

**MILITARY CAPABILITIES AND FOREIGN DEPENDENCE :
ISRAEL AND FRONT-LINE ARAB STATES /**

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List of Abbreviations

1. AA - Anti Aircraft
2. AMIO - Arab Military Industrial Organization
3. APC - Armoured Personnel Carrier
4. ASM - Air to Surface Missile
5. CENTO - Central Treaty Organization
6. FPB - Fast Patrol Boats
7. How - Howitzers
8. IRBM - Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile
9. MEDO - Middle East Defence Organization
10. MTB - Motor Torpedo Boats
11. NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organization
12. SAM - Surface to Air Missile
13. SLEM - Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile
14. SSM - Surface to Surface Missile
15. Rkl. Rif. - Recoilless Rifles
16. Tks. - Tanks
17. UK - United Kingdom
18. USA - United States of America
19. USSR - Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

No study of international relations can be complete without analysing the interaction of foreign policy and defence policy. It is in this context that the politics of arms transfer has assumed great significance, especially since the Second World War, because a large number of Third World countries have to depend upon the developed world for their military capability. The need to acquire military capability, therefore, becomes a major determinant of the national strategy. The usefulness of the weapon systems procured depends upon the security perceptions, full assimilation of the weapons in the country's armed forces and the assessment, of the countermoves made by the adversary. It is here that, in an interdependent world, nations seek linkages which they feel buttress their military security.

The nationalist movements and the resulting decolonization has expanded the locus of international conflict from Europe into areas of Asia, Africa and Latin America. This has resulted in the emergence of conflictual behaviour among the countries within these respective regions. This behaviour influences strategic thinking of the countries there.

The acquisition of military capabilities, either unilaterally or in a military alliance with other nations, may deter an opponent or provoke similar countermeasures by the opponent in an effort to maintain or restore a more favourable

relationship of forces. The ensuing struggle for power, therefore, becomes the central feature of international politics - according to the realist school of thought, which also emphasizes the balance of military power in its analysis of international conflict.¹

Relevant factors which must be considered essential while assessing the capabilities of an individual state are : military-- in comparison to those of its direct antagonists, economic, public opinion, intention of the opponents and dependence upon allied support. In this context it becomes essential to examine these conflicts not in isolation, but in their global context. It is in this perspective that we need to see the West Asian conflict, which has involved Israel and its five front-line Arab states in a constant state of confrontation for the last thirty-five years. The involvement of Super Powers or Great Powers in this conflict is nothing new, as this pattern has also been repeated in other 'area conflicts' all over the world.

Most of the Third World countries, especially in the Middle East, do not have the infrastructure to produce, maintain or even operate sophisticated weapon systems, and, therefore,

1 For detail, see Hans J. Morgenthau, Politics Among Nations (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967); James Dougherty and Robert Pfaltzgraff Jr., Contending Theories of International Relations (Philadelphia: Lippencott, 1971), pp. 65-99.

have to depend to a large extent on the military assistance from Super Powers or Great Powers. This creates a dependency, which may be influenced by several factors. The arms sales or the military aid given by the donor countries might vary according to their perceptions of the importance and potential gains and influences that could be acquired by the aid to the recipient state.

Arms sales are essentially political in nature, i.e. as a means to achieve political influence or friendship. But in some instances they also hold economic interest, e.g. the arms sales to the oil producing states. Yet, it must be noted that though economic gains are a useful input in arms trade, and France has a very flexible policy in that respect, very often economic considerations alone do not lead to arms trade. These trades underline the political linkages between the party selling arms and the one receiving arms. Thus, USA will readily sell arms to Saudi Arabia but not to Libya and it is easier for Libya to acquire arms from the USSR.

The acquisition of military aid and enhancement of a country's military capability depends upon the global and regional environment at the given time which influences the policies of both, the recipient and the donor. One major factor which has raised the military buildup in the Middle East has been its geo-strategic location which is of utmost importance to both the Super Powers. Thus they tend to readily help their dependent allies in the region.

The West Asia is important to the United States because of the position of the area as a political, economic and military crossroad between Asia, Africa, Europe and the Soviet Union. Earlier Greece, Turkey and Iran used to form a defence perimeter against direct Soviet expansion. With the passage of time, and due to political changes in this region, these countries have been replaced by Israel, Saudi Arabia and now Egypt to form a new line of defence. But the major US concern during the last couple of decades has been the indirect Soviet penetration. It feels that Moscow wants to dominate the strategic land-bridge between Europe, Africa and Asia, and is trying to gain control of the region by achieving a protectorate relationship with certain Arab nations. The Americans feel that by concentrating military and economic assistance to these regional powers the Soviets are not only trying to eliminate the western influence in the region but, at the same time, are also establishing a 'junior partner' relationship with their Arab clients.

The USSR looks at this area as its soft underbelly, and a potential route to the much needed warm waters for its naval forces. Therefore, it is interested in denying this region to its adversaries.

It is often true that asymmetry in relationship between the donor and the recipient state gives the donor a degree of influence in shaping the policies of the recipient. But there are some exceptions, and it is possible that the recipient

might follow a policy not to the liking of the donor state. Egypt under Sadat was given enormous military aid by the USSR, which had given its latest weaponry and also technical advisers to Egypt, so that it might be fully conversant with modern sophisticated weapons. This aid had continued even after the October 1973 War. But, with a change in his perception, Sadat not only asked for the withdrawal of the Soviet personnel in 1972 but also terminated all facilities provided to the Soviets in Egypt by 1976. Israel too has often taken steps that have undermined the US influence in the area even though the latter is at present its most staunch supporter and the biggest supplier of economic and military aid. Thus Super Powers and even Great Powers like Britain and France have been losing the ability to 'control' or influence events in their former colonies or zones of influence.²

The Super Power rivalry has played a significant role in the West Asia region. Since a direct military confrontation may prove counter-productive, the USA and the USSR compete with each other by proxy. In this case, the Super Powers support friendly states or regimes for strategic and political reasons. However, these 'proxy' states are not stable. Their alliance with the Super Powers mostly depends upon their own interests and perception of their security and outside threats. Thus, the

2 Andrew J. Pierre, *The Global Politics of Arms Sales*
 (Princeton, 1982), p. 4.

'proxy' states may continue, or if need be, change over to the opposite side of the fence. A good example of this phenomenon is found in the Horn of Africa where the Soviet Union initially supported Somalia militarily against Ethiopia which was supported by America. But, later on in 1977-78, the alliances and the respective roles were reversed.

Clausewitz had rightly pointed out that war is continuation of politics by other means. The level of military involvement corresponds to the stakes at a given time of the donor state in the region. For example USSR has developed high stakes in Syria since 1976, as it is now the only powerful Arab state in the Middle East region which is still pro-USSR, while the other states are leaning more towards the 'West'. Similar was the importance of Grenada for the USA in 1983, when it put in a direct show of force and intervened militarily. In other circumstances, when the stake is less, then the donor country does not bother much about the fate of its recipient state. Pakistan was left in the lurch by USA during and after the 1965 Indo-Pak War.

At the regional level, the factors which have influenced the demand for arms in the West Asia have varied from country to country; each having different foreign policy goals and relations with local and external powers. The three main reasons for arms acquisition are: internal security, external military contingencies, and prestige - the last an important factor for the Arabs.

The Arab states have to build up their military capability keeping in view two things; the Israeli menace and the threat posed to their regimes by other neighbouring states. It is in accordance with these perceptions that changes of alliances take place and the Arab states shuttle from Western sources to the Eastern sources.

The instability of successive Syrian governments as well as its confrontation with Israel, and the continuing Kurdish insurgency in Iraq plus its conflict with Iran and Israel were factors which influenced to some extent the demand for increased military capability and weapon procurement in those countries. Though Israel's military power was the most important factor for strategic planning and weapon requirement in Egypt, its competition with Iraq for Arab leadership in the 1950s was also a serious contributing factor. Moreover, between 1962 and 1967 Egypt's involvement in Yemen in support of the republicans against the Saudi-backed royalists caused it to put more stress on its military needs, as it had to deploy approximately 60,000 troops and other logistic resources in Yemen. This diversion of troops and equipment to Yemen reduced Egypt's military capability on the Israeli front as shown in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War.

Israel relies mainly upon the use of overwhelming and effective military force to secure its two most important objectives - firstly, to deter the Arabs from using force to solve the Palestine issue, and secondly, if a war does ensue, to insure that Israel can win a quick victory with minimum casualties.

The lack of sufficient manpower leads to the emphasis on high level of military training and sophisticated armaments. It depends for this purpose upon its lobby in Western Europe and the USA to ensure the weapon deliveries and appropriate technological, economic and political support.

Over the years the strategic importance of the West Asian region has grown due to the Super Power global confrontation. There were also other contributing factors for increased tension in this area. New states were created due to the decolonization process, and there have been revolutionary changes in most of these states. Also, during that period, the regional disputes have not only multiplied but also intensified. These factors have influenced the pattern of dependency and the donor-recipient relationship in the area.

In the 1940s the area was a preserve of the traditional colonial powers, Britain and France, with the USA getting a foothold in some spots due to its presence during the Second World War. They had bases, base facilities and treaty relationship with most of the states in the region which, along with their active presence in the area, were deemed to be sufficient to ensure the protection of their interests. There was hardly any Soviet presence. Under these conditions no need was felt to transfer large amount of weapons to the regional powers. That was reflected during the First Arab-Israeli War when the Arab forces were militarily inferior to those of Israel.

The formation of the state of Israel, the First Arab-Israeli War and the state of intense Arab-Israeli rivalry since

then, as well as the intensification of the Cold War rivalry in the region in the 1950s set a new pattern of arms transfer and the donor-recipient relationship. But, though the USA was emerging as the major arms supplier of the Western Bloc, the Israeli factor prevented the US entry as an arms supplier to this region in the fifties. The task of arms supply was entrusted largely to Britain and France. After 1955, the USSR entered in a big way as a competing power.

While the USSR continued to be a major arms supplier to some of the Arab states, the USA replaced Britain and France in the mid-sixties. By that time the Eastern Mediterranean had become the focus of Super Power rivalry, and both Super Powers were searching for allies on the littoral. The USSR had cultivated Syria and Egypt since 1955. But by 1964-65, when the Soviet naval presence had increased in the Mediterranean, the USA had a setback in Turkey and Greece when these two countries, on the southern flank of the NATO, had quarrelled over Cyprus.

Turkey lost its importance as a reliable US ally in the region, and therefore, to balance it USA gave more emphasis to developing new regional powers which could be more dependent upon the USA. In this aspect Israel suited it most. Hence the USA had strategic compulsions also to turn towards Israel.

In the 1960s, the growing importance of the Eastern Mediterranean, because of the Super Power naval rivalry based upon the newly developed SLBM (Polaris missiles), shifted the USSR's perception of threat from land-based missiles (Jupiter in Turkey) to the naval-based missiles (Polaris A-2), which

reportedly became operational in the Mediterranean in 1963. Though the USSR had sufficient naval force to operate in the Mediterranean, it did not have other support like port facilities and air bases for naval support and reconnaissance in the region. It had lost Albania due to ideological disputes in late 1960s. Hence it grew more and more dependent upon the 'friendly' littoral states like Egypt and Syria. Thus, USSR was forced to support these states economically and militarily so as to gain politico-military advantage in its Cold War rivalry in the Mediterranean.

Due to the Super Power rivalry during this period, the recipient states got massive military aid from their donors, on easier terms as compared to other periods of conflict. One result of these developments was that the old Arab-Israeli rivalry got directly linked to the Super Power naval rivalry in the region, thus, intensifying the confrontation further.

