UAR, (2) the UAR in its existence, and (3) the lasting effects of the UAR as a Pan-Arab experiment. Before I begin, however, it is necessary to understand what the UAR was, what Pan-Arabism is, and how the two relate to one another.

A. The UAR in the context of Nationalism

The UAR was a political entity formed by the unification of Egypt and Syria in 1958 and lasted until February 1961. Through this unification, a potential nation was born. I use the word nation intentionally here to emphasize the fact that the UAR was more than a unified state or ethnic community, but in fact a potential nation state. The importance of the concept of nationalism cannot be overlooked, since after all the creation of the UAR was based on an Arab identity. In short, the UAR was born from a kind of nationalism. In order to better understand this concept, we may draw on David

Miller's distinction between ethnic communities and nations which asserts that "nations: (1) are constituted by shared beliefs and mutual commitment, (2) share an extended history, (3) are active in character, (4) are connected to a particular territory, and (5) marked from other communities by their distinct public culture."³

Taking this definition of nationality into account, can the UAR be considered a nation? I argue that though it may have lacked certain aspects of nationhood, the UAR was a potential nation. It fulfilled the criteria for a nation in that its two joined countries were constituted by shared beliefs and mutual commitment, they shared an extended history, and they were active. The UAR arose on the basis of shared belief and mutual commitment. These two states united enthusiastically under Nasser with Pan-Arabism as their goal. The two states had an extended, connected history dating back to the Arab Caliphates of 700 CE. Egypt and Syria were also active in character in making a concerted effort to unite despite the numerous factors working against them and once they united they attempted to solidify as a government.

On the other hand, Miller's criteria also show where the UAR fell short of meeting the requirements for being a nation. Specifically, the two states were not directly connected to a particular territory, and both had somewhat different public cultures. Though these countries do not share a border, the Middle East was their common territory, though the Middle East was a territory that these two states shared, the countries further divided into two regions, the Levant and North Africa. Next, though these two countries did have a common public culture, there were some discrepancies. For

³ Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History*(Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2001), 12.

example, Egypt held steadfast to their Pharaonic ancestry, and this identification helped to shape Egyptian public culture. However, the modern public culture of both Syria and Egypt was still similar. Their cultural practices were firmly rooted in Islam, with both countries home to a small Christian minority. Also, they both adopted certain practices from European colonists such as French civic law.

That being said, the UAR encountered many obstacles in terms of maintaining the Pan-Arab sentiment and pride that originally brought the two states together. According to Anthony D. Smith's definition, "Nationalism is an ideology that places the nation at the center of its concerns and seeks to promote their well-being." In this definition, the nation, and not individual parties, is the primary concern of Nationalism. The Ba'ath party, Nasser, and other Arab leaders in the region all had their agendas, and acted, almost exclusively, to promote their interests. Smith continues to clarify his definition by explaining that there exist three fundamental goals of Nationalism: national autonomy, national unity, and national identity. Without a sufficient degree of all three, a nation cannot exist.⁴ Because of its unsure nature, the UAR struggled with all three.

National autonomy and national unity came into conflict with one another during the governance of the UAR. Time and time again, Syria felt overpowered by Egypt. Syrians often felt that they were being relegated to secondary positions while Egyptians were entering into positions of greater significance.⁵ This disunity beginning in 1958 continued to grow until 1961 when the united entity could no longer function. Fueled by

⁴ Smith, *Nationalism* 9.

⁵ Monte Palmer, "The United Arab Republic: An Assessment of Its Failure," *Middle East Journal* 20, no. 1 (January 01, 1966): 55, accessed October 02, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/4323954>.

both internal and external players, the lack of unity prevented the UAR from existing undisturbed. Both countries seemed to want national autonomy from one another, but never national autonomy as a unified nation. In the end, Egypt and Syria were unwilling to give up their separate national identities for a greater Pan-Arab identity. Egyptians were Egyptians, and Syrians were Syrians; the two were always divided into their individualized groups.

Even after the dissolution of the UAR, however, we still see the potential for a united nation through the Arab World, or at the very least the existence of an ethnic community. James L. Gelvin asks a fundamental question when it comes to defining the Arab world as such: Why do Arabs identify with one another? He claims that Arabs do in fact have a shared history. In addition to that, the shared language of the Middle East makes possible an exchange of media from all parts of the region. Media such as soap operas, newspapers, and news stations are found in practically every corner of the Middle East. Gelvin quotes an adage that declares, 'Egyptians write books, Lebanese publish them, and Iraqis read them.' This quotation ties back to the concept that actions of separate Arab countries are not isolated but have a resounding effect within the Middle East.⁶ Gelvin also cites the existence of regional associations such as the Arab League and the Arab Monetary Foundation as an example of this international cooperation within the Middle East. The importance of these organizations cannot be downplayed. The existence of such organization is a testament to the fact that the sentiment of Arab unity still exists until today. For example, in Syria with the Ba'ath party their slogan is “unity,

⁶ Gelvin, *The Arab Uprisings: What Everyone Needs to Know* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 2-3.

freedom, socialism.”⁷ This fact is significant given the pivotal role party played in bringing Syria into unification with Egypt. However, this slogan is significant; it harkens back to the heyday of Arab Nationalism with the Ba'ath Party at the forefront of the unification of Syria and Egypt.

The opposition to American interventionism may have been one of the strongest unifying factors in modern Arab international relations. Starting back with the formation of Israel in 1948, and more recently with the invasion of Iraq in 2003, these acts of western interventionism contribute to the sentiment of oppression that many Arabs feel. Not only do they feel oppression coming from their own corrupt governments (i.e. the Mubarak regime in Egypt and the Qaddafi regime in Libya), but from other international governments as well. When the Allies, in the aftermath of World War II, created Israel they impinged upon the lives of countless Palestinians, essentially uprooting them and leaving them with a great deal of animosity toward their Jewish neighbors. These feelings of resentment permeated the region, creating a widespread Arab culture based on hatred towards Israel.

Yet, even with all these unifying factors taken into account, we do not see a mass movement toward the formation of a Pan-Arab nation. Gelvin claims that even though there are many connections between the separate countries within the region, the people living within these separate countries do not wish to give up their national citizenship for a Pan-Arab one. After the various attempts at Pan-Arab unification such as the Arab Union and the UAR, Pan-Arabism for the most part, has dissipated from the

⁷ The Ba'ath party was and is the most prominent political party in Syria. It is also the political party with which Bashar al-Assad is a member.

consciousness of today's Arabs. Nevertheless, we still see how the Arab countries can affect one another. Take for example the Arab Spring; the revolution in Tunisia kindled the fire of revolution in Egypt and later in Syria as well.⁸ Why is that? Gelvin, again, relates it back to the common Arab identity. Even though to the Egyptians, Tunisians were not their countrymen, they still shared in the common struggle for freedom, an Arab struggle for freedom. Gelvin also points out how these revolutions were not named according to their separate countries, but grouped together as the Arab Spring. Grouping these uprisings into the Arab Spring was only possible due to their common Arabness.

B. Pan-Arabism: The Umma, Pan-Islamism, and al-Husri

The *umma* is the foundational concept for both Pan-Islamism and Pan-Arabism. It is also essential for the understanding of how the Arab community has developed throughout history. The *umma*, in its Islamic usage, originally referred to the social unity that was emerging in the early years of Islam.⁹ The theoretical foundations of the *umma* are based on two sets of laws: the natural laws (*sunnat Allah*) and moral laws (*shari'a*). The moral order that the *umma* creates becomes the foundation stone on which the *umma* rests. To become a member of the *umma*, one must submit to the will of God and recognize His Messenger, the Prophet Muhammad. The *umma* thus became the foundation on which regional leaders built Arab society. Throughout subsequent centuries, Islam began to spread and firmly root itself in what would become the Arab world.

⁸ Gelvin, *Arab Uprisings*, 7-8

⁹ Manzooruddin Ahmed, "UMMA: THE IDEA OF A UNIVERSAL COMMUNITY," *Islamic Studies* 14, no. 1 (April 01, 1975): 31, accessed November 22, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/20846935>.

In the interpretation of the *umma* as a strictly Islamic community, we see a division between two pivotal figures, al-Afghani and al-Husri, in the articulation of unity movements in the Arab World. Both figures fathered distinct, but somewhat similar theories of governance for the Arab World. Al-Afghani developed Pan-Islamism during the 1850's, an ideology noted for its emphasis on religion in governance that predated Pan-Arabism.¹⁰ Al-Husri is credited for forming Pan-Arabism during the early and mid-1900's. Pan-Arabism could be described as a somewhat more coherent and secular version of Pan-Islamism; Pan-Arabism was clearer in its goals and it provided a theoretical blueprint through which these goals could be reached. However, in order to understand either ideology, we must first understand how these men viewed the *umma* in their respective theories of governance. Al-Husri, unlike al-Afghani, redefined the *umma* in such a way that it had its ideological roots in the political theories of the German Romantic philosophers (Fichte, Herder, and Renan) which tended to be very secular in nature.¹¹ This conceptualization of the *umma* would continue to heavily influence al-Husri's ideologies throughout his career. By emulating the practices of German nationalists in attempt to recreate a national historical narrative, he sought to portray the *umma* as a nation rather than an Islamic community. In doing so, he would avoid excluding a very vocal and pivotal minorities, such as the Christians, from the *umma*.

Al-Afghani's definition of the *umma* cannot be easily translated into modern terminology. Whereas al-Husri's definition of the *umma* was strictly secular, al-Afghani's

¹⁰ Nikki Keddie, "Sayyid Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani," *Oxford Bibliographies Online Datasets*, 2011, doi:10.1093/obo/9780195390155-0002. 158

¹¹ Rahaf Aldoughli, "Revisiting Ideological Borrowings in Syrian Nationalist Narratives: Sati 'al-Husri, Michel 'Aflaq and Zaki Al-Arsuzi," *Syria Studies*, January 2016, 30, accessed May 2, 2016, <https://ojs.st-andrews.ac.uk/index.php/syria/article/download/1302/992>.

was not. Al-Afghani used the word *umma* to help articulate his own Pan-movement, Pan-Islamism. Pan-Islamism, like Pan-Arabism, was a reaction against colonialism. Pan-Islamism was an ideology that arose from the frustrations of the colonized world. For decades, the European colonial presence was very strong in the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia. Pan-Islamism attempted to harness these frustrations in an attempt to gather enough support to push these foreign powers out. Pan-Islamism used the Islamic community as its base; the movement recognized the existence of several Muslim identities including Arab, Indian, and Persian Muslims, and it used the religion of Islam and the Quran as the uniting forces between nations of the Islamic world, rather than Arab identities.¹² This strategy in theory seemed highly plausible, but in reality it failed to work as hoped. Pan-Islamism could not reconcile the cultural differences that existed between these very different groups of people. Therefore, even though Pan-Islamism could speak to a much wider audience, it could not unify the Muslim people of the world into a unified nation.