The mid-seventies saw a change in this pattern of dependency. There were two main reasons for it. They were the changing perception of Egypt under Sadat vis-a-vis the two Super Powers and also vis-a-vis the Arab-Israeli conflict per se. His policy of detente towards Israel brought him closer to the USA. The price demanded was not only a peace treaty with Israel but also a break with the USSR. Thus, the USSR was left with only one regional power, Syria. That partly explains the great stakes that USSR has developed in Syria today. The USA has acquired greater flexibility. While it has succeeded in detaching Egypt from USSR, it has not given up Israel, which it feels, is still

important in its strategy, not only in the Eastern Mediterranean but also in the Gulf, especially after the Iranian revolution and the ouster of the Shah of Iran in 1979.

One factor needs to be highlighted in the context of the pattern of donor-recipient dependency. Unlike the situation since 1955 when the countries of the Third World could bargain with the Socialist Bloc for arms, the countries of West Asia till 1955 were dependent upon only the countries of the West for their arms supply, whether they be UK, France or USA. This dependency model was influenced by a unipolar system instead of a bipolar system which came after the mid-fifties, and a multipolar system after the seventies. This unipolar dependency put the Arabs under great constraints, especially in their confrontation vis-a-vis Israel which had strong backing in the West, where every effort was made to protect it and to strengthen it. Sadat succeeded in bringing that model back after 1975 when he opted for US support in dealing with Israel. Saudi Arabia had never gone to the USSR for help, while Jordan had tentatively tried it once. Thus, today both models are operating in the Middle East, bipolar where USSR and USA (West) are arms suppliers to two rival powers, and the unipolar where only West is supplying arms to both the rival parties.

Thus, the intensity of regional rivalry, especially the Arab-Israeli rivalry, and the changing pattern of Super Power strategic interests in the region are reflected not only in the pattern of dependency between the donors and the recipients but also in the flow of arms to the region. This

phenomenon can be easily viewed from the importance attached to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the transfer of arms during different periods. During the First Arab-Israeli War, vintage arms (W.W. II type or even earlier models) were supplied to the belligerent forces, and subsequently an effort was made to contain them by the Tripartite Declaration of 1950.

There was a spurt in arms transfer in the middle of 1960s when USSR entered into the picture and Britain and France tried to match the flow of Soviet arms to Egypt and Syria by supplying new weapons not only to Israel but also to Jordan, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. The third phase of arms transfer began in mid-sixties and continues till today. In this phase latest arms were transferred by the Super Powers to their local supporters. These arms, which were not even tested in battle condition earlier, were used not only during the October War of 1973, but also in the subsequent battles in Lebanon.

Thus, for a more comprehensive understanding of this complex phenomenon one needs to study the interaction of four variables; possible variation in geostrategic significance of the area for Great Powers over a given number of years, the nature and intensity of Great Power rivalry as well as the regional rivalry and finally the interaction of regional and global conflicts. These variables will help one to understand not only the pattern of arms transfer but also the nature of dependency relationship between the donor and the recipient states.

Chapter II

DEPENDENCY UPON THE WEST (W.W. II - 1955)

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This is an interesting phase in the analysis of the dependency model of donor-recipient relationship. Unlike other models, where donorship syndrome is conditioned by bipolar or multipolar systems, in this case it is governed by unipolar system as seen from the framework of global international system affecting the region at that time. Before 1955, the two conflicting parties, Arabs and the Israelis (or the Zionists before the formation of Israel), were dependent upon what is commonly known as the Western Bloc. This 'bloc' was mainly composed of three Great Powers - USA, UK and France. Despite minor policy differences amongst them, they, for a long time, succeeding in co-ordinating their military, economic and political policies vis-a-vis the West Asian region. The USSR did briefly try to gain some influence over Israel and the Zionist group when it voted for the partition of Palestine and sold ex-German arms to Israel against dollar payment. But the USSR went into its shell, especially during the last phase of the Stalinist period, as far as this area was concerned and major policy changes could be brought about only during and after the Khrushchev era.

The Arab-Israeli Dispute and Great Power Interests

It will be useful to view the Arab-Israeli dispute in its historical perspective so as to understand the main forces influencing the relationship not only between the Arab states and Israel, but also between these two conflicting parties and the

international community, especially the Great Powers.

The main reason for such a unipolar dependency was that during, and even before, the Second World War the Arab World including Palestine was under the Western dominance. All the different Arab states looked towards Britain, France and America for assistance in their internal affairs and for the attainment of their national goals, even in the context of their dispute regarding the Palestine problem. The Zionists were also dependent upon the West, especially upon Britain and the United States of America for the achievement and establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine.

Ever since the mid-thirties, Britain, conscious of the need to win over the sympathy and support of the Arabs, had been suggesting compromise formulas for the solution of the Palestine question. However, it could not find a solution which could reconcile the Arab demand and the Zionist aspirations, especially in the context of the anti-semitic policies pursued by the Nazis and the Fascists in Europe and their repercussions as far as the Palestine problem was concerned.

Thus, throughout the Second World War, Britain froze the constitutional position in Palestine and held land transfers and immigration at the level of the 1939 White Paper. The Arab leaders were forced to choose sides between the Anglo-French alliance and the German-Italian axis. In this, the Arabs were greatly divided due to their specific interests and perceptions. These alliances have to be seen in the framework of short-term tactics rather than long-term strategic perceptions of these

Arab leaders.

reportedly, the followers of Mufti Al-Hussaini in Palestine and the Iraqi militants under Rashid Ali took the side of the Axis Powers, while King Abdallah sided with the Britishers in the hope of being rewarded after the war in his ambition of incorporating the Arab region of Palestine into Transjordan. The same was the case with King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia and Nuri as-Said of Iraq who had long-term systemic linkages with the West. Even the Wafd Party in Egypt realized that it would be safer to side with the British, since there was a basic identity of interests and since both were fighting against the hostile Fascist forces in Egypt. Thus, the Wafd Party was protected and projected as a ruling elite by Britain during that period, even at the cost of the Palace.

The British strategy was based on the importance of Arab support in time of war. Concessions on Palestine would help preserve and reinforce this alliance. Since Jewish backing was already ensured in any battle against the Nazis, it was not necessary to placate the Zionists.¹ This balance in the Arab and Zionist pressure on Britain led to a freeze on the part of the British Mandatory authority in Palestine.

Though siding with the British, the Zionists realized that they could not depend solely upon the Mandatory Power to gain their objectives. The Arabs had shown animosity towards

1 Barry Rubin, *The Arab States and the Palestine Conflict* (Syracuse, 1981), p. 118.

them for bringing immigrants to Palestine and Britain had succumbed to Arab pressures. Moreover, the Axis advances in the initial period of the war were not very reassuring to the Jews, even in Palestine. Therefore, they developed their own underground military organization, besides the terrorist groups like the Irgun and the Stern, which were often declared illegal by the British.

It was in these circumstances that the Haganah was formed. Haganah was an underground organization for self-defence of the Jewish community in Palestine during the British Mandate. It was controlled by the elected national institutions of the Zionist movement. Besides imparting military training, it also carried out terrorist activities against the Arabs and helped in organizing and bringing in of illegal immigrants.²

This period also witnessed an increased influx of immigrants into Palestine from many countries, especially from Eastern Europe, which increased the Jewish manpower resources and reinforced the Zionist's fighting capability as many of these newcomers had already obtained training in para-military activities. During the first year of the war, the Jews realized that a situation could arise when they might be left at the mercy of the Arabs since the Allied Forces in Europe and Middle East were being defeated and might even be forced to evacuate

2 Yigal Allon, The Making of Israel's Army (New York, 1971), pp. 3-15.

Palestine. To counter such a contingency the Jews created the Palmach - an independent military force consisting of nine companies regularly mobilized for action.

The co-operation with the British provided the Palmach with better training in military operations. It also undertook to develop the infrastructure of the Navy and the Air Force through local maritime and air sports clubs. Palmach became the "inspiring element within the Jewish community for resistance against foreign oppression and a dependable instrument of the political leadership for achieving national goals."³

During this period the Arabs were also feeling uneasy and politically insecure. To the Arab political circles the Palestine issue was again jeopardized as the new British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, was considered more pro-Zionist than his predecessor. Unlike Transjordan, many of the Arab states were sitting on the fence watching the turn of events, hoping to jump in on the winning side at the end of the war so that they might profit politically.

The Egyptians did not pay much attention to the Palestine issue during the early phase of the war as they were more concerned about the friction in the Anglo-Egyptian relations. Nuri as-Said stressed that Iraq would enter on the British side if Britain promised to implement the White Paper, gave independence

to Palestine, arranged for Syrian independence and supplied⁴ arms to Iraq. Britain, however, rejected these demands.

By the end of 1942, West Asia was securely in the hands of the Allies. King Abdallah, the only Arab Leader to provide support, and Nuri as-Said, who was pro-British but had gone into a temporary exile following the Rashid Ali coup d'etat, demanded their rewards from the British. They also suggested that Britain could further consolidate Arab support by furthering the cause of Pan-Arabism. The Jews, through Chaim Weizmann, repeated their proposal of peaceful co-⁵existence in an Arab federation along side a Jewish state.

The Zionist conference of 1942 demanded a Jewish state for the first time through the 'Biltmore Program', and King Abdallah responded by offering an alternative that the Arab por-⁶tion of the Palestine be absorbed in the federation of Trans-jordan, Syria and Lebanon. But this effort of his was countered by the stronger Arab states of Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Iraq, which held their own interests in the Palestine cause and saw them-⁷selves as more qualified for Arab leadership.

4 See Majid Khadduri, Arab Personalities (Baltimore, 1973), pp. 240-43 and Majid Khadduri, Independent Iraq (New York, 1951), pp. 170-71.

5 Howard M. Sachar, A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time (Oxford, 1977), p. 244.

6 A. N. H. Abidi, Jordan: A Political Study (Bombay, 1965), pp. 20-21.

7 Benjamin Shwadran, Jordan, A State of Tension (New York, 1969), pp. 233-34.

Meanwhile, the Zionists were pursuing their aim of forming a Jewish Brigade in the British Army, so that their men could acquire better training which would help in strengthening their underground military operations and help smuggle in arms. This was also very useful because it offered them battlefield experience which the Arab armies lacked.

It was during this period that the United States got involved in Palestine controversy due to the working of an effective Zionist lobby in Washington. But throughout this period America was not 'actively' participating in solving the crisis or taking sides with either the Jews or the Arabs. The reason for this behaviour was that at this particular juncture the United States had very little stakes in the West Asian region. In the global context, it had a low-key competition with the Russians in support of the Zionists. The Americans wanted to appease both, the Zionists and the Arabs, so as to safeguard the Allied supply routes to Russia and the Western interests in West Asia.

During the latter half of the 1940s the United States sided with UK and France and had nearly the same policies concerning the West Asian region. Since Moscow, during the Stalinist period, was not prepared to aid the Arab states, the US did not perceive any threat or competition from them. Only after the weakening of the British and French influence in the area, and the emergence of the Cold War, did the United States step in to fill the vacuum, and became actively involved in the

West Asian politics, viewing it in a global military-strategic context. Throughout this period, the Zionist lobby was much more effective than the Arab lobby in USA.

The Arabs decided that a broader unity among themselves was a must to impress the West. Therefore, the Arab conference in Alexandria in 1944 resulted in their joining in the British sponsored Arab League. The conference agreed that Palestine was an important part of the Arab World and that it, along with Syria and Lebanon, should be granted independence.

The World War II period also witnessed an intra-Allied power rivalry when the Anglo-American forces not only defeated the Vichy forces in Lebanon and Syria, but also put pressure on the Free French to grant speedy independence to these two states. The French had to follow that policy most reluctantly, and while it did not increase the British influence in Syria and Lebanon, it did lead to bitterness between France on one hand and the Anglo-Americans on the other. This might partly explain the French policy of coming closer to Israel during the latter's formative years. The end of the Second World War saw Britain emerge as the dominant Western Power in West Asia, and a patron of Arab states, now organized in the Arab League, the formation of which Britain had itself suggested and encouraged.

8 For details see Ahmed M. Gomaa, The Foundation of the League of Arab States: Wartime Diplomacy and Inter-Arab Politics, 1941 to 1945 (London, 1977), pp. 179-90.

The membership of half a dozen Arab states in the newly formed United Nations also gave an added influence to their demands in all international forums. The Arab League Pact of 1945 had already grouped the Arabs in a new regional power bloc. This, plus the help that the Arabs might offer to the West against the Soviet Union in the Cold War, compelled the British to be more soft in their approach towards the Arab problems. The Arabs on the other hand wanted to deal preferably with Britain rather than with the Zionists on the Palestine issue.

The Partition of Palestine and the First Arab-Israeli Clash

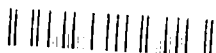
During the period of 1946 to 1947 both, the Zionists and the Arab states, were in two minds. Even though they looked towards the West for succor, they had realized that the British might be helpless in solving the Palestine issue. Therefore, both the conflicting parties developed plans to achieve their goals themselves; firstly through political means, and failing that through the force of arms. To that end, both the Arabs and the Zionists were secretly preparing for a showdown. They began acquiring arms and ammunition openly and sometimes secretly with a view to utilizing them when the need arose.

In February 1947, Britain finally gave up the attempt to find a solution, and referred the question of Palestine to the United Nations. The General Assembly appointed a Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), which by a majority vote recommended in August 1947 that the Mandate should end and

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Palestine should be partitioned.

While most of the Jews in Palestine had military training and many had underground guerilla experience, the Arabs were not so well prepared even though they numerically outnumbered the Jews. Yet, knowing their limitations in the military field, the Arabs had no choice other than to make military preparation.

King Abdallah of Transjordan was particularly not sanguine about the Arab military prospects. Anticipating Arab antagonism to his 'realistic' approach, Abdallah gave a series of surreptitious indications suggesting his readiness to accept partition of Palestine.¹⁰ Thus, the need for an agreement with the Zionists and the British. In the heart of hearts he thought that he was better placed to deal with the Palestine issue, since his Arab Legion was quite efficient - consisting of tough bedouin soldiers and British officers, reinforced by British military and economic aid.¹¹

The Syrians, while rejecting the Partition plan, prepared to nullify it by military force. In December 1947, the Arab Prime Ministers' Conference in Cairo, decided that the

9 In November 1947 the General Assembly resolved to adopt the UNSCOP majority report recommendations. For details see, C. H. Dodd and M. E. Soles, Israel and the Arab World (London, 1970), pp. 78-81.

10 See Abidi, n. 6, pp. 24-26.

11 P. J. Vatikiotis, Politics and the Military in Jordan: A Study of the Arab Legion 1921-1957 (London, 1967), p. 113.

Syrian government was to be entrusted with the task of training the personnel and organizing the Arab forces for intervention in Palestine. Syria instituted a compulsory military training and set aside \$2 million for arms purchases.¹²

The Iraqi armed forces were equipped by the British, but its experience in the Kurdish insurgency had not trained it to fight a modern conventional warfare away from its borders. Furthermore, several coup d'etats and purges in the military had reduced its operational capability. The Saudi army, on the other hand, was ill-equipped and ignorant of modern warfare due to tribal makeup of its military forces and lack of officer material and co-ordination, and was capable of only a token intervention.

Western military experts had analysed that, though loosely organized and ill-equipped, the Arab forces by their sheer numerical strength would be able to defeat the better armed military forces and guerilla groups of the Zionists, some of whom were British trained. But nevertheless there were many restraints on the actions of the Arabs, as they were divided and were pursuing individual political objectives. While Transjordan was more dependent upon the British to serve its purpose, i.e. of acquiring Arab areas of the Palestine, especially the West Bank, the Saudis were restrained from taking any action through fear of losing vital American aid.

¹² Anne Sinai and Allan Pollack, eds, The Syrian Arab Republic (New York, 1976), p. 113.

Though Egypt had limited interests in Palestine, its armed forces were more nationalist oriented and fought bravely. It took the maximum part in the First Arab-Israeli War. They were, however, defeated by the Israelis because of lack of adequate arms and military training and the distance involved across the Sinai.

Despite the internal bickering amongst the Arabs, the impending crisis forced them to co-operate. They donated a variety of weapons to the forces of Mufti Al-Hussaini in Palestine. By February 1948, more than forty-five hundred rifles, a million rounds of ammunition and a large variety of other small arms were provided to the Palestinian fighters, mostly by Egypt and Iraq.

The international political situation during that period favoured the Arabs, because the American arms embargo and the British Naval blockade made it extremely difficult for the Zionists to acquire arms and men. They depended to a large extent upon the arms that they picked up during the terrorist raids on the British and the Arab camps and supply dumps. Their military capability was further enhanced by the arms and men which the Zionists were able to successfully smuggle through the British blockade.

On the Arab side the British remained the only source of arms supply. The partial release of Egyptian money, which

13 See Rubin, n. 1, p. 128.

had been blocked by the British during the Second World War, came in handy to buy weapons. Even though the British training mission had been dismissed from Egypt, Cairo got 40 warplanes, 38 scout cars, 298 personnel carriers as well as small arms and other support equipment by June 1947. Iraq received aircrafts, small quantities of 25-pounders, anti-tank guns, anti-aircraft guns and armoured cars (the number of this equipment supplied is not specified). These supplies of weapons were reportedly stopped by the British on 3 June 1948 when they realized that Iraq was overtly using them against the Zionists in Palestine. Transjordan benefited most. The Arab Legion got a £2.5 million annual subsidy, and thirty-seven British officers were seconded to it as advisers. A fortyfive-man British Military Mission was also established in Saudi Arabia. 14

While other Arab states were arming up, King Abdallah lobbied in London and sought agreement with representatives of the Jewish Agency. He hoped that the British would help him in his desire to annex 'Arab' Palestine. The British favoured Abdallah's idea as they thought that other Arab states were of doubtful viability, and that the takeover of 'Arab' Palestine by Abdallah would possibly avert a chaos. 15

14 Harry Sacher, Israel: The Establishment of a State (London, 1952), p. 119.

15 See Abidi, n. 6, pp. 24-27.

This was the political situation during the first half of 1948. Terrorism, pitched fighting, population upheaval, massing of official and unofficial armies contributed to the breakdown of political order in Palestine. It was in this period of turmoil that the State of Israel was proclaimed on 14 May 1948. It was recognized soon by the Great Powers. Britain, which till now was acting as a policeman, not only lifted the naval blockade on 14-15 May 1948 but also left the
 16
 Palestinians to their fate.

As noted earlier, even though the Arab armed forces were composed of Syrian, Iraqi, Jordanian and Egyptian forces and the so-called Arab army under Al-Qawukji, the major brunt of the fighting was faced by the Egyptians. The Arab Legion, a well trained force, was not committed to active fighting against Israel because of political understanding between their leaders, especially Mrs. Golda Meirson and Emir Abdallah on the question of the West Bank.

When large-scale hostilities broke out following the Zionists' declaration of the State of Israel, the capability in military field of the conflicting forces of Egypt (since it was the major Arab state to have actively participated in the war) and Israel were as follows. The British military mission had supplied Egypt with approximately 100,000 Lee Enfield rifles of .303 calibre and other battlefield weapons details of which are

lacking.¹⁷ The Egyptians were also supplied with limited number of Spitfire fighters, Halifax and Lancaster bombers.

The Israelis on the other hand, had a lot of mixed variety of Second World War weapons, many of which were the ones left behind by the British. With the aid of Czechoslovakia, Panama and Yugoslavia the Israelis purchased a lot of weapons between 1947 and 1948. Reportedly Russia had sold them some ex-German arms against dollar payment. In the arms acquisition, Israel's secret transport command consisting of pilots of many nationalities, played a crucial role in operating throughout the world. They transported to Israel Czech-built Mausers and 2B-37 heavy machineguns. Among the aircraft which they smuggled into Israel (some from Britain without export licence) were Boeing B-17 bombers, Vickers Spitfire fighters, Avro Lancaster bombers, North American Harvard attack trainers, Bristol Beaufighters and Czech-built Messerschmitt ME-109 fighters.

Though at the start of the war the Egyptians and Israelis were more or less evenly matched in the quality of their armament, the Egyptians had more in quantity. The Israelis overcame this quantitative differences very swiftly. They bought and smuggled arms and aircraft and had experienced personnel to handle them. This amalgamate force not only helped in increasing the

17

L. P. Bloomfield and Amelia C. Leiss, Controlling Small Wars: A Strategy for the 1970s (New York, 1969), p. 324.

military capability of the Israelis but also proved itself superior to that of the Egyptians.

Whatever arms the Arabs could gather could not be effectively used against the Israelis because of two reasons. Firstly, the arms reached the fighting forces very late, and secondly the Arabs were not fully capable of using these arms due to lack of training and command experience. Even the Egyptian armed forces, trained, supplied and maintained by the British till 1947, found it extremely difficult to keep up to an acceptable level of readiness. As a result, the Arabs were routed on all fronts by the Israelis, which placed the latter in a better position in the 'Arab' portion of the Palestine.

The First Arab-Israeli War ended officially following the ceasefire of 29 December 1948. During the war the Arab forces had restricted their operations mostly to the area allotted to the Palestinian Arabs in the Partition resolution, while Ben Gurion was striving to enlarge the Jewish area, and refused to define the borders of Israel.¹⁹ The result was that Israel gained and consolidated more territory than was earmarked in the UN resolution. The 'Arab' Palestine under Partition resolution was destroyed. Part of it was occupied by the Israeli forces and incorporated into Israel. West Bank was incorporated in Trans-

19 Mahmoud Riad, The Struggle for Peace in the Middle East (London, 1981), p. 4.

Jordan, and Gaza came under Egyptian control where the provisional government of Palestine was established under the leadership of Mufti al-Mussaini. A small area near Lake Tibriz came under the Syrian occupation. Syria decided to withdraw from that area provided it was demilitarized (according to Armistice Agreement 1949). But that area too came under effective control of Israel soon after the Syrian withdrawal.

Thus the First Arab-Israeli War laid the seed of the refugee problem and the still unfulfilled desire of the Palestinians to have a national home. The war also led to a continuing hostile environment between Israel as a state and the Arab states. Both these variables dominate the West Asian situation even now.

Tripartite Agreement of 1950 and Arms Control in West Asia

The Western Powers, having failed to bring about a settlement that could ensure peace between Israel and the Arab states, tried the next best thing i.e. to try and control the arms race among the conflicting countries. Thus the Tripartite Agreement was signed, on 25 May 1950, in London between Britain, France and the United States. However, it broke down very soon because it was incompatible with the Western schemes for West Asian defence, which meant arming notably Iraq and Jordan which were also Israel's enemies. France too began to secretly supply Israel with arms in response to the Egyptian political support and military aid to the Maghreb countries, especially to Algeria.

The Cold War had already started and the USA was getting interested in the region, as was clear from the Truman Doctrine. For pursuing common interests, the USA wanted to go into partnership with UK and France and thereby not only contain the spread of Russian influence in the region, but also to have a say in the politics of the region. The Tripartite Declaration in May 1950 called for joint allied management of arms exports to the West Asian region, based on estimated needs for internal security and external defence. ²⁰

The Tripartite Agreement was the basis of unipolar dependency. The Arabs and the Israelis were both dependent for their arms supplies on the Western Powers. During this period UK, France and USA co-ordinated their political and arms sales policies for several reasons; firstly, to contain the Arab-Israeli rivalry, secondly to see that Israel was not made militarily weaker, since that would mean annihilation of a state they had contributed in establishing, by the Arabs and lastly, the West was also interested to see the continuing dependency of the Arabs on them. Therefore, it had to keep them in good spirits.