The difference between Muslim and Arab is stark, and must be kept clear. A Muslim is simply a person who practices the Islamic faith, and this could be anybody from Indonesia to Chad. Whereas the Arab identity is more complicated. The Arabs are a major panethnic group whose native language is Arabic. The Arab world spans from Morocco in the west and ends with Iraq in the east. In order to compete with the stronger bond that Arabs had, al-Afghani used religion as the authority that gave his ideology legitimacy. To al-Afghani, in the Islamic community, the existence of its people was vested in the will of God. The individual could only exist within the community (the

¹² Keddie. "Sayyid Al-Afghani." 2011. 519

umma). These communities were considered to be like organisms with souls that made up the greater nation of Islam, each community unique but important to the existence of the Islamic nation. Al-Afghani speaks of two types of social commitments that hold such communities together, the national and the religious. Al-Afghani consistently gives priority to the religious bond. He writes, 'Muslim history from the rise of Islam to the present day shows that Muslims have acknowledged the bond of religion over and above any racial bond or national group solidarity. This is why the Turks and the Persians have no objection to the rule of the Arabs, and the Indian subordinates himself to the Afghan . . . as long as the ruler follows the *shari'a*.' Al-Afghani stresses the fact that Islam was the foundation of the incredible cultural achievements that occurred during the existence of the Arab caliphates of the Middle Ages. He claims that Islam is the only thing that can bring the Arab Nation (the *umma*) out of savagery (*tawahhush*).¹³ Al-Afghani makes a valid point. Arabia, in the Pre-Islamic years, was nothing more than a region consisting of warring tribes. It is true that they weren't able to rally around an Arab identity. However, Pan-Islamism, especially in modern times, just doesn't work. If Pan-Islamism were to have been adopted, it would have ultimately ended in failure. Pan-Islamism would not have been able to sustain a multi-religious nation that was dominated by a single religion. With Hindus, Buddhists, and Sikhs in India, Zoroastrians in Persia, and Christians throughout the Arab world, Pan-Islamism could not accommodate all these people. Not to mention the sectarian strife between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims.

¹³Bassam Tibi, Marion Farouk-Sluglett, and Peter Sluglett, *Arab Nationalism: Between Islam and the Nation-state* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 164.

Al-Afghani's theory initially relied upon the Ottoman Empire to be the caliphate, the Islamic state, under which the Muslims of the Middle East and South Asia could unite. Though after experiencing the despotism of Sultan Abdul Hamid II in the late 1870's al-Afghani quickly denounced Ottomanism. He then slightly altered his ideology, and is quoted as saying that the believers, whom God has made brothers, should unite 'to enable them through their unity to create a dam to protect them from all the floods and streaming towards them!' He continues: "But I do not mean to insist that all Muslims should have a single ruler, since this would probably be difficult to achieve. I demand, however, that their supreme Lord should be the Qur'an and that religion should be the basis of their unity."¹⁴ Al-Afghani, in other words, changed his ideology in such a way that it became flaccid and thus lost its potency as a theory of governance.

Even after this alteration, al-Afghani's Pan-Islamism maintained its very anti-Imperialist tone. Al-Afghani believed only through unity can the Arab world be able to withstand the incredible power of the colonial system. He envisioned Islam stepping into the 20th-century hand in hand with modern technology and science. He believed it was necessary for the countries of the Arab world to pull their people out of the dark and into the light. He said, "the colonial powers direct their gaze towards those countries with rich resources and fertile soils, whose populations are sunk in ignorance." Al-Afghani recognized Arab ignorance as one of the Arabic world's greatest weaknesses; the people of the Arab world still face this crippling issue. Al-Afghani understood that illiteracy and ignorance were at the core of the problem. He knew that if there were to be educated

¹⁴ Ibid. 166

masses, the people of the Islamic world would have been more readily able to fight off the grip of colonialism.

In the end, having turned away from the abuse of Ottomanism, Pan-Islamism became an anti-colonial consciousness more than anything else. From this perspective, al-Afghani could urge individual people such as the Egyptians to unite as a nation and push the British out. Al-Afghani wanted to see the uprising of Islamic peoples against the Ottomans and Europeans; he wanted to see the tide turn against colonial rule. He believed Egypt was the place where this was most likely to happen. Egypt had the population and the culture to sustain such a revolution. But when the revolution did come, it did so under the banner of Pan-Arabism.

Sati al-Husri was born in Aleppo in 1879. His father was Judge Mehmet Hilal Effendi, and he was educated in Istanbul. It was there that he acquired many of the foundational ideas such as French Positivism and European nationalism that he later applied to his theory of Arab Nationalism.¹⁵ His theory states that the individual is not a solitary human being, but part of a society to which he owes his complete allegiance. In this tenet we see both a similarity and a distinction between Pan-Islamism and Pan-Arabism. As in Pan-Islamism, the community takes precedence over the individual, but unlike Pan-Islamism, Pan-Arabism was not a religious movement. It was a nationalist one. Arab identity, in al-Husri's view, was strong enough to unite the Arab World into a unified nation or a modified version of the *umma*. Unlike the definition of the *umma* used above, al-Husri uses *umma* in a purely national sense. He strips the term of any religious

¹⁵ L. M. Kenny, "Sāṭi' Al-Ḥuṣṣrī's Views on Arab Nationalism," *Middle East Journal* 17, no. 3 (July 01, 1963): 231, accessed October 14, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/4323606>.

affiliation, leaving it to mean, “a group of people” bound together by ties of language, history, and tradition.¹⁶

Al-Husri’s ultimate goal was to see the state boundaries of individual Arab states within the Middle East vanish. He puts little to no emphasis on religion in his theory stating that, ‘in some cases people of various creeds have united to form nations, while in other instances those of the same religion have fought each other in order to establish separate nation states.’¹⁷ Instead he approaches the matter in a fashion that concentrates on how the people of the Arab world identify themselves. In his writings, al-Husri raises the distinctions between *al-jinsiyah* (citizenship) and *al-qawmiyah* (peoplehood). He uses this example to illustrate an issue that existed (and continues to exist) in the region, that the people of the Arab World often confused the two with one another. Al-Husri uses the term *al-Urubah* (Arabness), to reconcile the two aforementioned terms by emphasizing the commonalties between the people of the Arab World established by a common language.¹⁸ Asserting that regardless of the religion, Arabs adhered to, or what flag they swore allegiance to, they were connected by this common language that was rooted in centuries of history and tradition. As professor Yasir Suleiman writes, “The Arab nationalists adopt as an article of supreme faith the view that language is not just a means of communication, of conveying messages between interlocutors, but a most eloquent symbol of group identity and one whose ultimate strength lies in its ability to provide the

¹⁶ Ibid. 232

¹⁷ Ibid. 237

cultural and instrumental backbone of the group's legitimate objective of furthering its ethno-cultural self-interest."¹⁹

C. Nasser: Hero of Pan-Arabism and Arab Nationalism



(Above) Gamal Abdel Nasser

With the articulation of this new theory, al-Husri needed a champion in order for Arab Nationalism to succeed. He found a leader in Gamal Abdel Nasser. Nasser was the son of a minor postal official, who would one day be the first president of Egypt. Nasser was first an Egyptian and not an Arab. It was not Nasser's initial intention to unite the Arab world, but rather over time he became a figure under which the Arab people could

¹⁸ Ibid. 234

¹⁹ Michael W. Suleiman, "THE ARABS AND THE WEST: COMMUNICATION GAP," *II Politico* 32, no. 3 (September 01, 1967), accessed March 19, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/43206717>.

²⁰ "Muslim Brotherhood Breaking Free of Nasser," *Veterans Today*, accessed May 01, 2016, <http://www.veteranstoday.com/2011/03/27/muslim-brotherhood-breaking-free-of-nasser%E2%80%99s-long-ban-on-the-group/>.

unite. It was not until the Suez crisis that Nasser became this widely admired figure who stood up to the oppressive West. After this point, Nasser became the hero and spokesperson of the Arab World. His sympathizers existed all over the Arab world, and craved to be part of a united Arab state. Nasser portrayed himself as a constructive revolutionary who lived and led by the revolution's *Six Principles*: anti-colonialism, anti-feudalism, anti-corruption, social justice, the creation of a strong national army, and uncorrupt democracy.²¹ His extremely vocal position on anti-colonialism made him very popular in Algeria, which was fighting tirelessly for its independence during the Algerian War (1954-1962). Throughout his career, Nasser proved to be strong enough to stand up against the West, though his confrontation with the West eventually would be his downfall. It was this confidence that brought him to such prominence within the region. There are examples of his solidarity against the West in addition to the Suez crisis such as his very vocal support of Algeria Franco-Algerian war,²² and stark opposition to the creation of Israel. All these factors contributed to Nasser's meteoric rise as the would-be Pan-Arab savior of the Arab World.

²¹ Joel Gordon, *Nasser: Hero of the Arab Nation* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006), 37.

²² Anthony Nutting, *Nasser* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1972), 126.

Chapter 2: The Marriage of Egypt and Syria

With the UAR, the theories of Sati al-Husri blossomed into reality. The UAR was a manifestation of all things al-Husri envisioned in the hypothetical Arab nation, as a nation founded on the tenets of secularism and Arabness. At the time of the UAR's formation, its leaders believed they had sufficient momentum to unite every nation in the Arab world. In this experiment of nation building, Nasser sought to bring together the people of the Arab World into a single country that could elevate itself within the international community, and to make the UAR a truly global power. Nasser and his constituents recognized the potential of their new nation, much as al-Husri did, in the redefining of the Middle East and the Arab World.

The unification of the United Arab Republic was arguably the most significant event to take place in the Middle East during the early Cold War era. Arab leader Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt and the Ba'ath Party in Syria together spearheaded the groundbreaking movement towards unification. Nasser, however, was the true leader of the new movement, and without his leadership the United Arab Republic would never have existed. Furthermore, Egypt in the early 1950's had shocked the Arab World in being the first to overthrow its monarchy and create an Arab democracy. Egypt had, therefore, become the point from which revolutionary fever spread throughout the Arab World. Nasser capitalized upon Egypt's role and exerted his influence to form the United Arab Republic.²³ In the unification of Egypt and Syria that took place on February 1, 1961, we see the self-motivated mobilization of two separate countries as they came

²³ D. Peretz, "Nonalignment in the Arab World," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 362, no. 1 (1965): 38, doi:10.1177/000271626536200105.

together to create the first democratically united Arab nation. In this chapter, we will explore some the factors that brought the two nations together as well as the different political ideologies that sustained them, while also examining the ways the UAR had an impact on its neighbors.

A. Factors that Encouraged Unification

Numerous factors combined to bring Syria into the Egyptian sphere of influence. During the administration of Syrian Prime Minister Faris al-Khuri, Syria's position wavered in the Arab League²⁴ debates over potential unification in early 1955. Al-Khuri's lack of commitment to the cause eventually led to the ousting of his administration by the Syrian parliament. However, Egyptian and Saudi interference played a substantial role in the demise of al-Khuri's administration.²⁵ As a result, a new regime came to power in Syria. The new government in Syria was a coalition headed by Sabri al-'Asali, which had the backing of the Pan-Arabist Ba'ath Party and the leftist foreign minister and Khalid al-'Azm. This new government was supportive of the idea of Syrian alignment with Egypt, which in the early 1950's was still a very nebulous concept. However, Israel's invasion of the Gaza Strip on February 28, 1955, played its part in reinforcing the need for unification. The Israeli invasion generated fears of possible

²⁴ The Arab League, composed of Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Transjordan, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen, was established by the pact signed by these states on March 22, 1944. According to the pact, which is regarded as the leagues constitution, the League has its purpose to strengthen relations between the member-states, to coordinate their policies in order to achieve cooperation between them, and to safeguard their independence and sovereignty.

"The Arab League," *International Organization* 1, no. 1 (February 01, 1947): 154, accessed March 20, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/2703547>.

²⁵ Gordon H. Torrey, *Syrian Politics and the Military, 1945-1958*(Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1964), 273-274.

armed conflict among leaders in the Syrian military, a conflict which they knew they could not win. The fear of military conflict reinforced Mahmud Riyad's argument that the biggest threat to the Arab World was Israel rather than the Soviet Union.²⁶ Prime Minister 'Asali reasoned with U.S Ambassador Moose that "Egypt possessed a greater potential for assisting Syria in the case of conflict with Israel; hence, in the struggle between the two, the Syrian government "had decided it must side with Egypt against Iraq."²⁷

The unification of Syria and Egypt was relatively rapid phenomenon. It took place just six years after Egypt's revolution in 1952, against the backdrop of Cold War politics. In February of 1958, Nasser experienced considerable pressure from the Syrians to enter into a political union. At first, Nasser was reluctant to enter such a union so quickly. He believed that for two states to come together and create a lasting national union, the people would need to struggle for it. Through their combined efforts, they could forge together a new nation. This result, however, was not the case of the United Arab Republic. Nasser eventually succumbed to the pressures coming from Egyptian political elites and the Syrian Ba'ath Party, but it is necessary to understand the reasons why Syria was so eager. In 1956 and 1957 Syria was in an unfavorable situation both strategically and economically. Syria bordered Israel, Turkey, and Iraq and had strained relations with all of them. With Israel, Syria had little to no interaction except in war. In the case of

²⁶ Mahmud Riyad was an Egyptian diplomat. He served as the Egyptian ambassador to the United Nations from 1962 to 1964, Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1964 to 1972, and Secretary-General of the League of Arab States from 1972 to 1979.

²⁷ James P. Jankowski, *Nasser's Egypt, Arab Nationalism, and the United Arab Republic* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 75.

Moose to State, March 8, 1955, US/State, 674.83/3-855

Turkey, the two countries had an extended history of animosity, with hostilities coming to their zenith during the Turkish seizure of the Syrian province of Alexandretta in the 1930's.²⁸ In addition, Syria's working relationship with the USSR made the Turks uneasy. In 1957, Syria accepted arms from the Soviet bloc, and the Turks frowned heavily upon this transaction, especially since the Turks and the Russians had a long history of armed conflict. Furthermore, Iraq was perhaps the country with which Syria was most concerned; Syria had come to discover in 1956 during the Baghdad trials that the Iraqi government at the time had plans to move their military into Syria and forcibly incorporate Syria into the Iraqi monarchy, on the pretext of preventing a communist coup. Economically, Syria was in an equally unfavorable position. In the years following the armed conflict between Syria and Israel, Syria experienced an unusually dry wet season. This drought was devastating to the Syrian economy since the economy was based primarily on agriculture. The drought of 1956 made Syria increasingly reliant on foreign aid coming from Russia, and, in turn, halted the growth of Syria's large cities with Damascus chief among them. These combined factors pushed Syria, more or less, into the arms of the Egyptians.²⁹ A country that had similar aspirations for Arab unity and would help preserve the integrity of the Arab Nationalist movement.

²⁸ Nevill Barbour, "Impressions of the United Arab Republic," *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 36, no. 1 (January 01, 1960): 21, accessed February 23, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/2609306>..

²⁹ Ibid. 22

B. The Constitution of the Ba'ath Party

The Ba'ath Party, which was founded on the principle of Pan-Arabism, was the leading political party in Syria in the years leading up to the unification with Egypt. If the Ba'ath party had not been in power, it would have been less likely that these two states would have ever come together to create the UAR. To understand the unification of the UAR and the factors that brought about its creation, one must understand what the Ba'ath party was and what it represented. To shed light on the topic, we will look directly at the constitution of the Ba'ath Party that was approved by the first Congress of the party in 1947.

The Ba'ath party had three fundamental principles as stated in their constitution. The First Principle focused on the Unity and the freedom of the Arab nation. The Party held the belief that the different Arab peoples of the Middle East form a single Arab nation, who have the right to live in a unified Arab state. They proposed that the Arab Fatherland constituted an indivisible political and economic community, characterized by its cultural unity and that any differences that existed among the Arab peoples would disappear after the awakening of the Arab consciousness. The Second Principle focused on the personality of the Arab Nation. The Arab Nation, in the eyes of the Ba'ath Party, was characterized by several virtues, which were a result of its successive rebirths,³⁰ these virtues being vitality, resiliency, and creativity with the ability to recreate and renew the Arab Nation continuously. The Third Principle had to do with the mission of

³⁰ The 'successive rebirths' mentioned here is a reference to the many forms in which Arab society has taken. From a nomadic people to conquerors, to being conquered. The Arab people have evolved and adapted throughout history.

the Arab Nation, which aimed for the renewal of human values with an emphasis on increasing human harmony and mutual help among the nations.³¹

In the same constitution there are found approximately forty-eight articles with a focus on many topics ranging from foreign policy to economic policy, but before the articles address specific topics, the constitution states some general principles, several of which are germane to the purpose of this thesis. “*Article 1*: The Arab Party is a universal Arab Party. It does not concern itself with regional politics except in relation to the higher interests of the Arab cause. *Article 2*: The headquarters of the party is for the time being located in Damascus. It can be transferred to any other Arab city if the national interests should require it.”³² These two articles are directly linked to the explanation of Syrian-Egyptian relations in the beginning of the United Arab Republic. For instance, the Syrian Ba’ath Party was dissolved when the UAR was created. The Ba’ath Party was willing to sacrifice itself for the sake of the of the Pan-Arabist goal. The creation of the UAR was an example in which *Articles 1 & 2* were put into action. The Syrians were not concerned with petty politics, but rather they were dedicated to the creation of an Arab Nation. Nasser did not want party politics getting in the way of the Arab mission of unification.

Article 6: The Party of the Arab Ba’ath is revolutionary. It believes that its main objectives for the realization of the renaissance of Arab Nationalism or for the establishment of socialism cannot be achieved except by means of revolution and

³¹ "THE BAATH ARAB SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL LEADERSHIP THE CONSTITUTION OF THE BA'ATH ARAB SOCIALIST PARTY," Ba'Ath Arab Socialist Party National Leadership, August 31, 2015, The Fundamental Principles, accessed February 20, 2016, http://www.baath-party.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=307&Itemid=327&lang=en.

³² Ibid

struggle. To rely on slow evolution and to be satisfied with a partial and superficial reform is to threaten these aims and to conduce to their failure and to their loss. This is why the party decides in favor of: 1) The struggle against foreign colonialism, in order to liberate the fatherland completely and finally. 2) The struggle to gather all the Arabs in a single and independent state. 3) The overthrow of the present faulty structure, an overthrow which will include all the sectors of intellectual, economic, social, and political life.³³ Those general principles provide further evidence for the argument of UAR sympathizers that Egypt was the best partner when it came to realizing these goals.³⁴

C. Marxism in the UAR

The UAR adopted much of the terminology and philosophical content of Marxian socialism. The leadership of the nation stressed the class struggle that had existed in the country for many years, between the Egyptian pashas (a title given to the societies' elites) and the landless laborers who worked for them. The government of the UAR resented the aloofness of the rich in the face of social and economic progress. They extended the concept of social struggle to the relationship between the West and the Arab World, where the Arab World was engaging in an anti-imperial struggle to overthrow the paradigm of Western domination. Egyptians and Syrian elites, however, were reluctant to extend the application of Marxist social theory to the governance of their people. Rather, the citizens of the UAR insisted that their socialism did not come from Marx, but that it

³³ Ibid

³⁴ *Ibid.* General Principles (Articles 1-13)

was a product of national experience.³⁵ The Charter of the United Arab Republic explains that ‘the socialist solution was a historical inevitability imposed by reality, the broad aspirations of the masses, and the changing nature of the world in the second part of the twentieth century.’³⁶

These adaptations of socialism and nationalism to the needs of Arab elites, served as the foundation for many of the UAR’s political policies. It is worth noting that this strain of socialism was very different than that in the Soviet Union. Arab socialism was revisionist in nature and, defined by its eclecticism. Socialism in this form was acceptable to the Arab masses. Arab socialism attracted immense support due to the fact that it accommodated the needs of the common Arab. It did not call for the iconoclasm of cherished beliefs, nor did it call for an overwhelming restructuring of society. Arab socialism was more directly a product of post-colonialism. Arab socialism was an outlet through which revolutionary governments could redefine themselves while promoting economic and social progress.³⁷ For example, during the occupation of Egypt, the British held claim to the Suez Canal. When Nasser came to power, he nationalized the canal and created the Suez Canal Authority. Though it came at the price of 1,650 Egyptian lives lost in defense of it, the nationalization of the canal was Arab socialism in action.³⁸ It

³⁵ Fauzi M. Najjar, "Islam and Socialism in the United Arab Republic," *Journal of Contemporary History* 3, no. 3, The Middle East (July 01, 1968): 184, accessed February 23, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/259705>.

³⁶ *The Charter: United Arab Republic* (Cairo: State Information Service, 1962), 49.

³⁷ Hamid Enayat, "Islam and Socialism in Egypt," *Middle Eastern Studies* 4, no. 2 (1968): 141-142, doi:10.1080/00263206808700097.

³⁸ Derek Varble, *The Suez Crisis, 1956* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2003), 90.

was an act of reclamation from the West on the part of the Egyptians. It returned the revenues of this resource to the Egyptian people.

The United Arab Republic also brought about a radical transformation in the countries of Syria and Egypt. With its socialist policies, the UAR was able to improve the daily lives of many citizens. During his time as the head of both the Syrian and Egyptian governments, Nasser placed several five-year plans into action. Mixed committees that consisted of specialists in the areas of industry, agriculture, transportation, irrigation, and economics assembled these five-year plans.³⁹ They had a profound effect on the society, which was indicated by the improvements made to the quality of life in Egypt. Revolutionary Egypt was socialist and simultaneously a predominantly Islamic society.⁴⁰ For its part, the UAR's socialist self-conception is made clear in the first Article of the Constitution, which states that 'the UAR is a democratic, socialist State based on the alliance of the laboring forces of the people,' while the fifth Article asserts that 'Islam is the Religion of the State.'⁴¹ The combination of both traditional religious ideology with a contemporary and secular social philosophy created a national society that was unique to the Middle East.

³⁹ Raymond William. Baker, *Egypt's Uncertain Revolution: Nasser and Sadat* (Cambridge: Mass, 1978), 62.

⁴⁰ Najjar. "Islam and Socialism in the United Arab Republic. 183

⁴¹ *The Charter: United Arab Republic*. Cairo: State Information Service, 1962.

D. The United Arab Republic's Influence in Africa

The Bandung Conference⁴² served as a meeting point for representatives of the United Arab Republic (UAR) and sub-Saharan African states. It was through these meetings that the UAR developed a relationship with these African countries leading to the opening of African bureaus in Cairo during the late 1950's and early 1960's. By 1960, the UAR had exchanged ambassadorial representation with ten African States.⁴³ Through the establishment of diplomatic relations, they attempted to perpetuate and nurture anti-western sentiment and rally African nationalists behind the anti-imperialist banner. This mutual support manifested itself when the Egyptians welcomed representatives from African states into their country. Egyptians allowed the delegates from different African nationalist movements to come and use the modern radio facilities in Cairo so that these representatives could spread their propaganda across the African continent using the airwaves. In Egypt's assistance to its African neighbors, we see its attempt to establish Cairo and the UAR as the center for African liberation.⁴⁴ Egypt embraced its African roots as a means to take a leading role in the region. In assuming

⁴² "Bandung Conference, a meeting of Asian and African states—organized by Indonesia, Myanmar (Burma), Ceylon (Sri Lanka), India, and Pakistan—which took place April 18–24, 1955, in Bandung, Indonesia. In all, 29 countries representing more than half the world's population sent delegates." The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica, "Bandung Conference," Encyclopædia Britannica Online, August 24, 2014, under "Summary," accessed March 22, 2016, <http://www.britannica.com/event/Bandung-Conference>.