The agreement expressed vigorous opposition to the forcible change of boundaries or armistice line, thereby giving Israel de facto recognition, and encouraged local participation in a Western sponsored collective defence system for the

20 See Dodd and Sales, n. 9, p. 105.

region. As a further inducement they offered to transfer modern weapons to these states. Lastly, the Western policies were so defined as to see that the Arabs would not exploit intra-West rivalry to get political and military advantages vis-a-vis Israel. The United States preferred not to interfere, in the beginning, in the arms supplies of UK and France to their former political wards.

By the time the Tripartite Agreement took place, the Arabs did not acquire any major arms, leaving aside some of the British W. W. II vintage arms which were transferred to them. These included some naval vessels, like torpedo boats, corvettes and frigates. Israel, on the other hand, went on an arms acquisition spree. It bought a large number of W. W. II Sherman M-3 tanks and updated its gun. It bought 500 war surplus half-tracks from the USA. It also acquired a lot of aircraft, including fighters, bombers and transport aircraft. The acquisition of these specific types of weapons and aircraft, shows that right from the beginning Israel has laid stress on mobility based upon a combination of armour and aircraft.

Between the Tripartite Declaration and the Czech arms deal of 1955, the supply of weapons and arms control affected mostly Egypt. Since the Western Powers were equating Israel with all the Arab states, and Egypt was only one of the several Arab states, it got approximately one-fourth of the amount of weapon systems supplied to Israel. Another factor which affected the Arab military capability was the French breaking the agreement and going in for a politico-military collaboration with Israel.

France supplied Israel with up to date weaponry from 1953 onwards.

The weapon supplied during the period of 1950 to 1955
21
to these countries were as follows:

The emergence and heightening of the Cold War saw the West, especially the USA, assuming a more serious role in the region. To it, the West Asian region had become a forward post to act as a counter to any direct or indirect Soviet advance. Thus, because of the intensification of Super Power rivalry, USA began dominating the politics of this region. For that purpose it wanted Israel and as many Arab states as was possible, to be on its side. Iraq, Jordan and Saudi Arabia were more 'Western' oriented in their thinking. The only state which was creating problem except Syria was Egypt.

In August 1951 Egypt reiterated the earlier demand for the revision of the 1936 treaty. When it failed to get a favourable response it unilaterally abrogated the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium Agreement on Sudan and proclaimed King Farouk as the King of Egypt and the emperor of Sudan. This action was ignored by UK. Five days later the British presented the plan for the Middle East Defence Organization (MEDO), and warned that evacuation of the British forces from the Suez Canal Zone would be considered only if the MEDO proposals were accepted by Egypt.

21 For details, SIPRI, The Arms Trade with the Third World (Stockholm, 1971), pp. 842, 843, 845, 847, 850 and 838-40.

ARMS SUPPLY TO ARABS AND ISRAEL, 1950-1955

Country	No.	Army	Source	No.	Navy	Source	No.	Air Force	Source
<u>Israel</u>	50	Sherman, Mk.3	USA	1	Coastguard Cutter	USA	21	NA T-6 Harvard	USA
	25	Cromwell	UK	1	Patrol Vessel	USA	60	DH Mosquito NF.38	France
	100	AMX-13	France	6	Motor Torpedo Boats	France	5	Boeing PT-17 Keydet	USA
	50	M-4 Sherman	France				4	NA P-51 Mustang	Sweden
				14	Landing Craft	USA	40	Fokker S-11	Holland
				2	Landing Craft	UK	20	DH Mosquito NF.38	UK
				2	Patrol Vessel	UK	21	NA P-51 Mustang	Sweden
							14	Gloster Meteor F.8	UK
							5	Gloster Meteor T.7	UK
							10	Piper L-18B	USA
							10	Piper L-21	USA
							5	M.H 1521 Broussard	France
							6	Gloster Meteor N.F. 13	UK
							15	Dassault Ouragan MD 450	France
							24	Dassault Mystere IV A	France
		(Tanks)							
<u>Egypt</u>	25	Charioteer	UK	1	Escort "Hunt" class	UK	10	Avro Anson	UK
	32	Centurion MK. III	UK	2	Corvette	UK	20	Supermarine Spitfire F.22	UK
	151	Valentine	(UK) Bel- gium	2	Motor Torpedo Boat	UK	24	Gloster Meteor F.8	UK
	150	Sherman	USA	3	Motor Launch	UK	2	Gloster Meteor T.7	UK
	20	AMX-13	France	8	Coastal Mine sweeper	USA	10	Short Sealand SA.6	UK
	20	AMX-105A	France	2	Destroyer "Z" class	UK	15	DH Vampire F.52 and T.55	UK

Country	No	Army	Source	No.	Navy	Source	No	Air Force	Source
							30	DH Vampire Mk.5 and T.55	Syria
							5	Curtiss C-46	USA
							2	Westland "Dragon- fly"	UK
							1	Beech C-45	USA
							1	Grumman HU-16A Albatross	USA
							3	Sikorsky S-51	USA
							7	Douglas C-47	USA
							5	DH-104 Mk.1 Dove	UK
							15	NA T-6 Harvard 2B	Canada
<u>Syria</u>		No details			No details		7	Junker Ju 52/3 M	France
							26	Fiat G.59 4B	Italy
							1	Fairchild Argus	UK
							50	DH Vampire (later transferred to Egypt)	Italy
							10	Dh Chipmunk	UK
							23	Gloster Meteor F.8 and NF.13, T.7	UK
							6	Douglas C-47	France
							5	NA T-6 Harvard	USA
							1	Beech D 18 S	USA
							1	DH Dragon Rapide	UK
							40	Supermarine Spitfire F.22	UK
<u>Lebanon</u>	40	Centurion	UK	-	-		1	DH Dove 104	UK
							3	Savoia-Marchetti SM-79	Italy
							8	NA T-6 Harvard 2 B	UK

Country	No.	Army	Source	No.	Navy	Source	No.	Air Force	Source
(Leb. contd.)							2	Percival T.1.	UK
							11	DH Chipmunk T-20/ 30	Canada
							10	DH Vampire FB.52	UK
							4	DH Vampire T.55	UK
							3	DH Chipmunk	UK
							1	Macchi M.B.308	Italy
<u>Iraq</u>	25	Churchill	UK				20	DH Chipmunk T.20	Canada
	20	Ferret	UK				12	DH.Mk.52 Vampire	UK
	60	Centurion	UK				10	Bristol Beaufighter Mk.10	UK
Approx. 10		M-24	USA		No details		6	DH Vampire T.55	UK
							2	Westland Dragonfly	UK
							6	NA F-86 Sabre	USA
							6	Hunting Provost T. 53	UK
							14	DH FB.50 Venom	UK
							1	DHC-2 Beaver	Canada
<u>Jordan</u>	50	Charioteer-6	UK		-		1	Beagle Auster T-7	UK
(1954-56)	50	Centurion	UK				2	Auster Aiglet	UK
(1954-56)	75	Ferret	UK				2	Auster Autocrat	UK
							6	Auster AOP.6 & 7	UK
							4	DHC Devon Mk.1	UK
							2	DH Dragon Rapide	UK
							4	DH Chipmunk T.10	Canada
							1	Vickers Viking	UK
							1	Beech twin Bonanza	USA
							1	Handley Page Marathon	UK
							10	Hunting Provost T.51 Mk.3	UK
							2	DH Vampire T.55	UK
							9	DH Vampire FB.9	UK

In May 1953, John Foster Dulles, the US Secretary of State, visited West Asia and came up with his plans for a strategic 'northern tier'. He also said that "the 'internal front' should be accompanied by strong external defensive capacity - but through the independent 'non-aligned' Arab collective security pact, strengthened by military co-ordination and by modern arms which the West, if wise, would supply without political strings." ²² The USA also played a major role in pressurising Britain to come to an amicable settlement with Egypt on the question of Sudan, and the evacuation of British forces from the Suez Canal zone. They also tried to woo Egypt by offering her economic aid for the Aswan Dam in 1954-55.

Till this time the model of dependency was unipolar, for Egypt, even though facing a lot of internal turbulence and external threat from Israel, did not opt for linkages outside this model. But ultimately this model proved to be a failure. The effectiveness of the Tripartite Agreement under the unipolar dependency model was undermined, primarily because France broke the arms control by supplying arms to Israel, thus, provoking bitter reactions from the Arab states. The Arabs, especially Egypt and Syria, were being discriminated against by the West. This bitterness of the Arabs reached its peak when the Israelis raided the Gaza strip in February 1955 and the USA failed to supply Egypt with the weapons it had been demanding

22 Erskine B. Childers, The Road to Suez (London, 1962), p. 121.

for defending itself. Thus, Egypt broke away from this unipolar model for the first time and went for an arms deal with Czechoslovakia. The American withdrawal of aid for the Aswan Dam created further problems for Egypt which wanted to consolidate its shattered economy. Thus, militarily and economically harassed by the Zionist lobby in Washington, the Egyptians had no option but to look for alternative sources.

The nationalization of the Suez Canal Company by Nasser, a political and economic response to the rejection of Aswan Dam loan and to bring revenues needed to build the Aswan Dam, infuriated the French and the British who, in collusion with Israel, attacked Egypt in 1956. This further consolidated the newly developed linkages between the USSR on one hand and Egypt and Syria on the other. The Iraqi coup d'etat of 14 July 1958 also delinked Iraq from the West. These developments led to a changeover from a unipolar to a bipolar or multipolar model of dependency.

Chapter III

SEARCH FOR NEW OPTIONS

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Until the mid-1950s the West Asian States were constrained by unipolar dependency, i.e., dependency upon the Western Bloc only. Both, Israel and the Arab states, were dependent upon Britain, France and USA - the last becoming increasingly involved in the region since the Second World War and slowly acquiring a dominant partner relationship among the three Western donor states. With passage of time and the decreasing influence of the ex-colonial powers, Britain and France, a political vacuum was created in the region motivating USA to step in to take over the responsibility of guarding not only its own but also the Western interests as a whole in this region, in the global international context.

In the post-World War II period Great Britain was left economically and militarily weak. Thus, its West Asian policy was more dependent upon the carrot rather than the stick. The reassessment of its strategic and political commitments in the region clearly showed that they would need greater Arab co-operation than before. There were two reasons for the decline of the British influence in West Asia. Firstly, the welfarism at home, retrenchment abroad and the granting of independence to India reduced her resources to bring an influencing force in the region. Secondly, "Britain found that support for the Arabs in Palestine ensured no advantage in relations with Egypt or Iraq - witness the Egyptian

Egyptian complaint to the United Nations in 1947 and the fate of Portsmouth treaty with Iraq in 1948." ¹ Another faulty judgment on the part of Britain was the encouragement and sponsorship of the Arab League which proved counter-productive to their own influence. And while Britain still held some bases in Egypt and Iraq, there was great pressure from these countries for the revision of the treaties which sanctioned these bases.

France, on the other hand, was also rapidly losing the power to act as an influencing factor in the politics of the West Asian region. In 1943, the Lebanese nationalists had adopted a provocative policy towards the Free French. When the latter reacted forcefully, the British intervened on the Lebanese side and thus damaged the French position in that country. France was humiliated in a similar situation in 1945 in Syria. During that period, a rising tide of nationalism was spreading throughout the region which eroded the interests of France and Britain alike. The European Powers saw that it would be difficult to keep a hold over this region by force. Britain's inability to take a decisive action in the regional problems was clearly revealed when it dropped the issue of Palestine into the lap of the United Nations.

1 Elie Kedouri, "Britain, France and the Last Phase of the Eastern Question", in J. C. Hurowitz, ed., Soviet American Rivalry in the Middle East (New York, 1971), p. 193.

Entry of USA

With the decrease of the British and the French influence in the area it was quite natural for America, the third Western partner, to take over the leading role in West Asia. After the Second World War, America was one of the three members of the Western 'unipolar bloc' which provided help to West Asia. In the post-War period it was not so much in the lead due to its lesser stakes in the region, but that attitude was soon to change. Stalin's denouncement of the treaty of neutrality with Turkey, the demand for joint Russo-Turkish management of the Straits, the prompted secession of Azarbaijan and Kurdistan, drove Turkey and later Iran closer to the US.²

Stalin's heavy handed politics and Russia's slow advance towards the West Asian region provoked American interest in this area. "The United States has consistently opposed Soviet expansion in all parts of the world. Alarmed by the rapid fall of all the Eastern European states to Soviet domination after World War II, the United States developed a policy of containment that attempted to ring Soviet Russia with states allied to and pledged to resist Soviet expansion."³

2 J. C. Hurowitz, "Origins of the Rivalry", in J. C. Hurowitz, ed., Soviet-American Rivalry in the Middle East (New York, 1971), p. 5.

3 P. M. Dadant, "American and Soviet Defense Systems vis-a-vis the Middle East", in Willard A. Beling, ed., The Middle East: Quest for an American Policy p. 174.

President Truman of America had pointed out that the problem of Palestine was unsolvable, but nevertheless he supported the immigration of Jews into Palestine, keeping in view the 1946 US presidential elections. His attitude satisfied the Zionists but displeased the Arabs, especially Saudi Arabia. In February 1948 Truman was disturbed about the prospects of a civil war in Palestine because of the dangerously tense international situation - the communist threat in Europe and the takeover of Czechoslovakia. Truman wanted to avoid a major crisis in Palestine as he believed that the United States would be required to respond with troops if any armed conflict took place. With American troops tied down in Palestine they would have less leverage in Europe.⁴ March 1948 saw a shift in the American policy. It called for abandoning the partition decision and instead advocated installing a temporary UN trusteeship in Palestine. But, in spite of the American efforts, a full-scale war in Palestine could not be avoided. The creation of the State of Israel on 15 May 1948 was followed by the American recognition of the State of Israel.

For three years, Truman's decisions had vacillated according to the changing pressures of the movement. He had no firm conviction regarding the Zionists goals in Palestine. While the representatives of the State and Military Departments advised Truman against taking a pro-Zionist stand for fear of

4 John Snetsinger, Truman, the Jewish Vote and the Creation of Israel (California, 1974), pp. 85-86.

agitating the Arabs, his close associates and personal staff⁵ urged bold sponsorship of the Zionist movement in West Asia. Truman's West Asian policy was conducted with the short-range political expediency in view rather than the long term national goals.

The advent of the 1950s saw the United States getting more and more involved in West Asia to protect the Western interests in this region. The Pentagon supported London's September 1951 proposal for a joint West Asian command, including Egyptian officers, under a British supreme commander. But the Egyptians preferred the departure of the British from the Suez Canal base.

Concerning the Western defence interests in the region, Britain tried to work out a West Asian defence plan in November 1951. But abandoned it in favour of American proposal of the 'Middle East Command' - which stipulated that all the states which joined in this Command would be placed on the basis of equality and the facilities granted by these states to the Command would be subject to specific agreements. Egypt rejected these proposals.⁶ The reason why Egypt was the only country to be approached out of all the West Asian countries with these proposals, and the importance of Egypt to the West was that it was the cornerstone of any defence system in West Asia, due to

5 Ibid., p. 35.

6 Naouf Abdel el Sayed, The Baghdad Pact in World Politics (Geneva, 1971), p. 13.

the British military bases in the Suez Canal Zone and the leading role it played among the Arab states.⁷ In August 1952, the idea of 'Middle East Command' took a new shape and emerged in the form of 'Middle East Defence Organization'. While the British thought that they could go ahead with that organization even without the Arab participation, the Americans were of the view that no 'Middle East Defence Organization' could work without participation of the regional countries.⁸ This American policy continued till the coming of Eisenhower, but nevertheless, the MEDO could never take a firm shape.

The slow but steady rise of the United States as an influencing power in the West Asian region shifted the attention of the Arabs and the Israelis towards it, so as to get the maximum benefit while at the same time to influence the US policy in their favour. Egypt, immediately after the July 1952 revolution, which brought the 'Free Officers' to the forefront, began to look towards the United States for help. President Naguib suggested that Egypt could come to a compromise on the Sudan if the USA aided the former. The US ambassador to Egypt, Mr. Caffery, suggested to his government that instead of making Egypt a strong member of the MEDO, it would be better if USA helped Cairo in making an effective military force for the

7 John Coert Campbell, Defense of the Middle East (New York, 1961), pp. 42-43.

8 Ibid., pp. 44-45.

9

country's protection.

While General Naguib was leaning towards the United States for aid, Nasser was more cautious in his approach. Though he wanted arms to ensure the military's loyalty, yet he did not want to lose his supporters by making concessions to the Americans without adequate returns. When Nasser asked the Americans for arms, the latter were surprised and pointed out that they already had an arms agreement (February 1952) in which the Americans were to supply Egypt with \$5,000,000 worth of arms. But since the previous agreement was for counter-insurgency weapons only, it was rejected and a new list of requirements was given to USA in November 1952, which included tanks, 3 squadrons of jet fighters, artillery and ships. The cost of this equipment was to be paid back in Egyptian cotton. ¹⁰

It is important to note that when a direct approach to enlist the Arab states, especially Egypt, into a Western sponsored defence alliance in West Asia failed, the Western Powers tried to influence the Arab States through Turkey, a member of NATO. Though the Turks met with some initial success with Egypt, ultimately nothing concrete came out of it. Similar approach was made by the Turks to coax Saudi Arabia, Syria and Lebanon into joining the Defence Organization but their attempts

9 Harry Rubin, The Arab States and the Palestine Conflict (Syracuse, 1981), p. 219.

10 Mohamed Hassanein Heikal, The Cairo Documents (New York, 1973), pp. 36-37.

11
met with failure.

During this period both, the Zionist and the Arab lobby in USA, were unable to get any worthwhile commitment or help for their national aspirations which included military aid for strengthening their respective armies. Only a slightly favourable ear was given to Jordan and Iraq, both pro-western states, while Egypt and Syria, both non-aligned countries, were treated with caution. Saudi Arabia tried to influence America through ANAMCO but with little success. The total US aid given to these states between 1949 and 1962 was as follows:

12
Table - US Aid to West Asia: 1949-1962 (in \$ million)

Country	Economic	Military	Total
<u>Arab States</u>			
Egypt	1.3	0	1.3
Iraq	0.5	0	0.5
Jordan	5.2	0	5.2
Lebanon	2.0	0	2.0
Saudi Arabia	0.4	0	0.4
Syria	0.4	0	0.4
Total	9.8	0	9.8
<u>Israel</u>	86.5	0	86.5
Total	96.3	0	96.3

11 See El Sayed, n. 6, pp. 14-15.

12 US Overseas Loans and Grants, Obligations and Loan Authorizations, 1 July 1945-30 September 1977, pp. 14-28.

The above study clearly shows that the United States gave only economic aid to the Arabs and Israel up to 1952. The noticeable point is that no military assistance was given, and that the economic aid given to Israel over the 1949-52 period was tremendously more than what was given to all the Arab states during the same period. In comparison to these states, the military and economic aid given to Turkey and Iran over the same period, emphasises the importance given by the USA to these two states during the same period.

Table - US Aid to Turkey and Iran: 1949-1952
(in \$ million)¹³

Country	Economic	Military	Total
Iran	16.5	17.3	33.8
Turkey	225.1	256.8	481.9
Total	241.6	274.1	515.7

Egypt, during the period following the 1952 revolution, was seeking support from the United States for the treaty revision from the British concerning the Suez Canal base and the future of Sudan. Besides these demands for treaty revision, Egypt had also demanded weapons from the USA to secure its borders against Israeli aggression. When hard-pressed by USA to join MEDO against the Soviet Union, as a quid pro quo for arms aid,

13 Ibid., pp. 17, 28.

Nasser replied that he could not disregard "a killer with a pistol sixty miles from me at the Suez Canal to worry about somebody who is holding a knife a thousand miles away."¹⁴

The United States, in response to the Egyptian appeal, was able to bring about an agreement between Britain and Egypt in July 1954, "under which Britain would evacuate the Suez Canal Zone within twenty months and finally leave Egypt after 72 years of occupation. This agreement and the continuing goodwill being displayed by America towards the Egyptian revolution did not please the Israelis. They wanted the British army to remain in Egypt, for the British were both, a distraction to the Egyptians and also a buffer along the Suez. The Israelis did not want the United States to remain on good terms with Egypt."¹⁵

With the Eisenhower Administration in power in the White House, new approaches were made in January 1953 by Byroade, the American Assistant Secretary of State, to solve the Sudan question and towards the problem of arms supplies to the Arab nations. In spite of the new approach taken by Eisenhower towards West Asia, Ali Sabry, who had gone from Egypt to America to acquire arms in November 1952, came back empty handed. Churchill had requested Eisenhower not to supply any arms to

14 See Heikal, n. 10, p. 41.

15 Ibid., p. 43.

Egypt as they might be used to fight and kill British soldiers in the Suez base. During that period, the American influence vis-a-vis the Arab states was at the lowest ebb, because the Arabs thought that continued American support to the Israelis was detrimental to the Arab interests.

Increasing Arab-Israeli Tension

There were valid reasons for the Arab demand for arms from USA and other western sources. The Tripartite Declaration of 1950 had put an arms control on the supplies of arms to this region. This arms control favoured Israel more than the Arab states since the Arab states were treated as a single unit in comparison to Israel. Thus, the military capability of an individual Arab state was reduced. Even when the arms were transferred by the western powers to West Asia, pro-western Arab states like Iraq and Jordan were favoured in comparison to Egypt and Syria which were leaning more towards non-alignment.

A more serious factor for the Arabs, especially Egypt, was that France, one of the partners of USA and Britain in the Tripartite Agreement, made covert attempts in 1954 at providing Israel with military aid and began supplying it with Mystere jet fighter aircrafts, AMX-13 light tanks, anti-tank vehicles, 75 mm recoilless guns and anti-aircraft batteries. On receiving information that the French were were supplying arms

16 For details see, Merry and Serge Bromberger, Secrets of Suez (London, 1957), p. 34.

to Israel, Nasser decided to help the Algerians so that Egypt could make France "need their arms in Algeria so that they will not be able to give them to Israel. We will oblige them to use them far away from us so that they will not be used against us."¹⁷

The Arab-Israeli tension kept on increasing since 1954 and culminated in the Gaza raid of February 1955. In 1954, Ben Gurion initiated terrorist activities against the Egyptians and tried to bring them in conflict with the Western Powers. This was done without the knowledge of the Israeli Defence Minister, Pinhas Lavon. Though the attempt failed, it produced bad blood between Egypt and Israel. In February 1955, soon after Ben Gurion came out of his retirement, "regular Israeli troops smashed across the armistice line at Gaza in a meticulously planned and heavily armed attack that killed thirty-eight and wounded thirty-one Egyptians."¹⁸

The Gaza raid came as a shock to Nasser, and the vulnerability of Egypt against future such attacks by Israel was underlined. He redoubled his efforts to get military aid from the Western Powers, especially the USA, but the Western impassive attitude irritated him. Nasser even tried to buy obsolete arms from World War II dumps in Belgium. Some he got from Italy. He

17 See heikal, n. 10, p. 47.

18 Erskine B. Childers, The Road to Suez (London, 1962), p. 132.

approached Sweden, Switzerland and Spain for arms purchase. He tried to get the British release the 80 Centurion tanks that the Egyptian government had contracted to buy and had already paid for. The British sent 16 tanks and promised to deliver the rest if Egypt stopped attacking the Baghdad Pact.¹⁹ But none of these ad hoc measures could increase the Egyptian military capability to match the growing Israeli strength. Egypt was desperately searching for fresh options which were provided by the Eastern Bloc.