⁴³ Tareq Y. Ismael, "The United Arab Republic and the Sudan," *Middle East Journal* 23, no. 1 (January 01, 1969): 180, accessed February 23, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/4324392?ref=search-gateway:d6c7016d3b511affffacbe3b3a070d50>.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 179

this leadership role, Egypt took the opportunity to undermine the West's "Monroeization"⁴⁵ of Africa, with the tagline Africa for Africans.⁴⁶

The case with Sudan, however, was slightly different. Egypt had a long shared history with the Sudan. Egyptian royalty had claimed rule over the Sudan for many years, and in the Revolutionary era, the countries had separated indefinitely. The Sudan, however, remained an important neighbor and a critical factor in the UAR's formulation of African Policy. Egypt's fundamental consideration in dealing with the Sudan was that it controlled the sources of the Nile. Egyptian political elites regarded the Nile as Egypt's life source, and potential damming projects would be potentially devastating to both agriculture and the economy in Egypt. Additionally, Sudan was Egypt's gateway to sub-Saharan Africa. The Sudan was a potential middleman for Egypt in that it belonged both to the Arab World as well as to Sub-Saharan Africa. In 1956, 38.8 percent of the population identified as Arab with 51.4 percent of the country being primary speakers of Arabic. Furthermore, Sudan's government made Arabization a public policy.⁴⁷ This move towards Arabization had to do, in part, with Egypt's influence in the region. Nasser writes in his book *The Philosophy of the Revolution*, "boundaries extend to the heart of the Continent (Africa) where it is bounded by neighborly relations, being the sensitive

⁴⁵ Just as the US welcomed the revolt of the Spanish colonies in South America in the early 1800's, Egypt encouraged the countries of Africa to challenge their European overlords and drive them out of Africa. Just as President Monroe wanted to keep the Americas for the Americans, Nasser wanted to keep Africa for the Africans.

N. Kasturi, "THE MONROE DOCTRINE," *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 3, no. 2 (October 01, 1941): 181, accessed March 22, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/42743711>.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 182

⁴⁷ Heather J. Sharkey, "Arab Identity and Ideology in Sudan: The Politics of Language, Ethnicity, and Race," *African Affairs* 107, no. 426 (January 01, 2008), accessed March 22, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/27666997>.

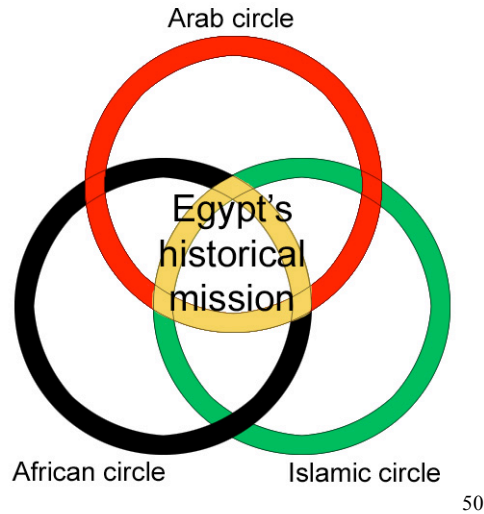
center.”⁴⁸ Besides the geopolitical factors, there were several economic and social considerations affecting Egypt’s relationship with the Sudan. The Sudan possessed abundant resources for purchase, and it was also a large importer of Egyptian goods.⁴⁹ In sum, Egypt needed to ensure that relations with their neighbor to the south remained amicable. Thus, we see the purpose of Egypt developing relationship with its neighbors to the south was to further exert its influence within the continent. As Egypt’s significance grew within the Third World, that significance would become tethered to the image of the United Arab Republic. A positive relationship with the African nation would prove pivotal in protecting the UAR’s interests in the continent of Africa.

⁴⁸ Gamal Abdel Nasser, *The Philosophy of the Revolution* (Buffalo: Smith, Keynes & Marshall, 1959), 69.

⁴⁹ Ismael "The United Arab Republic and the Sudan." 15

E. Nasser's Three Circles

Nasser's Three Circles Theory (1954)



Nasser's Three Circles was a concept articulated in *The Philosophy of the Revolution*, which implicated Egypt in the African, Arab, and Islamic worlds. In this theory, Nasser illustrated Egypt's multifaceted identity with three circles: an Arab circle, an African circle, and an Islamic circle. All of which came together to create the Egyptian identity, an identity which, Nasser argued, destined Egypt to be an international leader. Nasser asserted that it was impossible to ignore the connections between Egypt and these different but connected worlds to which it belonged. Nasser writes, "We cannot look stupidly at a map of the world, not realizing our place therein and the role determined to us by that place."⁵¹ Egypt's location put it at the crossroad of different cultural and

⁵⁰ "Nasserism," Wikipedia, section goes here, accessed May 1, 2016, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/cb/Nasser's_Three_Circles_Theory.jpg.

⁵¹ Sylvia G. Haim, *Arab Nationalism: An Anthology* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Pr., 1976), 230.

political spheres, making it one of the most dynamic nations of the so-called Third World.

The Islamic circle was less a spatial concept and more a concept that transcended space, in that one could not place the religion of Islam on a map because it was constantly growing and evolving throughout the globe. The Islamic character of Egypt, unlike its claim to Arabness, was undeniable. Islamism further legitimized Egypt's role in the Arab world. When Nasser went to Saudi Arabia in 1953 for the Funeral of King Abdul Aziz, he went as a Muslim not as an Arab leader. As Nasser stood in front of the Kabbah in Mecca, he envisioned a reformed pilgrimage. He wanted to see the pilgrimage transform from a ritual that vindicated an individual of all his sins into a great political power. Nasser saw Mecca as a place where leaders of the Islamic world came to convene and create an Islamic parliament.⁵² In reality, this was nothing more than the musings of a young and naive leader, but it did lay the foundation for Islamic interconnectivity that would help support the concept of the UAR.

The Arab and African circles were different from the Islamic circle in that one could place them on a map. Egypt served as the crossroads for the Arab world and the African continent. Nasser agreed that the geographical positioning provided the nation with a sort of manifest destiny. Egypt felt its connection to Africa through its ancient Pharaonic roots as well as the current struggle that both Egypt and many African states were experiencing against the European colonial powers. These two factors linked Egypt to the land and to the people of the land. Through their Pharaonic ancestry, Egypt laid

⁵² Nasser. *The Philosophy of the Revolution*. 77.

claim to the Arab role as the mother of nations. In fact, in the national anthem of Egypt there is a verse that declares Egypt to be the mother of all countries.⁵³

Nasser does say, however, that the ‘Arab circle is the most important and the most closely connected with us.’⁵⁴ I find this trinity of identity lopsided, in that Nasser provides more or less emphasis on the depending on the circle of identity. This imbalance more than likely has to do with whatever goal Nasser was trying to accomplish. For example, Nasser seems to neglect the importance of the African circle, which most probably had to do with the quiet racism that existed between Egypt and Sub-Saharan Africa. But as for the pronounced emphasis on the importance of the Arab circle, this should come as no surprise, given Egypt’s intention to validate its Arab identity. On the other hand, the political climate certainly had an impact on the formulation of this philosophy. The Zionist movement polarized the region, making countries like Egypt, which had dubious claims to Arab ancestry, more Arab. The formation of the state of Israel in certain respects, unintentionally banded the countries of Middle East together against a common enemy, which was itself.⁵⁵ When *The Philosophy of the Revolution* was written in 1954, it provided the foundation on which the Nationalist Arab movement

⁵³ “Egypt! O mother of all Countries...Mother of the great ancient land, My sacred wish and holy demand, All should love, awe and cherish thee, Gracious is thy Nile to humanity, No evil hand can harm or do you wrong.”

“State Information Services The National Anthem,” State Information Services The National Anthem, accessed March 22, 2016, <http://www.sis.gov.eg/En/Templates/Articles/tmpArticles.aspx?ArtID=7#.VvDZ1pMrInU>.

⁵⁴ Haim. *Arab Nationalism: An Anthology*. 231

⁵⁵ Jean-François Troin, "L'identité Arabe: De L'espace De La Nostalgie Aux Territoires En Mouvement / Arab Identity: From the Land of Nostalgia to the Territories in Motion," *Annales De Géographie* 113e Année, no. 638/639, COMPOSANTES SPATIALES, FORMES ET PROCESSUS GÉOGRAPHIQUES DES IDENTITÉS (July 01, 2004): 533-534, accessed March 22, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/23456697>.

would grow and manifest itself through Nasser.⁵⁶ Nasser was quite intentional in his timing in order to convey this message of Arab unity effectively.

The formation of United Arab Republic was a seminal event in the history of the Arab World. It was groundbreaking in the modernization of Arab society, as a political union that took the first democratic step towards wider Arab unity. When examining the first steps of the UAR into nationhood, one must take into account that the leaders of this national experiment aimed at uniting the region. They sought to educate and liberate the people who had for so long been disenfranchised. In the next chapter, we will see the United Arab Republic begin to implement policies in order to move towards the goal of a strong, united Arab state.

⁵⁶ "Philosophy of the Revolution | Work by Nasser," Encyclopedia Britannica Online, =, accessed February 23, 2016, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Philosophy-of-the-Revolution>.

Chapter 3: The UAR and the Cold War

The Cold war played a significant role in shaping the politics of the Arab world from the early 1950's up until the late 1960's. The objective of this chapter will be to focus on the various ways in which Western and Soviet intervention determined the fate of the UAR. It is essential to understand the context in which these political power plays were taking place. Western intervention in the Middle East, through decades and centuries of European imperialism in the Arab world, had become a tradition of European colonial powers. It was not until the beginning of the Cold War that two new pivotal actors emerged: the United States and the Soviet Union. The conflict between these two political giants helped determine the fate of not only the UAR but of the entire region. As a result of the Cold War conflict, the Arab World became a battleground of clashing ideologies. During this period, the actions of these political entities negatively affected the political stability of the UAR. The Arab World, literally and metaphorically, lived between philosophical realms, and the actions taken by the West and the Soviet Bloc affected, both directly and indirectly, the UAR and its neighbors. Whether through the implementation of the Eisenhower Doctrine or Soviet attempts to further the influence of communism, the superpowers violated the autonomy of Arab states. The numerous interventions of the West in the politics of the UAR is what brought about this union's demise.

A. The Arab Perspective: Arab Attitudes and Aspirations

In order to more completely understand the political climate in which these actions of foreign intervention were taking place, we must first consider the Arab mindset. To begin, let us look at the fundamentals that have weighed in on the formation of Arab attitudes toward other players. America and Western Europe failed to see the Arab world as an entity with interests, ideals, and a will of its own; the West rather treated the Arab states as pawns in their fight against Soviet encroachment. The West expected the Arab people to subordinate their needs to its own exigencies. Emile Bustani commented on the treatment of the Arab World by Western powers (Britain in particular) in his article *The Arab World and Britain*: “In the years when the Arab States were going through their political childhood, the British treated them in a manner which any competent psychiatrist could have said would lead inevitably to the creation of phobias and neuroses among them.”⁵⁷ The poor western treatment of the Arabs shaped the development of the relationship between the two, and to an extent it pushed the Arab World into a different relationship with the Soviet Bloc. The Soviets provided aid to Arab nations without demanding that these nations align with Soviet interests, making a working relationship possible between the USSR and the Arab World.