At the Bandung Afro-Asian Conference in April 1955, China's Chou En-lai offered Nasser arms. In May there were preliminary talks with the Russians but no decision was arrived at. In June, Nasser warned the American Ambassador that if the West would not sell Egypt the arms needed to bring her forces up-to-date, and to secure adequate counter-Israeli defensive capacity, she would have to turn to the Soviet Bloc. That summer, Egypt got from Britain forty Centurion tanks, but shipped without a single round of ammunition. On protest, ten rounds per tank were sent, not even enough for preliminary firing tests.²⁰

Entry of USSR: Nasser Opt's for the Eastern Bloc

The Western Powers did not heed Nasser's warning of going to the Soviets for military aid, as they thought that he was

19 See Heikal, n. 10, p. 46.

20 See Childers, n. 17, p. 133.

bluffing. This attitude, plus the Western inability to supply Egypt with the weapons it demanded, the Egyptian threat perception of the Israelis and its legitimate need for defence equipment left no option to Nasser except to look towards the Eastern Bloc for help. Egypt concluded an arms agreement with Czechoslovakia worth \$250 million which was made public in September 1955. Simultaneously, Syria too had opted for the Soviet arms.

After the fall of its pro-West dictator, Adib Shishakli, in 1954, Syria like Egypt thought that the Baghdad Pact was a threat to her sovereignty. This concept of mutual threat by the Western sponsored and militarily backed regional alliance of the 'northern tier' states of Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Pakistan, "created a convergence of interests between Damascus and Moscow that led to military and economic agreements as well as political collaboration in the Middle Eastern and international arenas. The Syrian-Israeli dispute over the demilitarized zones on their common border was the occasion for the earliest indication of this collaboration, in the form of the first Soviet veto in the Security Council in January 1954."²¹

Soviet military co-operation with Syria dates from January 1956, when the Syrian government thought that the West was putting 'impossible conditions' for purchasing arms from it. This resulted in the first Soviet-Syrian arms accord. After the

²¹ Yaacov Mo'i, "The History of Soviet Intervention in Syria", in Anne Sinai and Allen Pollack, eds., The Syrian Arab Republic (New York, 1976), p. 93.

1956 agreement, follow on agreements, technical assistance and goodwill naval visits followed in the usual Soviet pattern.²² The Turko-Syrian crisis of 1957 resulted in the large scale supply of Soviet military equipment to Syria, which was far above the immediate absorption capacity of the Syrian armed forces.

Soviet interest in the West Asian region had increased immediately after the Second World War. Previously it was involved only in Turkey and Iran, but slowly, with the change of events and alliances in the region, it started paying more attention to the Arab states, as the area constituted the 'soft underbelly' of the Soviet Union which could be threatened by Western Powers which were very active in this area.

Soviet interest in the West Asian region suffered a setback in 1945 under Stalin, whose heavy handed policies did nothing but lower the image of the Soviet Union. His attempts to control the Turkish Straits by denouncing the treaty of neutrality and non-aggression with Turkey, and the attempted secession of Azarbaijan in Iran met with failure. Russia was forced to withdraw its troops from Iran with embarrassment in front of the Security Council. These bold attempts made by Stalin, drove Turkey and later on Iran into developing close relations with the United States.²³

22 For details see: George Lenczowski, Soviet Advances in the Middle East (Washington, D.C., 1972), p. 105.

23 See Hurowitz, n. 2, p. 5.

The Soviet Union, in the latter half of the 1940s, did not differentiate between the Zionists and the Arabs. During the discussions on the future of Palestine, the Soviet representative urged that it should either be partitioned or turned into a binational state. Later, on 11 November 1947, it came to an agreement with America to implement the Partition Plan. After the formation of Israel, the Soviet Union even helped it, since it thought that it could create a new area of influence and thereby check the Western patronage of Israel. reportedly, the Soviet Union sold some ex-German arms to Israel during this period.

The coming of Khrushchev to power saw a marked change in the Soviet policy towards West Asia. His policy of peaceful coexistence, and the emphasis given to the policy of offering help to the newly independent states made a mark on different regimes in the area. The emergence of Cold War made Russia more worried about West Asia, as it was of utmost strategic importance to her. From now on the strategy of the Soviet planners was to break through the slow encirclement which was the result of the Western promoted blocs and alliances with Turkey, Iran and some of the Arab states. Another long term aim of the Soviet Union was to acquire 'warm water' ports for her naval fleets. This made it essential for the Russians to try and influence the Arab littoral states with access to the Mediterranean and the Suez Canal.

When the Western Powers formed the Baghdad Pact, the Russians denounced it as a Western alliance (in disguise, bent

upon building American bases at its back door. The US illusion that Russia would not give modern arms to non-communist West Asian states was shattered when the Soviets started vigorously searching for Arab friendship in response to the Baghdad Pact. In winning over of Egypt and Syria in 1955, based on the strategy of peaceful coexistence, the Soviet Union destroyed the West's monopoly of the modern weapons market in West Asia. In the years that followed, Iraq and Yemen also became Russia's close supporters in the Arab East.

As a rival arms purveyor to Arab states, the Soviet Union did not question the non-aligned policy of these states vis-a-vis the Cold War. The formation of the Baghdad Pact led Russia to help and support the non-aligned states of West Asia to counterbalance the Western pressure. Egypt and Syria in 1955, Iraq in 1958 and Yemen in 1962 came closer to the Soviet Union. One main reason why they went to the USSR for arms was the refusal of the Western Powers to supply them enough arms to maintain their security vis-a-vis Israel. The Arab need for arms during this period had another legitimate cause. That was the fear of the 'hawk' elite of Ben Gurion and Moshe Dayan which had emerged powerful in Israeli politics. These men were hard-line Zionists who believed in 'no-border' theory for Israel and favoured an expansionist policy.

The Western arms control over this region was lost in 1955 when the reluctance of the West to give the confrontation Arab states enough arms forced Egypt and Syria to look for

other options, which they found in the Soviet Bloc. Since the West had strategic interests in Egypt it did try to counter the growing Egyptian tilt towards the Soviet Union. America and Britain offered economic aid to Egypt, especially for the construction of the High Dam at Aswan even after the arms deal. Negotiations on the High Dam continued despite the Czech arms deal. Britain stepped up its arms supplies to Egypt, though in a token form. Meanwhile, USSR too was busy establishing firm ties with the Egyptians.

Following Demitri Shepilov's visit to Egypt in July 1955, Egypt had entered into new trade agreements with the USSR in September of the same year. In February 1956, USSR and Egypt signed a cooperation agreement on atomic energy, followed by establishment of a permanent Soviet trade mission in Egypt in July 1956.²⁴ The Soviet aid to Egypt plus the pressures from the Zionist and the Cotton lobby in the USA resulted in the US withdrawal of the aid for the Aswan High Dam. The refusal of aid to Egypt turned out to be an uncalculated risk on the part of the American policy makers, because from that time onwards Egypt became more and more dependent upon USSR for economic and military assistance which had their political implications. These developments in the region as well as the changes in the Great Power role changed the character of dependency in this region from unipolar to bipolar.

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See Charles J. McLane, Foreign Aid in Soviet Third World Policies (London, 1968), pp. 212-13.

This new model continued for about two decades.

The refusal of the Americans to give aid for the Aswan Dam led Nasser to nationalize the Suez Canal Company in July 1956.²⁵ He hoped that the nationalization of the Canal would bring in revenue to build the Aswan Dam, and at the same time it was meant as a political rejoinder to the West for the manner in which Egypt was refused that aid. The West did not take the nationalization easily. It tried to pressurise Egypt through political means like the London Conference, and when they failed, the three concerned parties, French, British and the Israelis, decided to attack Egypt simultaneously so as to cow it down.

These three participants had different motives for attacking Egypt. Britain wanted to remove Nasser as the leader of the Arab world, and replace him by some one who would represent the framework of Anglo-Arab influence. Israel's main ambition was not only to inflict a crushing defeat on the Egyptians and to win territory and gain access to the Suez Canal and the Red Sea, but also to lower the prestige of Egypt by showing the superiority of Israeli might over those of the Arabs. The French wanted to avenge the Egyptian support to the Maghreb nationalists, especially to the Algerians. They also wanted to humiliate Nasser for attempting to nationalize the Suez Canal Company in which France had almost fifty per cent shares.

On 7 August 1956, a secret agreement was reached in Paris by which France was to supply arms secretly to Israel. Ben Gurion responded in September 1956 by saying that Israel at last had one true ally. By the middle of September the Anglo-French planned expedition was ready for action. The Anglo-French plans to attack Egypt in coordination with Israel were finalized in Paris on 13 October 1956.²⁵ It is important to note that while these military preparations were being finalized, efforts were being made to solve the dispute through a negotiated settlement. But such a settlement did not suit Britain, France and Israel. On 29 October 1956, sixty French Air Force jets, manned by French pilots, flew from bases in France to Israel via Cyprus. This action was in response to Ben Gurion's request, as his airforce chiefs had told him that they would be unable to give the Israeli army ground support while protecting Israeli skies against Arab air attack. The French also helped Israel in a big way during the Suez War of 1956. While their transport aircraft dropped supplies to the Israelis deep in the Sinai, the French naval vessels guarded the Israeli coast and shelled the targets in Egypt.

The defeat of the Egyptians in front of this triple onslaught was not surprising. In fact it could hardly stand up to the arms of the Israelis. "Egypt had scarcely begun to achieve proficiency even in those Czech-made weapons that had

by then been assembled ... only some Egyptian crews had barely begun to learn how to use only some of the new Soviet tanks. Most of the MiG jet fighters were still in their crates... Egypt had only forty trained pilots, ten for bombers, thirty for fighters.²⁷ Egypt had no option but to order its troops to withdraw from Sinai to the West Bank of the Suez, and to blockade the Suez Canal itself by sinking ships there.

While this one-sided battle was raging on, the USA, though a part of the Western Bloc, did not approve of the attack. It compelled France and Britain to abandon their plans of forcibly seizing the Suez Canal. Israel had already been given the ultimatum to withdraw 10 km from Suez by UK and France, in addition USA also forced it to withdraw from the Sinai. This act brought to an end the collective image of the three Western Powers working together for the defence of common interests in the Arab-Israeli Zone. The Suez Crisis eroded the influence of traditional powers like France and Britain, thus making it possible for USA to assume the role of the primary defender of Western interests in the region. Thus, Soviet-American rivalry in this region got transferred to Soviet-American rivalry. The Eisenhower Doctrine of 1957 was in essence an exclusive American guarantee of what had formerly been a Tripartite one.

From this time onwards USA started taking a leading role in matters pertaining to West Asian politics and security. It

intervened in the Syrian Crisis of 1957 and in Lebanon in 1958. The USSR during this period was supplying its dependent Arab states with modern weaponry to undermine further American influence. It made good the defence equipment lost by Egypt during the 1956 war. But even during this phase there was no significant arms transfer from America either to the Arabs or to Israel. The British and French kept on supplying military equipment to both, the Israelis and the pro-Western Arab states. It was only after the mid-sixties that the United States became a direct and major supplier of weapons to its partners in the context of the Arab-Israeli confrontation in the region. That change in the mid-sixties reflected the changes in the global strategic environment based upon induction of new strategic weapons, specially the submarine launched ballistic missiles, which influenced the arms transfer policy of the two Super Powers in that region.