A second fundamental for understanding the Arab position in the Cold War is the difference, or lack thereof, between the United States and the West. The typical Arab individual made no distinction between these two entities. The US had been lumped into the Arab conceptualization of the West, putting it in the same category as European

⁵⁷ Emile Bustani, "The Arab World and Britain," *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 35, no. 4 (October 01, 1959): 427, accessed March 19, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/2609121>.

powers. This conceptualization is critical given the relationship between the Arabs and European powers. Starting with the Napoleonic invasions of 1798 and culminating in the post-World War I settlements, virtually every piece of Arab land had been claimed by either England or France (and to a smaller extent Spain and Italy as well) through the use of military action. This history of occupation made it difficult to rally support among the masses for Western and US causes.⁵⁸ Though despite United States' anticolonial policies, it garnered animosity from the Arab world as a result of its very vocal Pro-Zionism, thus the Arabs often times lumped the US in with Western Europe. Not to mention, Algeria was still fighting for its independence from France. And after years of having battled for independence with Britain and France an embittered relationship with the West ensued. The Arab people did not see the Cold War in the same context as did the Americans and Russians. Arabs did not see it as a battle between Communism and Democracy, but rather as a battle between superpowers, a conflict which concerned the common Arab man very little.

Between 1945 and 1947, the relationship with the Western Powers was already strained due to the memory of European colonial predation. The Zionist movement was (and is) an extremely sensitive subject in the Arab World. In 1917, after the British seized Palestine from the Ottomans, they opened the territory to mass migration. It opened the borders of Palestine to people who were seeking to form a new state of their own state, while the Palestinian people were denied the right to self-determination.⁵⁹ As Jews from

⁵⁸ F. Sayegh, "Arab Nationalism and Soviet-American Relations," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 324, no. 1 (1959): 104, doi:10.1177/000271625932400113.

⁵⁹ Michael W. Suleiman, "THE ARABS AND THE WEST: COMMUNICATION GAP," *II Politico* 32, no. 3 (September 01, 1967): 252, accessed March 19, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/43206717>.

around the globe flooded into Palestine, tensions grew high. At the time of the British partition of Palestine in 1947, there were 1.2 million Arab Palestinians to 600,000 Jews.⁶⁰ In other words, when the British divided the Palestinian homeland in half, it was not proportional. Dissatisfaction and frustration erupted into violence in 1948 with the Palestinian civil war, the first Arab-Israeli conflict.⁶¹ People from across the Arab World took the establishment of the Israeli state as an affront to Arab sovereignty and autonomy. Therefore, even before the Cold War had become a prominent part of international life, the western powers had incurred suspicion, hostility, and active opposition from Arab nationalists.

In the first years of the Cold War, relations did not change drastically between the Arabs and the outside world. At this point in their development, the Arabs were very limited in their sense of the outside world. Many of the Arab States during the 1950's were taking their first steps as independent countries, and so it was natural for the Arabs to be deeply invested in the domestic issues of the time rather than that the goings-on of nations that were not in the region. Therefore, their take on the Cold War was shaped by interaction with the Soviet Union and the NATO countries. At the beginning of the Cold War, a majority of Arab countries were still under foreign rule or were taking their first steps as independent nations. Therefore when the Arabs first looked upon the belligerents of the Cold war, they did not see communist and democratic blocks going head to head in a battle of ideas; rather, the Arabs saw a familiar oppressor, the West, and a new foreign power, the Soviets. In the Arab World's relative seclusion, the clashes between the West

⁶⁰ Eugene L. Rogan, *The Arabs: A History* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), 252.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* 262

and the East occurring outside the Arab World- the triumph of Communism in China, the First Berlin Crisis, the Invasion of South Korea- were all very remote from daily consciousness. The Arabs were more concerned with issues of their own such as the liquidation of the British base in the Suez. For the most part, the USSR was removed from the Arab scene, which eventually served to benefit Arab interests. When the Soviets began to interject themselves in Arab politics in the late 1950's, the Arab people were not nearly as suspicious, which allowed for a relationship to develop.

The Arab desire to remain uninvolved during the Cold War was a continuation of their earlier struggle for liberation; Arabs did not want to be dragged into another European conflict. The West was continually (and without warrant) placing itself in the middle of Arab politics.⁶² From the Baghdad Pact⁶³ to the Gaza Raid,⁶⁴ the West incessantly exerted economic and political influence on the Middle East. As a result, the initially nebulous policy of nonalignment was more attractive and soon crystallized into a formal doctrine. As indifference towards the Cold War became unfeasible, Arab nationalists used the nonalignment movement as a way of rejecting the influence of the

⁶² D. Peretz, "Nonalignment in the Arab World," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 362, no. 1 (1965): 37, doi:10.1177/000271626536200105.

⁶³ Originally formulated by the Eisenhower administration in January of 1953, the Baghdad Pact was a regional defense pact that served to protect American interests. It was intended to protect against soviet encroachment, while serving to ensure American access to Arab oil.

Elie Podeh and Onn Winckler, *Rethinking Nasserism: Revolution and Historical Memory in Modern Egypt* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 209.

⁶⁴ The Gaza Raid (Operation Black Arrow) was an Israeli military operation carried out in Gaza (while under Egyptian control) on 28 February 1955. The operation targeted the Egyptian army. Thirty-eight Egyptian soldiers were killed during the operation, as were eight Israelis.

Spencer Tucker, Priscilla Mary. Roberts, and Anthony C. Zinni, *The Encyclopedia of Middle East Wars: The United States in the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, and Iraq Conflicts* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2010), 1162.

Cold War powers. Arab nationalists did not wish to see Cold War politics elbow its way into their recently liberated homelands. On the other hand, the Arab world had to temper these negative feelings with reason. Arab nations were able to understand the necessity of maintaining a commercial relationship with both the West and the Soviet Bloc. Thus, when the Arab world entered into diplomatic relations with either the West or the Soviets, national interests were uppermost in Arab minds.⁶⁵

As countries like Egypt proceeded with their policy of nonalignment when dealing with the Cold War players, the Arab cultivation of relations with the Soviets prompted a strong reaction from the West. The opposing interests of the Arabs and the West were what brought about this hostile response. When the Arab states began trading with the Soviet bloc, the Western powers were alarmed. The West still believed it was entitled to prevent Arab states from trading with other countries. They had yet come to terms with Arab sovereignty. Arab Nationalists, however, argued it was the West which had provoked this new development. For it was the West, and not the Soviet bloc, that had brought the Cold War to the Middle East with the implementation of the Eisenhower Doctrine.⁶⁶ When the UAR chose the position of nonalignment after its formation, it was

⁶⁵ F. Sayegh, " Soviet-American Relations," 105

⁶⁶ The Eisenhower Doctrine was the foreign policy in the Middle East that stated that any Middle Eastern country could request American economic assistance or aid from U.S. military forces if it was being threatened by armed aggression from another state. This policy was a method through which the Americans would attempt to contain Soviet and communist encroachment in the Third World.

"The Eisenhower Doctrine, 1957 - 1953-1960 - Milestones - Office of the Historian," U.S. Department of State, accessed April 18, 2016, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/eisenhower-doctrine>.

subjected to harsh economic sanctions. These sanctions were intended as a sort of punishment for not bending to the will of the West.⁶⁷

B. The West: The United States and Great Britain in the Middle East

1. U.S. Involvement

As we saw in *The Philosophy*, one of Nasser's primary goals was to free Egypt (and later the Arab world) from dependence on the West. He understood his aim as a matter of advancing the larger Arab cause of fighting Western Imperialism. In this pursuit, Nasser created an enemy of the US. His desire to remain non-aligned was perceived by the US as a threat. Officials of the Eisenhower administration understood that nationalist leadership in the Third World was just as great a threat to US interests in the Third World as the communist ideology, simply because they could not control it. In March of 1958, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles declared that, "in the three situations which most greatly concern the United States today – namely, Indonesia, North Africa, and the Middle East – the directing forces were not Communist, but primarily forces favorable personally to a Sukarno, a Nasser, or the like."⁶⁸ The confrontation between the US and Egypt was not primarily an outcome of a misapprehension on the part of the US policymakers unable to distinguish between Nationalism and Communism. Rather, the two players struggled over the acceptable limits of Arab Nationalism. It was a

⁶⁷ Ibid. 106

⁶⁸ Juan Romero, "Arab Nationalism and the Arab Union of 1958," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no. 2 (2014), doi:10.1080/13530194.2014.99431.

Memo, 20 March 1958, *FRUS* 1958-60, III, 54.

contest of interests not a conflict of values.⁶⁹ That being said, however, the US and the West took the same approach with the rest of the world.

The Middle East was a vital region during the Cold War. Its vast reserves of oil made relations with the countries in the Middle East a matter of national security. From the US perspective, it could not fall into the hand of the Soviets. Western Powers were concerned that Moscow might use Arab Nationalism as a tool to drive out western influence in the Arab World. Though communism would never achieve lasting influence in the Arab world due to cultural and religious incompatibilities, it should come as no surprise that the West was worried. For years, Western Powers had, in one way or another, oppressed the Arab people. From the perversion of the Arabic language by the French in the Maghreb of North Africa to British control of the Suez in Egypt, the West had a poor track record, whereas the Soviets had no such blunders in their dealings with the Arab people because of their shorter history of involvement.⁷⁰ The West feared that the USSR and the Arab world would connect based on similar interests. Russians and Arabs both wanted to empower the oppressed; the Arab World and the USSR both wanted to create for themselves a new history.

⁶⁹ Roland Popp, "Accommodating to a Working Relationship: Arab Nationalism and US Cold War Policies in the Middle East, 1958-60," *Cold War Hist. FCWH Cold War History* 10, no. 3 (2010): 398, doi:10.1080/14682741003686107.

⁷⁰ "When France colonised Algeria in 1830, it was not merely economic exploitation or political domination it sought, but a comprehensive annexation that aimed at eliminating its culture. The French controlled education, government, business, and most intellectual life for one hundred thirty two years. France's colonial system imposed a harsh programme of acculturation which positioned French as the dominant language on its colonies, ousting local languages, Arabic and Berber." Malika R. Maamri University of Algeria

Malika Rebai Maamri, "The Syndrome of the French Language in Algeria," *International Journal of Arts and Sciences*: 77-89, accessed March 19, 2016, http://openaccesslibrary.org/images/Malika_Rebai_Maamri.pdf.

Thus, Nasserism was an obstacle to the Eisenhower Doctrine. Due to the tenets of Nasserism, such as opposition to western influence, the United States labeled Nasser a threat. Instead of communicating, or developing a rapport with the new up and coming leader, the Americans decided to push against him. Arab autonomy on a large scale would mean that the US could not as easily exert its control on individual countries within the region. Eisenhower resorted to sedition to defame and discredit Nasser by labeling him a Soviet puppet, though he was no such thing. Though he embraced socialism, Nasser was open in his opposition to communism in Egypt and the Arab world. Furthermore, there are instances where Dulles likened Nasser to an Arab Hitler, “except that Nasser, fortunately, does not himself control great military power.”⁷¹ This verbal attack was a ploy to hurt Nasser's image, while also playing to rally the United States’ Jewish allies.

As the politics of the Cold War and American foreign policy in the Middle East grew increasingly complicated from 1959 to 1960, the Eisenhower administration took a different stance in relation towards Nasserism. Their new official objective was to fill the supposed ideological vacuum that was the Arab world before the Russians did. However, the administration’s sentiment toward Nasser and his nationalist aspirations did not become more amicable as a result of this policy. Many believed that Nasserist interests were still detrimental to the interests of the West in the Middle East. They feared that Nasserism endangered their relations with Muslim countries in the near east such as Pakistan, Turkey, and Iran. Another significant western concern was that of Israel’s

⁷¹ Romero, "Arab Nationalism and the Arab Union of 1958.