Military Equipment Supplied by Great Powers to the
Arabs and Israel, 1953-1963

Country (Supplier)	Country (receiver)	(No.) armour	(No.) fighting ships	(No.) aircraft
<u>France</u>	<u>Egypt</u>	(20) AMX-13	-	-
	<u>Syria</u>	(20) AMX-105A	-	-
	<u>Syria</u>	-	(3) Patrol Boat "Ch" class	(6) Douglas C-47
	<u>Israel</u>	(160) AMX-13	(2) Motor Tor- pedo	(5) Max Holste M.H. 1521
		(30) AMX-105	Boats	Broussard

table contd.

Country (Supplier)	Country (receiver)	(No.) Armour	(No.) fighting ships	(No. aircraft
		(300) M-2 and M-3	-	(60) Dassault M.D.450
		(100) M-4 Sherman		Ouragon
		(30) AML-60/90		(60) Dassault Mystere IV A
				(14) Nord 2501 Noratl
				(24) Sud Vautour 2
				(24) Dassault Super Mystere B.2
				(5) Sud Alouette III
				(72) Dassault Mirage III - CJ
				(100) Potex/Bedek CM- 170 Magister (built under licence)
<u>UK</u>	<u>Egypt</u>	(32) Centurion Mk III	(2) Destroyer "2" class	(15) DH Vampire
		(151) Valentine		F.52 and F.55
				(2) Westland Dragon- fly
				(12) Gloster Meteor F.
				(5) DH 104 Dove Mk.1
				(8) Gloster Meteor NF.13
	<u>Iraq</u>	(25) Churchill	(8) Patrol Boats	(12) DH Vampire Mk 52
		(20) Ferret		(6) DH Vampire T.55
		(110) Centurion		(10) Bristol Beaufight Mk. 10
		(100) Saracen		

			(6) DH Chipmunk
			(4) Bristol 170 freighter
			(4) Westland Dragonfly
			(15) Hunting Provost
			(14) DH Venom FB. 50
			(2) DH Heron
			(15) Hawker Hunter T.6
<u>Israel</u>	(250) Centurion	(2) Patrol vessel	(20) DH Mosquito NF.38
		(2) Landing craft	(14) Gloster Meteor F.8
		(2) Destroyer "2" class	(5) Gloster Meteor T.7
		(2) Submarine "S" class	
<u>Egypt</u>	(150) M-4 Sherman	(8) Coastal mine-sweeper	(5) Curtiss C-46
			(1) Beech C-45
			(7) Douglas C-47
			(1) Grumman HU-16A Albatross
			(3) Sikorsky S-51
<u>Syria</u>			(5) NAT-6 Harvard
			(1) Beech D-185
<u>Iraq</u>	(40) M-24 Chaffee	-	(5) NA F-86 Sabre
<u>Israel</u>	-	(4) Landing craft	(10) Piper L-18B
			(60) Piper L-21
			(2) Sikorsky S-55
			(6) Boeing C 97 Stratofreighter

				(5) Bell 47 G
				(2) Hiller UH-12 A
				(2) Convair FBY-5A Catalina
				(7) Sikorsky S-58
<u>USSR</u>	<u>Egypt</u>	(100) BTn 152	(30) Motor	(10) An-2
		(350) BTn 40	Torpedo Boat	(12) An-12
		(120) T-54/55	"P-3" class	(2) MiG-15
		(400) T-34	(6) Fleet Mine- sweeper "T43" class	(10) Il-14
			(2) Destroyer,	(80) MiG-17
		(60) JS III	"Shoryi" class	(3) Il-28
		(130) T-54	(8) Submarine,	(30) Yak-18
			"V" class	(4) Mi - 1
			(1) Submarine,	(40) Mi - 4
			"MV" class	(80) MiG - 19
			(2) Inshore mine- sweeper,	(26) Tu-16
			"T-301" class	(40) MiG-21C
				(50) MiG-21C
				(1963-64)
			Delivery started of SO1", and "Komar" type patrol boats. number unspecified.	
	<u>Syria</u>	(100) BTn 152	(15) Motor Torpedo Boat	(6) MiG-15 UTI
		(200) T-34		(25) MiG-15
		(150) T-54	(2) Fleet mine- sweeper "T43" class	(60) MiG-17
				(8) Il-14

		Supply started in 1963 of 'Komar' class patrol boats. Number unspecified	(10) Yak - 11 (7) Mi-1 (10) Yak-18 (10) Mi-4 (7) Il-28
<u>Iraq</u>	(10) T-54 (45) T-34 (25) JS III (200) BTk 152 More supplies of T-34/35 between (1960-1965)	(12) Motor Torpedo Boats "P6" class (3) Submarine chaser.	(17) MiG-17 (15) Yak-11 (15) Il-14 (10) Il-28 (1) Il-28U (10) MiG-15 UT I (2) An-2 (17) MiG-19 (10) Tu-16 (4) Mi-1 Delivery of MiG-21 started in 1963, number unspecified.

Source: This table does not include the arms supply to the Arab countries from Czechoslovakia between 1953 and 1963. For details see SIPRI, Arms Trade Register, The Arms Trade with the Third World Cambridge, 1975, pp. 43, 50, 52 and 63.

Chapter IV

USA REPLACES FRANCE AND UK

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The entry of the United States of America into the West Asian region was gradual and spread over a period of years. Even after the end of the Second World War it kept a low profile and let the ex-colonial powers play the dominant role in this region since during that period the stakes of the USA were much lower than those of the French and the British in this area. It had started off by participation in the Arab-Israeli conflict when it went in for the Partition Plan for Palestine. Then, in 1950, it became a partner of France and Britain in the Tripartite Agreement to impose an arms control in West Asia. Later on, after the Suez Crisis of 1956 and the Iraqi coup d'etat of 1958 the USA indicated its greater involvement through the Eisenhower Doctrine of 1957 and by becoming more deeply involved in the committees of the Baghdad Pact (CENTO) and by signing bilateral agreements in March 1959 with Turkey, Iran and Pakistan.¹

Till 1957, the United States, was following the Truman Doctrine, which was aimed at containment of the communist movement all over the world, thus, the US move to encourage Western sponsored regional alliances in the West Asian region during this period. But this policy was changed with the declaration

1 P. M. Dadant, "American and Soviet Defense Systems vis-a-vis the Middle East", in Willard A. Beling, ed., The Middle East: Quest for an American Policy (Albany, 1973), p. 175.

of the Eisenhower Doctrine in January 1957. In the period following the Eisenhower Doctrine, the United States started taking more active interest in West Asia to fill in the vacuum created by the British and French departure from this region and the consequent decrease in the influencing capacity of these ex-colonial powers.

Super Powers and the Eastern Mediterranean Strategy

But even while all this was taking place, the American strategic interests in the region, especially the so-called 'northern tier' were declining. There were two major reasons for this declining interest, especially after 1962. One was the beginning of the detente politics between the two Super Powers following the Cuban missile crisis. The other was that during this period more sophisticated ICBMs and SLBMs had become operational which were capable of hitting a distant target at long range with effective precision.

The introduction of the SLBM system (Polaris) in the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea meant that the focus of the Super Power rivalry had shifted from the land frontiers to the sea i.e. from the 'northern tier' to the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean, with Iran occupying a new strategic role to play in US policy in the Arabian Sea. The sea power had also acquired and strengthened new bases like in Diego Garcia. The process had been initiated in 1964 with the creation of the British Indian Ocean Territories (BIOT) of which Diego Garcia

was a part. Subsequently other islands were given up and Deigo Garcia base agreement was negotiated and finalized between 1965 and 1966 between UK and USA.

As far as the SLBM strategy is concerned, the active deployment of these missile submarines was relatively more in the Atlantic, the Pacific, and the Mediterranean rather than that in the Indian Ocean, where also, there was supposedly an escalation of Super Power naval rivalry. In the West Asian context, the naval forces of the Great Powers were sharply confronting each other in the Mediterranean, especially its Eastern part, enclosed as it was between Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt, Libya, Greece and Turkey, thus making it more compact and strategically important region in the context of Super Power naval rivalry.

The Eastern Mediterranean has been an arena for the strategic struggle for power, previously between Britain and Russia and now between USA and USSR, thus signifying the continuation of the old rivalry of sea power vs land power. The Soviet Union views the Mediterranean as a weak spot which leads to its back door, the Black Sea. It also serves the long standing goal of the Russian ambition of having access to 'warm water'. The Russians tried unsuccessfully to get a foothold in the Mediterranean after the Second World War when they encouraged a civil war in Greece and put diplomatic pressure on Turkey.

The post-World War II activities of the Soviet Union by which it was trying to get a stronghold on the Mediterranean,

like the demand for revision of the Montreux Convention of 1936, trying to get control over the Turkish Straits and the demand for return of parts of north-eastern Turkey which had been given up by the Soviet Union soon after the Russian revolution and interference in Greece through the local communist party led to the America's Truman Doctrine and subsequently to the incorporation of Turkey and Greece in the Southern flank of the NATO in 1952.

During this period Western line up of bases was as follows: US had Sixth Fleet bases in Italy, Greece and Turkey, while Britain had them in Suez, Cyprus and Libya. France had bases in Maghreb and also military linkages with Israel. In 1955 the Soviet Union dramatically leaped over the 'northern tier' and broke the virtual blockade of the Black Sea by a combination of carrot and cannon tactics. In 1955 Russia concluded an arms deal with Egypt and Syria, thus increasing its stakes in the region.

The USSR was not a strong naval power as it did not have a 'blue water navy'. Following the change of events in the fifties, it not only lost its chances in Turkey and Greece but also in Yugoslavia following Tito-Stalin controversy. The

2 J. C. Hurowitz, "Origins of Rivalry", in Hurowitz, J.C., ed., Soviet-American Rivalry in the Middle East (New York, 1971), p. 5.

3 Jesse W. Lewis Jr, The Strategic Balance in the Mediterranean (Washington, 1976), p. 2.

only place where naval facilities were available to Russia was Albania, but even they were lost by the end of 1950s following the so-called ideological disputes between Albania and USSR. Thus, by the beginning of 1960s when the second generation of strategic nuclear weapon systems, Polaris II and III had become operational in the Mediterranean, the USSR had only low-key contacts with the two Eastern Mediterranean littoral states of Syria and Egypt. The Soviets perceived that if they wanted to match the Western dominance of the Mediterranean they would have to develop and strengthen contacts not only with Egypt and Syria but also with countries of the Maghreb, especially Algeria which had become independent in 1962.

By 1963 the American Sixth Fleet had become very powerful in the Mediterranean. It consisted of two task forces, each built around an aircraft carrier, a cruiser, several destroyers and submarines (including the ones having nuclear missiles - Polaris II and III), amphibious assault ships, minesweepers and support ships. The Fleet not only projected the American naval and air power over the Mediterranean and the Middle East but also its sea-launched missiles were capable of hitting the Soviet targets up to Central Asia. As the Central element in the Western security system in the Mediterranean, the Sixth Fleet replaced British and French bases west of Suez after 1956. Turkey was incorporated in NATO in 1952 and was used as a forward NATO base on which 15 Jupiter missiles were

installed in the late fifties. But these land-based ICBM missiles were of lesser range and not so effective and were removed following the entry of submarines into this area which were armed with the Polaris missiles of extended range and precision.

The Soviet Union reacted in a big way to counter the American predominance in the Mediterranean. 1964 saw the entry of the Russian task force in the Mediterranean in a big way. To deter the US Sixth Fleet, by 1966-67, they had thirty vessels including submarines, guided missile frigates, destroyers, landing crafts, support ships and a helicopter carrier (newly developed). This Soviet naval strength was doubled in the Mediterranean during the 1967 crisis.