³⁷⁴ NSC Meeting, 31 July 1958, *FRUS* 1958-60, XII, 129; for Dulles’ skepticism with respect to the question of recognition of the newly formed UAR see Dulles Memo to Eisenhower, 8 February 1958, *DDRS*

security. The West feared that the Arab nationalist movement, if it gained too much momentum, would threaten Israel's existence. It is important to keep in mind that Israel was an ever-present reminder of Western attitudes toward the Arab Middle East. It was a piece of land taken from an Arab people, the Palestinians, and given to the Israelis. Thus, it became the United States' policy not directly to oppose Nasser but discreetly to support his opponents.

The US agreed to come to terms with Arab nationalism, but it refused to come to terms with the fact that Nasser had become the de facto leader of the Arab nationalist movement. The US could stomach that Nasser was president of the UAR, but it could not allow Nasser to grow into the leader of the Arab World. The year 1958 was the apogee of the Arab Nationalist movement and the UAR. In ensuing years fragmentations and splits inside the movement began to form. These ruptures began to diminish Nasser's seemingly incontestable leadership.

2. British Involvement

Iraq's entry into the Baghdad Pact, an agreement that linked Iraq more closely to the West, marked a new phase in inter-Arab relations. Iraq's view of the region was incompatible with Egypt's. Iraq envisioned an Arab world heavily affiliated with the West, while Egypt imagined an Arab world defined by a common Arab policy oriented towards Arab solidarity and independence from the Western World. After the Baghdad Pact, Egypt and Iraq stopped trying to convince one another which was the best path for their countries to take, as they had for many years, and began instead working to convince the other Arab states to follow their own policies. Egypt wanted to prevent more Arab countries from entering into the Baghdad Pact. Nasser considered it to be of

vital importance that Egypt convince its neighbors that Pan-Arabism was the right choice.⁷² As a result, they sought to bring Syria onto the side of the Egyptians.

The Baghdad Pact was an international military alliance between the UK, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, and Turkey, formed on February 24th, 1955. This alliance's goal was to help prevent the spread of Soviet influence in the Middle East. Though the Baghdad Pact preceded the formation of the UAR, it greatly affected the UAR's future. Because it was a military alliance, the pact created much political friction between Egypt and Iraq. Egyptians were strongly opposed to the idea of establishing a pact in the Middle East that would serve Western interests. Egypt had, for decades, been fighting this kind of Western influence, and for Iraq to have invited it to their part of their world was infuriating for Egyptians.

The conflict from which all other issues arose involved the different threats perceived by each country. The Iraqi monarchy viewed communism as the greatest threat faced by the Arab world. In the last years of the Hashemite Kingdom of Iraq, the communist party incited many riots, which the government at the time used to quell. These uprisings caused many Iraqis to sympathize with the communist cause.⁷³ The communists, therefore, posed an existential threat to the Iraqi monarchy. Meanwhile, most Egyptians saw Western imperialism as the most serious threat. Nasser did not dismiss communism as a potential threat, but rather he realized the most immediate threat

⁷² James P. Jankowski, *Nasser's Egypt, Arab Nationalism, and the United Arab Republic* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 64.

⁷³ Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: A Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes and of Its Communists, Ba'thists, and Free Officers* (Princeton: N.J., 1978), 693.

was that of foreign imperialism and domination from the West. Nasser understood that implicating Egypt in international alliances inevitably carried the risk of perpetuating external dominance in a new guise. Nasser wanted not only Egypt, but all of the Arab world to become self-reliant. He proclaimed that, “Egypt is utterly determined that the defense of this region originate from within. It is firmly convinced that the defense of the Arab region must depend on the Arab states themselves.”⁷⁴ Nasser’s determination to separate the Arab world from the West, in particular from the United Kingdom, made him an enemy of the Western great powers.

Another motive behind Egypt’s opposition to the Baghdad Pact was related to the fact that it hurt Egypt’s regional position. The West hoped the alliance would isolate Egypt in the Middle East. When Iraq initially entered into the Baghdad Pact on February 1955 with Turkey, though Nasser was not outraged, he was well aware of Iraq’s ulterior motives. He explained to the U.S. Ambassador Byroade that “he was not greatly upset by the fact that Iraq joined in the pact with Turkey.”⁷⁵ This statement was simply a display of Nasser’s gamesmanship. Nasser was well aware of Nuri al-Sa’id’s (the pact’s Iraqi sponsor) real motives. Al-Sa’id’s goal had little to do with defense; rather it was his intention to bring Syria into the Iraqi orbit. This plan was all part of a British-Iraqi strategy to isolate Egypt in the Arab world. It was a scheme, designed by the West and Iraq, that indirectly set up the UAR for failure. In the final months of the UAR, when Syrian dissatisfaction with Egypt was at its apex, Syria began to question whether it had made the correct decision to join Egypt instead of Iraq. The Syrians began to speculate

⁷⁴ Romero, "Arab Nationalism and the Arab Union of 1958.
Translation based on the *Al-Ahram* text in US/State, 674.00/4-455

⁷⁵ Ibid.
Byroade to State, March 11, 1955, US/State, 674.00/4-1455

whether Iraqi and Syrian cultures were not more compatible, and whether the fact that the countries bordered one another made a long lasting union more plausible. These beliefs, however, would have very likely turned out to be false for a couple of reasons. First, the Hashemite Kingdom of Iraq was inclined to rely on the West for support. Syria, much like Egypt, had a vision of the Arab world that removed it from the influence of Western Power politics. Secondly, the Iraqi government was in a state of flux from the mid-1950's to the early 1960's. The Baghdad Pact, the overthrowing of the monarchy, and the establishment of a 'democratic' state made Iraq an unpredictable environment.

C. Soviet Actions in the Arab World

Relations between the Soviet Union and Egypt were initially amicable. During the 1950's, Egypt had entered into a trade agreement with the Russians in which the Soviets would provide arms, and the Egyptians would provide cotton and rice. Furthermore, Nasser made a trip to Moscow during this period to help build a mutually beneficial Soviet-Egyptian relationship. His journey was an outright success. Nasser left the USSR saying that Russia is a country with "no ulterior motives."⁷⁶ This relationship with the Soviet Union, however, played a large role in fueling American suspicions. When Nasser had Egypt recognize Communist China, it confirmed Dulles' belief that Egypt was gradually slipping into the Communist camp.⁷⁷ Though Dulles's this conclusion was

⁷⁶ Yasmin Qureshi, "A REVIEW OF SOVIET-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS," *Pakistan Horizon* 35, no. 1 (March 01, 1982): 117, accessed May 01, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/41393662?ref=search-gateway:a4c2160d08919e5b30569dc5daa8ed9c>.

⁷⁷ Qureshi. A REVIEW OF SOVIET-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS. 114

based on nothing more than false speculation, it strained the relationship between Egypt and the US.

On the 26 of July 1956, Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal. The nationalization was a tremendous victory for the Arab Republic of Egypt. Since 1869, the Suez Canal had been an outpost for European Imperialism in Egypt. And though Egypt had provided the land and the labor force that constructed the canal, from 1880 to 1936, Egypt received no compensation for the use of its land from either the British or the French, as result of deal where the Khedive of Egypt, Isma'il Pasha, sold the Egyptian and Sudanese shares in the Suez Canal Company in order to repay his personal debts.⁷⁸ The nationalization of the canal returned the profits back to the Egyptian people. However, Nasser's decision to do so further angered the British and the French. Nationalization was another reminder to the British and French that their empires were crumbling. What did come as a surprise was the Anglo-French decision to challenge Nasser's move with military force. Britain and France, in collusion with Israel, attacked Egypt on 29-30 October 1956. This decision incited anger from both superpowers and the Afro-Asian nations of the world. The Soviets, unlike the Americans, came out in open support of the Egyptians. Nevertheless, Nasser received this support tactfully, as he did not want to lose support from the Eisenhower administration, which was at the time encouraging its British, French, and Israeli allies to withdraw from the war. On November 5th, the Soviet Government sent a note to Britain and France threatening the two parties with a nuclear strike if they did not immediately stop the war. In the letter to Britain the Soviets wrote, "The question of the

⁷⁸ Ragaie El Mallakh, "The Economics of the Suez Canal under UAR Management," *Middle East Journal* 14, no. 2 (April 01, 1960): 127, accessed May 01, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/4323227>.

Suez Canal is only an excuse for Anglo-French aggression, which has other and far reaching goals. It is impossible to hide the fact that an aggressive robber war against the Arab peoples is now actually unfolding with the purpose of abolishing the national independence of states of the Middle East and of restoring the regime of colonial slavery overthrown by the people of the area." The note went on to say, "what would be Britain's situation if stronger governments, possessing all the forms of contemporary arms attacked her? After all, such countries at the present time do not need to send naval or air forces to the British shores, but can use other means, for example missiles...."⁷⁹ The Suez Crisis resulted in a tremendous victory for Nasser, with the return of the Suez Canal to Egypt. This event elevated him in the minds of Arabs across the region, thus positioning him to assume the role as leader of the Arab World.

Soviet relations with Egypt remained amicable until Syria and Egypt merged into the UAR. Russia had mixed feelings in regard to the union, for while it strengthened the position of the neutralists the union also saw to the dissolution of the Syrian communist party, hitherto the strongest in the Middle East. Relations between the USSR and Nasser took a turn for the worse as the conflict between Arab nationalists and Arab communists began to escalate. In 1958, Karim Kassem overthrew the Hashemite monarchy of Iraq during a coup d'état. Nasser hoped this new government would join the UAR to help further Pan-Arabist goals, but Kassem was unwilling to join the union. Instead, he began to install Iraqi communists in high-ranking positions to gain support from the communists to help combat the internal pressures to join the UAR. The USSR hoped to use Iraq as a

⁷⁹ The Policy of the Soviet Union in the Arab World, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1975, pp. 72-74

base from which they could spread communist ideology to the rest of the Arab world. As a result, Iraq received a large amount of military and economic aid from the Russians.⁸⁰

Nasser was infuriated by this development. He denounced Iraqi communists as stooges of Moscow. Nasser said, "We were trying to convince ourselves that the communist parties in our countries were independent of international communism... They carried out orders and instructions to liquidate patriotic and national elements to place our country in the zone of communist influence. We were suddenly faced by flagrant interference in our internal affairs by Russia."⁸¹ The UAR and the USSR over the next year would enter into a war of propaganda, each party verbally attacking the other.

This war of propaganda lasted for a little more than a year. After Iraqis began to reject the communist and Soviet presence in their country, Soviet influence declined in all other parts of the region as a result. Though relations between the USSR and the UAR normalized, the damage had been done. The relationship that Egypt, and later the UAR, had with the USSR was arguably the most detrimental relationship it had with any other major global power. Though there was much less direct intervention coming from the Soviets, the fact that UAR had any relationship with the Soviets incriminated the UAR in the eyes of the West. As mentioned earlier, Soviet relations with the UAR fueled western suspicions. As a result, the Western powers reacted in such a way as to ensure their interests were not being compromised in the Middle East. These actions had a direct bearing on the political stability of the Union. In the end, the UAR fell victim to the frequent interjection and intervention of foreign powers in domestic and regional politics.

⁸⁰ Qureshi, Y. A REVIEW OF SOVIET-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS. 116

⁸¹ R. Stephens, Nasser, Harmondworth, Penguin Books Ltd., 1973, 297

Chapter 4: The Collapse of the United Arab Republic

In 1960, before the collapse of the UAR, Nasser gave a speech before hundreds of Egyptians and Syrians. The topic of his speech was based on a discussion he had with the head of the Muslim Brotherhood. In Nasser's conversation with the leader, he requested that Nasser make the wearing of the *tarha* (the headscarf) mandatory for all women in the nation. Upon mentioning this, the crowd burst into laughter. When I saw this film clip for the first time I was amazed at how drastically the Arab World has changed. During the 1950's and 1960's, the notion of incorporating laws that would dictate how people lived in order to cater to a religious agenda was absurd. And yet today, we see in Egypt a world warped by the resurgence of religious fundamentalists, where daily life is defined by failing internal infrastructure. The Arab World has become a place where ignorance abounds, and the economy is in disrepair. Arab civilization seems no longer to move forward, but to be moving backward. Pan-Arabism endeavored to change the direction of Arab progress by creating a secular and egalitarian society where all could live freely and safely. In this chapter, we will examine several things: the end of the UAR, Israel and its effect on Arab Nationalism, and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt since the downfall of the UAR.

A. The End of the UAR

In the process of bringing two governments together, the UAR encountered many difficulties in reconciling the politics of two separate countries. Throughout the UAR's existence, there were always tensions that existed between the Syrians and the Egyptians. Much of this stemmed from the fact that certain members of the Syrian government

(high-ranking Ba'ath Party leaders and military officers) were dissatisfied with the original terms of the merger. As mentioned early in my thesis, the unification between Egypt and Syria occurred rapidly due to certain external factors that pressured Syria into a national merger.⁸² However, once these pressures subsided, Syrian discontent began to form. Under Nasser, the Syrian government was expected to make many changes in order to find a place in Nasser's government. One expected change was the dissolution of all political parties. Though the Ba'ath Party was angered by this, its members were willing to conform to the standards of their new government. But something that Syrian political elites couldn't tolerate was being relegated to secondary positions while Egyptians were coming into their country and taking the best positions. Thirty-three of the top 400 positions in Syria are known to have been filled by Egyptians. The actual number may have been higher. Many have argued, however, that these numbers were not all that high given the fact that Egyptians and Syrians shared a common citizenship under the UAR.⁸³ I would argue that during this period of transition into national unity, Syrians most probably felt that their country was playing host to an Egyptian occupation. The flooding in of Egyptian politicians undoubtedly overwhelmed the Syrians, who had difficulty adapting to the rapid changes demanded by Egypt.

As divisions began to form, it became increasingly difficult to sustain the national union. Power had become too concentrated in the hands of the men who created the Egyptian revolution, the inner circle of Nasser's Free Officer movement. This imbalance aggravated the conflicts that existed between Syrians and Egyptian political elites, and

⁸² Monte Palmer, "The United Arab Republic: An Assessment of Its Failure," *Middle East Journal* 20, no. 1 (January 01, 1966): 53, accessed October 02, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/4323954>.

⁸³ *Ibid.* 55

Syrian concerns were not baseless.⁸⁴ Nasser undertook a systematic liquidation of Syrian officers from the army. His administration was transferring them to other parts of the government such as the Foreign Ministry. Other times, the government would just pension them off and relieve them of their duties, a tactic which not unsurprisingly created resentment.⁸⁵ In Nasser's endeavor to create a functional government, he became too heavy handed and showed bias to his Egyptian countrymen. Above all, the neglect of Syrian officers was perhaps the greatest mistake Nasser made when it came to dealing with the Syrians. On the 28th of September, 1961, the United Arab Republic was destroyed by a coup d'état led by the Syrian military.⁸⁶ In one of the first public statements made by the Syrian Revolutionary Command, they outlined their grievances, "From the very first day,' the statement says, 'we wanted unity to be represented by an exchange of officers from both regions. Our youths went, full of vitality and Arabism, to the South. What was sent us from Egypt? All the evils and sins committed under the name of unity started from this point.'"⁸⁷

These domestic issues that were present, however, need be taken with a grain of salt. As with any emerging nation, problems were inevitable, especially in the case of the UAR. The leadership of this new nation followed no model in the formation of the nation state. Rather, it was a national experiment unlike the world had ever seen. The issues that arose during the nations infancy were natural and necessary in order to create an efficient and functional union. But what turned these domestic difficulties into insurmountable

⁸⁴ J. S. F. Parker, "The United Arab Republic," *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-) 38, no. 1 (January 01, 1962): 24, accessed October 02, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/2611377>.

⁸⁵ Patrick Seale, "The Break-Up of the United Arab Republic," *The World Today* 17, no. 11 (November 01, 1961): 473, accessed October 02, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/40393301>.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* 471

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* 472

obstacles was the political intervention of foreign powers. The UAR, while trying to establish itself within the region, had to counteract the affects of the Arab World's hostile political environment.⁸⁸ (In Iraq, for example, Nasser found a fierce enemy in General Qasim. Throughout his administration, Qasim was vocal in his opposition to Nasser and his policies. Qasim went even further in combating Nasser's influence in Iraq, which at the time was quite prevalent, by imprisoning supporters of Nasser. Moreover, with Qasim in power, Iraq would never join the UAR.⁸⁹ Iraqi membership was the next logical step in the growth of the UAR considering the clout the Iraqi Ba'ath party had in the country and without its support the movement for Arab unity was bound to lose momentum.

As we saw in Chapter 2, Nasser and the UAR faced considerable pressure from the Cold War powers during the same time period. Though Nasser was very open in his position of non-alignment and anti-imperialism, he understood the importance of maintaining a working relationship with both the Western world and the Soviet Bloc. But in his attempts to balance the national interests of his country and with the appeasement Cold War powers; the will of the international superpowers proved too great for the UAR and Nasser. The reality of the matter is that the UAR was ultimately doomed to failure by its position within the larger power structures of Cold War global affairs.

⁸⁸ Palmer, "The United Arab Republic: An Assessment of Its Failure," 60.

⁸⁹ Abbas Kelidar, "The Struggle for Arab Unity," *The World Today* 23, no. 7 (July 01, 1967): 295, accessed May 01, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/40393999>.

B. Economics in The UAR and Egypt

The Arab quest for unity and modernity has been a Sisyphean endeavor, hampered by the West at nearly every turn. In the relatively recent resurgence of Islamic extremism in many Arab countries, such as in Iraq and Egypt, we see a failure of societies in several Arab countries to improve. For a society to progress, especially a religiously mixed one, it must create a secular political culture. As a result of the Arab world's failure to do so, a discontented and stagnant society has arisen. Furthermore, few Arab countries have been able to build a national state capitalist system.⁹⁰ The political elites of the region have either been unwilling or unable to mobilize the social forces to create a sound capitalist market.

There have been, time and time again, resolutions put forth by the Arab League to create a common market between the countries of the Arab World and to create programs that would promote economic cooperation, but these schemes have seldom been implemented. Even amongst the subgroupings of the Arab World (i.e. The Maghreb; Egypt, Iraq, & the Levant) there has been little success with respect to coming together for economic cooperation. The only exception to this rule is the Cooperation Council of the Gulf, with Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states.⁹¹ However, critics of the cooperative have claimed that though this is the best example of Arab cooperation, it is perhaps the least Arab in substance. This claim is based on the fact that the economies of the Arabian Peninsula are fueled by foreign labor, with most of their workers coming from South and

⁹⁰ Faysal Yachir, "Wither the Arab World?," *Social Justice* 23, no. 1/2 (63-64), *The World Today* (April 01, 1996): 189, accessed March 29, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/29766934>..

⁹¹ *Ibid* 187

Southeast Asia. Furthermore, the Gulf has often been viewed as a puppet of the West because of its dependence on Western patronage in their respective petroleum industries.

During the 1960's when Pan-Arab sentiment was at a peak, a significant factor that prevented the UAR from bringing more countries into its sphere of influence was its failure to bring about economic integration.⁹² There are several explanations for the absence of economic planning in the different Arab plans for unification. Arab nationalism was born out of the discontent with foreign rule, both Ottoman and European. From its inception, Arab nationalism was not explicitly concerned with the economic revitalization of the Arab World. Rather, the Arab Nationalist movement was concerned with the establishment (or reestablishment) of an Arab nation state and the liberation of occupied and colonized Arab lands. Therefore, economic interests were very much on the periphery. Even after several Arab countries gained their independence, the political elites of the Arab world neither understood the importance of economic analysis nor encouraged the type of economic inquiry that is essential for policy formulation and execution.⁹³

Perhaps the most convincing explanation for a lack of emphasis on the importance of economics in Arab nationalism can be found in the disdain, disinterest, and indifference with which some of the many influential writers and thinkers of Arab nationalism viewed economics. For example, as the father of Arab Nationalism, Sati al-Husri denied the importance of economic forces in the articulation of the Arab nationalist

⁹² Abbas Alnasrawi, "Economic Integration: A Missing Dimension of Arab Nationalism," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 11, no. 2/3, ARAB AMERICANS: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE (April 01, 1989): 287, accessed October 14, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/41859073>.

⁹³ Ibid 290

movement. According to al-Husri, to even consider economic interests as one of the foundations of Arab nationalism would be contrary to intelligence and logic. Abdel Rahman al-Bazzaz, another theoretician of Arab nationalism, who served as Secretary general of OPEC and became Iraq's prime minister in the 1960's, echoed Husri's views when he said that it is possible for nationalism to arise among people who are aware of their national existence, their national language, and the spiritual values which are given to them by their common history, without the need for a materialistic economic unity to hold the group together.⁹⁴ This neglect of economics can be attributed to the rivalry between Arab Marxists and Arab nationalists. Thus, to distinguish themselves from the Marxists, the nationalists sought to place less emphasis on the importance of economic policy in the shaping of social and political change.

C. Israel and the Death of Arab Nationalism

Israel, since her founding in 1948, has been the nemesis of Arab and Islamic society. So much so that until today Israeli passport holders are refused admission to many Muslim and Arab countries.⁹⁵ This animosity goes back decades, and often the hostility has escalated into violence. From the 1940's to 1960's the Arab World and Israel had entered into several armed conflicts, the first being the Arab-Israeli War of 1948. After this war, Arab-Israeli relations never normalized but instead raised tensions ever higher, and eventually erupted into the Six-Day War of 1967, which is arguably the

⁹⁴ Ibid 291

⁹⁵ Countries that do not accept Israeli passports: Algeria, Bangladesh, Brunei, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Oman, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, United Arab Emirates, And Yemen. In addition, Iran, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen do not allow entry to people with evidence of travel to Israel, or whose passports have either a used or an unused Israeli visa.

most important Arab-Israeli armed conflict in modern history, for it was this war that brought about the demise of Arab Nationalism. The war has been labeled many things, but the name that is most striking is the Arabic name for the war: *an-Niksah*, the setback.⁹⁶ This is a misnomer. The war of 1967 was not just a setback from which the Arab Nationalist movement would recuperate. It was a catastrophe for the Arab World in that it virtually destroyed the pride and hope of a generation.

The war began with the mobilization of Egyptian forces in the Sinai Peninsula along the Israeli border on June 5th, 1967. In response to this, the Israelis launched a series of preemptive air strikes on Egyptian airfields, wiping out nearly the entire Egyptian air force.⁹⁷ By using the element of surprise to their advantage, the Israelis had gained air superiority putting the Egyptians at a disadvantage. As a result of this, Nasser had to evacuate the Sinai Peninsula, which was a devastating blow to Egyptian morale. In response to this development, Egypt was able to convince the Jordanians as well as the Syrians to begin their attack on Israel. However, this action proved futile; Israeli counterattacks resulted in the seizure of the Golan Heights from Syria and the West Bank as well as East Jerusalem from the Jordanians.⁹⁸ By the sixth day fighting ended, and on June 11th, 1967 the Arabs and the Israelis signed a ceasefire.

⁹⁶ "The Six-Day War " The Setback" - Division of Refugee Affairs." The Six-Day War " The Setback" - Division of Refugee Affairs. Accessed April 26, 2016. <http://drah.ps/en/index.php?act=post&id=357>.

⁹⁷ Mark A. Tessler, *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 396.

⁹⁸ Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000), 16.

The conflict resulted in 1,000 Israeli casualties and 20,000 Arab casualties.⁹⁹ This war brought an end to the Arab movement for unity because it dealt the final blow to an ideology that had become wobbly in the years after the dissolution of the UAR. Nasser, the once great hero of the Arab everyman, had been defeated by Israel. In the eyes of Arabs across the region, Nasser now seemed as incapable of waging the battle against Western influence in the Arab World. Over time, tears in the fabric of Arab modern society began to form, providing a channel through which religious fundamentalism could gain a foothold in the Arab community. In the aftermath of this war, more and more Arabs took the religious fundamentalist interpretation of the defeat as God's (Allah's) punishment of the Arabs for their move towards secularism. In the 1970's and 1980's Arab secular society began to unravel in the face of religious conservatism. This retreat to older ways of thinking began to breed anger and frustration amongst the multi-religious populations of several Arab nations.

D. The Muslim Brotherhood and Political Islam

In the years since Nasser, Egypt's government has gradually become more and more religious. In 2012, Egyptians elected the Muslim Brotherhood to a position of power, yet subsequently rescinded their hold on government. The Muslim Brotherhood. The Muslim Brotherhood has a very long history in Egypt. The roots of al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun (The Muslim Brotherhood) as a political party date back to the end of the 19th century. It began as a movement associated with al-Salafiyya; which aimed to reincorporate Islamic values of bygone days into Egyptian society. The group was

⁹⁹ Spencer Tucker and Priscilla Mary. Roberts, *The Encyclopedia of the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A Political, Social, and Military History* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2008), 1198

formally founded in Isma'iliyya in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna'. Imperialism had kindled the fires of discontent among these men. It was characterized by its dissatisfaction with Egypt's status in the world. The Muslim Brotherhood viewed Egypt's secularization as a form of moral and social decline. Furthermore, the involvement of the West in Egypt added insult to injury. Adherents saw the implementation of capitalist policies was seen as an affront against Islamic values, especially since the concept of Islamic banking was prominent in Egypt.¹⁰⁰

The Muslim Brotherhood up until the 1950's had been opposed to the British occupation of Egypt and the Muhammad Ali dynasty. When the Free Officers came into power, the Brotherhood opposed them as well.¹⁰¹ Their feelings of opposition came to its highest point when Nasser signed the agreement with the British concerning the evacuation of the Suez Canal.¹⁰² The Muslim Brotherhood saw this agreement as a betrayal, and in response they organized an assassination attempt upon Nasser on October

¹⁰⁰ "Islamic banking refers to a system of banking or banking activity that is consistent with the principles of the *Shari'ah* (Islamic rulings) and its practical application through the development of Islamic economics. The principles which emphasise moral and ethical values in all dealings have wide universal appeal. Shari'ah prohibits the payment or acceptance of interest charges (*riba*) for the lending and accepting of money, as well as carrying out trade and other activities that provide goods or services considered contrary to its principles. While these principles were used as the basis for a flourishing economy in earlier times, it is only in the late 20th century that a number of Islamic banks were formed to provide an alternative basis to Muslims although Islamic banking is not restricted to Muslims."

"Institute of Islamic Banking and Insurance - What Is Islamic Banking," Institute of Islamic Banking and Insurance - What Is Islamic Banking, What is Islamic Banking?, accessed May 02, 2016, http://www.islamic-banking.com/what_is_ibanking.aspx.

¹⁰¹ The Free Officers were a group of nationalist officers in the Egyptian armed forces that instigated the 1952 revolution. Nasser was a part of this group. James L. Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 186.

¹⁰² Roberto Marín Guzmán, "El Fundamentalismo Islámico En Egipto (I). Ideología Y Práctica Política De Los Al-Ikhwan Al-Muslimun [Los Hermanos Musulmanes] En Egipto (primera Parte)," *Estudios De Asia Y Africa* 36, no. 3 (116) (September 01, 2001): 281, accessed March 29, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/40313423>.

26th, 1954. The assassination was the beginning of the end for the Muslim Brotherhood. It caused public outrage, and civilians took to the streets screaming, “May the Brotherhood burn in Hell,” “Death to the Satanic Brotherhood,” and “Death to the Traitors.” Nasser sought out and virtually eradicated the party from the Egyptian political scene. At the end of this tumultuous period, Nasser’s administration had incarcerated more than 4,000 members, hanged six leaders, as well as tortured many of those arrested.¹⁰³

At its core, the Muslim Brotherhood was a violent, militant organization that often took to violent methods to achieve their goals. They arose in the modern era as a result of Egypt’s national discontent. The shortcomings of the time were visible in all parts of Egyptian life; the political landscape was bleak and sectarian strife between Muslim and Copt was commonplace.¹⁰⁴ The Brotherhood capitalized on these problems in the hopes to exacerbate already existing divisions between Muslim and Christian communities in Egypt. In an Islamic Egypt, the best Coptic minority could hope for in the hypothetical Islamic state would be the status of a protected but diminished subordinate community. To highlight the indifference that many political Islamists felt towards their Coptic countrymen Islamic political historian Rifaat Said was quoted saying, “We count everything in Egypt: cups, shoes. The only thing we don’t count is the Copts. They have been two million since 1945. No one has died; no one has been born.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Ibid 281

¹⁰⁴ Fouad Ajami, "The Sorrows of Egypt," *Foreign Affairs* 74, no. 5 (September 01, 1995): 79, accessed March 29, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/20047301>.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid 78

E. Conclusion

After the dissolution of the UAR and the death of Nasser in 1970, militant Islam grew stronger in Egypt. With groups like the Islamic Brotherhood and the Islamic Liberation Party (now known as the Egyptian Liberation Party) rising in popularity, Egyptians became more susceptible to the message of radical Islamists. Adil Hamuda, an Egyptian intellectual who authored a book in 1987 on the growth of religious extremism since 1967, viewed the uprising at the Technical Military Academy in 1974 as the key turning point toward religious extremism in Egypt.¹⁰⁶ The Palestinian-born Dr. Salih Sirriya led this insurrection; he was one of Sayyid Qutb's disciples and a leader in the Islamic Liberations Party. At first glance, the uprising may seem insignificant given the Arab World's tumultuous past, but it set a precedent, and had a negative ripple effect on Egyptian society. Its most significant product was the assassination of Anwar Sadat. Islambouli, an alumnus of the same Technical Military Academy mentioned above, was radicalized. He left the Egyptian Army to become a part of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, an Islamic terrorist group later affiliated with al-Qaeda. This group, however, was just one of many. In 1992, officials estimated that there were between 45 and 55 militant groups in Egypt.¹⁰⁷

Islamic resurgence was and is taking over Egyptian society. From the 1970's up until today, radical Islamism successfully competes with liberal, democratic, socialist, and even nationalist movements of thought. Moreover, the Islamic resurgence was not

¹⁰⁶ Adel Hamuda, *The Move to Violence* (Cairo, 1987), 104.

¹⁰⁷ David Sagiv, "Judge Ashmawi and Militant Islam in Egypt," *Middle Eastern Studies* 28, no. 3 (1992): doi:10.1080/00263209208700913. 531

unique to Egypt. The entire Islamic world has seen the reappearance of radical Islam in everyday life. From Algeria to Iraq, we see the concomitant devolution of Arab values. For example, in Algeria, the modern dream of *laïceté*¹⁰⁸ for the multi-religious country died in the face of the Islamic resurgence. In the new constitution of Algeria, it states that the religion of the state is Islam. It does not say that it is the religion of the majority but rather it affirms that Algeria as a nation is Islamic in its constitution and identity.¹⁰⁹ Such Islamism shaped the post-colonial society of Algeria. More women began wearing the veil, some because they had become more religiously conservative and others because the veil kept them from being harassed on the streets. We saw similar cases to that of Algeria in the late 1980's with the election of Islamist politicians in Jordan and the Palestinian Authority.

In the process of trying to halt the encroachment of communist ideology in the Third World (particularly the Arab World), Western Europe and the United States inadvertently played a part in creating a dysfunctional society. They generated a culture of distrust between themselves and the Arabs. Throughout the 1950's and 1960's, many of the Arab countries, including Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, succeeded in creating secular governments. Though these governments were far from reaching the standards of the Western World, they served as a point from which their countries would evolve. In their

¹⁰⁸ *Laïceté* or French Secularism is the absence of religious involvement in government affairs, especially the prohibition of religious influence in the determination of state policies. Conversely, it is the absence of government involvement in religious affairs, especially the prohibition of government influence in the determination of religion.

René Rémond, *Religion and Society in Modern Europe* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 35.

¹⁰⁹ Sanson, Henri. "La Laïcité Dans L'Algérie D'aujourd'hui." *Revue De L'Occident Musulman Et De La Méditerranée* 29, no. 1 (1980): 55-68. 56, Accessed March 27, 2016. http://www.persee.fr/doc/remmm_0035-1474_1980_num_29_1_1874.

acts of intervention in the Arab World, the West hindered the Arabs from ever reaching their potential. Chief Justice Muhammad al-Ashwami's book *Political Islam* expresses concern for Egyptian intellectuals against the growing power of extremist Islamists.¹¹⁰ He has understood that the politico-religious issues of Egypt had an effect on the entire region and, to an extent, the whole world. As we have seen with the attacks in Brussels and Ankara in 2016, the Islamic extremism originating from the Arab world has spread to cities across the globe.¹¹¹ But what has caused this metastasis of Islamic extremism? Anti-Americanism and Anti-Westernism as we know it is a relatively new phenomenon fueled by American and Western foreign policy. In the aftermath of the Gulf War, US National Security Advisor and future US ambassador to Israel Martin Indyk, told the US House of Representatives in 1991, "I think that the anger in the Arab street is real. It is produced by a number of different factors. But in the end, what matters is not whether they hate us or love us-for the most part, they hate us. They did before. But whether they are going to respect our power."¹¹² It is telling of American attitudes towards the Arab World, suggesting that in the eyes of the American government, the Arab World is nothing more than collateral damage on their path to global power. Instead of providing

¹¹⁰ Sagiv. "Judge Ashmawi and Militant Islam in Egypt." 53

¹¹¹ Ceylan Yeginsu, "Explosion in Ankara Kills at Least 34, Turkish Officials Say," *The New York Times*, March 13, 2016, accessed March 29, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/14/world/middleeast/explosion-ankara-turkey.html>.

"Death Toll from Brussels Attacks Rises to at Least 34," *BNO News*, March 27, 2016, accessed March 29, 2016, <http://bnonews.com/news/index.php/news/id3973>.

Steve Almasy, Pierre Meilhan, and Jim Bittermann, "Paris Massacre: At Least 128 Die in Attacks," *CNN*, November 14, 2015, accessed March 29, 2016, <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/11/13/world/paris-shooting/index.html>.

¹¹² Ussama Makdisi, "'Anti-Americanism' in the Arab World: An Interpretation of a Brief History," *The Journal of American History* 89, no. 2, History and September 11: A Special Issue (September 01, 2002) 538, accessed March 29, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/3092172>.

constructive and sustainable support to the Arabs, the US has allowed this part of the world to revel in its own dysfunction. The Arab Nationalist movement of the United Arab Republic is dead, but the interconnectivity of the Arab people is not. Though the Arab Nationalist dream was hampered by the pervading actions of foreign powers, social and political progress is still possible if, and only if, Arabs can come together to work in collaboration towards a more secular and more unified Arab World.

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