Time and again after 1956 the Soviet Union publically warned the United States that it would not abide American military and political paramountcy in the Middle East, so close to Russia. During this phase the Soviet arms exports to the Arab states were primarily aimed at undermining the Sixth Fleet by blocking accessibility to important Arab coastal countries. At the same time, Soviet naval and air base facilities in Egypt and Syria were intended to bolster Soviet military capability in vis-a-vis the Americans in the Middle East especially in the Eastern Mediterranean and also to lend support to the Arab capability.

While the Super Powers naval rivalry in the Mediterranean was taking a new turn, due to the induction of the Polaris submarines there, the Arab-Israeli relations were again getting tense and were on the verge of explosion. The cause of this renewed conflict was the diversion of the water of the river Jordan for Israel's domestic use. "In 1963 Israel simply flouted the Arab world by declaring, despite the Arabs, that she would withdraw from the Jordan up to the limits of the Johnson Plan and, worse, by announcing that the water would be used to irrigate the Negev, an acquisition by Israel in 1948⁵ that has ever stuck in the Arab gullet." In response to this act of Israel, the Arab states, in the January 1964 Arab Summit Conference, decided that though they did not want to go to war with Israel over the diversion of water from Jordan river, they planned to reduce the flow of Jordan, and Egyptian Lt-General Ali Amer was appointed to command a joint Arab force which was to be set up 'to ward off the existing danger in technical and defence fields.' Israel's stand on withdrawing Jordan's water within limits of the Johnson Plan and the threat that it would act to protect her rights put the Arabs in a dilemma. As they knew that they would have to face the wrath of the Israeli military, and the suspicion between the Arabs themselves, did not permit them to agree on stationing of troops on one another's territory. By September 1960, it became clear that the Arabs

⁵ C. H. Dodd and M. E. Sales, Israel and the Arab World (London, 1970), pp. 132-9.

were not militarily capable of challenging Israel on the river Jordan issue, therefore all the Arab states except Iraq, Syria and UAR were either indifferent or opposed to it.

After the break-up of the Egyptian-Syrian Union in 1961, Syria accused Egypt of neglecting the Palestinian problem. These accusations were levelled again in 1963 when Israel diverted the water of river Jordan. In order to show his interest in preserving the Palestinian entity, Nasser called for the first Arab Summit Conference in Cairo in January 1964. During this period the Palestine issue and movement were under the Egyptian influence. The conference on Palestine held between 28 May and 2 June 1964, announced the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). It also adopted a Palestine National Charter and decided to establish a Palestine Liberation Army (PLA). During this period, under the chairmanship of Shuqayri, PLO was under the Egyptian influence and its policies were the extension of Egyptian policies. "The PLO appointments, organization, training and activities were decided by the Arab League and in fact by Egypt."⁶

Simultaneously, other Palestine liberation organizations like al-Fatah, as-Saiqa etc. were created which used to launch attacks against Israeli targets etc. The situation changed when the 'Al-Fatah' took control of the PLO in 1968. Al-Fatah movement, started by Yasser Arafat in late 1960s, right

⁶ See Aryeh Y. Yodfat and Yuval Arnon, PLO: Strategy and Politics (London, 1981), p. 22.

from the start emphasized the military thrust of its movement carried out by its military operation was launched in January 1965.

Syria, with the coming of the Ba'th party to power in February 1963, started backing Al-Fatah. It helped them by supplies of arms and training facilities in which brought the PLO increasingly under the influence of Syria. The Syrians utilized the PLO for perpetuating Jordan-Israeli clashes - the PLO used to infiltrate into Jordan and from there carry on attacks against the Israelis. The Israeli countered these moves of PLO by retaliatory attack on Jordan - blaming the latter as responsible for PLO's action.

The Palestine Liberation Front (PLF) was another group working under the instructions of the Syrian intelligence. It was formed in 1969 "by Ahmad Jabril, a former officer of the Syrian army, and Ahmad Zarour, a former Jordanian officer, with the aim of waging a guerilla war against Israel." ⁷ Though al-Fatah and the PLF achieved little success in operations against Israel, their continuous attacks and Israeli counter-attacks resulted in escalating the tension in this area, and were indirectly responsible for the outbreak of the June 1967 War.

Another factor which heightened the continuing Arab-Israeli tension during this period was the Israeli attempt to

7 Ibid., p. 23.

acquire sophisticated weapons and the indigenous production of some missiles with French and US support (power reactor at Dimona in Negev) - both for its missile production and nuclear programme. Early in 1966 it was confirmed that French aerospace companies were cooperating with Israel for development of medium range, two stage missile based on French SRAEB Topaze test vehicle.⁸ The Israelis succeeded in launching their adaptation of the French Gabriel rocket in 1961. Under these circumstances, Egypt felt insecure and decided that it ought to develop armament (missiles, in its own country on which it could depend. For this purpose it hired some German scientists headed by Professor Wolfgang Pilz to develop rockets and aircraft. The Israelis tried to dissuade the German scientists by harassing them - sending them parcel bombs and by kidnapping some of them. In spite of all this Egypt produced and fired her first missile (Al Kahir) on 21 July 1962.⁹ By the end of 1962 Egypt had produced two missiles, Al-Kahir (325 mile range) and Al-Zafir (200 mile range). In 1963 the Egyptian developed another missile Al Alfred with a range of approximately 500 miles.

Another development during this period was the third party transfer of US arms to Israel via West Germany as part of war reparations. In December 1952 Israel had signed a reparations

8 Aviation Week and Space Technology, 19 January 1966, p. 27.

9 Mohamed Hassanein Heikal, The Cairo Documents (New York, 1973), p. 207..

settlement with West Germany under which they had agreed to pay three billion dollars over a fourteen month period, as compensation for Nazi crimes against the Jews. Nasser saw this move on part of the West as an attempt to strengthen Israel economically and militarily. Nasser spoke about this to many international figures, but they could do nothing except noticing and agreeing that this step would lead to further complication.

In 1960 Ben Gurion had met West German Chancellor (Adenauer), and told him that its previous arms supplier, France, was changing its policy under de Gaulle. Britain was caught between the Arab and Israeli dilemma and America was hesitating to directly supply Israel with arms. Therefore, Gurion suggested that Germany should give the Jews 'means to defend themselves against another attempt at national genocide. As the Americans did not want to get directly involved in the arms deal, as that would have destroyed Kennedy's friendship with Nasser, they literally forced the West Germans to supply military weapons to Israel.

After the deal was finalized, Israel bought, from the \$60,000,000 credit provided, two British submarines, 200 American Patton tanks, 200 armoured carriers, 72 105-mm self-propelled guns, 35 155-mm howitzers, 6 torpedo boats, American F-84 jet fighters, Italian G-91 jet fighters, French Noratlas

10 For details see Howard M. Sachar, A History of Israel: From the rise of Zionism to Our Time (Oxford, 1977), pp. 559-64.

transport aircraft and 15 helicopters. They also bought 200 40-mm radar equipped rapid fire guns. Reportedly West Germany agreed to buy Israeli Uzzi sub-machinegun.¹¹

In 1962 the United States was gradually acceding to Israeli arms acquisition programme. The 1962 agreement for the transfer of Hawk surface to air missiles to Israel was an important factor in the West Asian arms race.¹² Yet, there was no direct shipment of arms from US to Israel till 1964 when a few Hawk SAMs were supplied to Israel. Whatever US arms that Israel had acquired earlier were from third party sources. In 1966 US agreed to sell 24 A-4 Skyhawk light attack bombers to Israel but these planes were delivered in December 1967 i.e. after the June War. While buying weapons from Britain, France and USA, Israel had also tried to achieve self-sufficiency in producing small arms. Besides the Uzzi sub-machinegun, it produced M16 flame thrower and Metol 82 mm bazookas. In case of tanks, they combined AMX with the Sherman to produce light and medium tanks with high velocity 75 mm/85 mm/105 mm guns and good manoeuvrability. Israel also procured motor patrol boats from France and Italy.¹³ By 1967 Israel had developed a significant capability to produce and upgrade weapons and aircraft

11 For details see *Asikal*, n. 8, pp. 322-3.

12 See Harold A. Govey, United States Military Assistance (New York, 1965), p. 45.

13 For details see Lincoln P. Bloomfield and Amelia C. Leiss, Controlling Small Wars: A Strategy for the 1970s (New York, 1969), pp. 242-4.

spare parts, thus effectively enhancing its military capability and fire power.

Seeing the slow but steady arms buildup in Israel, it was but natural for Egypt to feel threatened and therefore to look toward her new ally (USA) for help. For strategic interests (as mentioned earlier, it became compulsory on the part of the Russians to help the Egyptians by supplying them readily with new arms. The purpose of the new arms aid was to strengthen and update Egypt's land, air and naval capability.

By the end of 1958 Russia had sent Egypt 100 MiG-17 fighters and 60 Il-28 bombers. By 1962 approximately 110 MiG-19 fighters were delivered. reportedly an agreement was reached between USSR and Egypt in 1960 by which the former was to supply MiG-21 fighters and Tu-16 bombers to Egypt. These supplies began from 1962 onwards. The SA-2 surface-to-air missile supplied in 1962 became integrated with the MiG-21, in an air defence role by 1966.¹⁴

In the field of armour, Egypt had acquired T-34 tank immediately after the Suez War. By 1960 it contracted to buy approximately 500 T-54 tanks from USSR; these were further supplemented by T-55 tanks (with infra-red light) by 1966. By 1967 the Soviets supplied Egypt with heavy howitzers and long-range rapid fire field guns of recent design. Along with these there was an increase in Egypt's naval capability. The USSR supplied Egypt with 10 minesweepers, missile patrol boats,

14 For detail see, *ibid.*, p. 334.

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6 escort vessels, 11 submarines and 6 destroyers, which made the Egyptian navy quite capable of playing a vital role not in the defence of Egypt proper but also in the Mediterranean. Since 1966, many Egyptian pilots and officers were trained in USSR and the Soviet technicians and military advisers accompanied the arms supplies to Egypt to train the Egyptians in dealing with modern weaponry and also to maintain sophisticated equipment.

In Syria, meanwhile, a new group of (leftist) Ba'th party had come to power following the coup d'etat of February 23, 1966. From this time onwards USSR grew closer to Syria and declared that it shall not tolerate any interference in an area so close to her southern border. The Syrians were not only helped politically by the Soviet attitude but also gained militarily through Soviet arms aid. On 4 November 1966 Syria also signed a mutual defence pact with Egypt, so that the latter may come to the help of the Syrians if they were attacked by Israel.

The Americans siding with the Israelis and the Russians backing up the Egyptians and the Syrians, once again linked up the Arab-Israeli rivalry with the Super Power rivalry in the region. This escalated the regional tension and was thus reflected in the arms transfers of the donor countries to the recipient states. The US dependence on Israel was increasing during this period, as one of the Super Powers was trying to

15 Ibid., pp. 336-9.

create another suitable and powerful ally for itself in the region following the Greece-Turkey rivalry over Cyprus and the growing disenchantment of these NATO partners with the USA. The wooing of Turkey by USSR also decreased its importance as a dependable ally in the eyes of the Americans, especially since the signing of the economic agreement between Turkey and USSR in 1965.

The situation in early 1966 could be summed up as follows. There was an increasing economic, political and military support to Israel from USA. The US-Egyptian relations had further deteriorated due to high-handed policy of Dulles earlier and later on of President Johnson. Formation of a unified Arab command was restricted by the political differences among the Arab states, and Egypt's military engagement in Yemen in support of the republicans. Israel was also during this period going through an economic and political crisis. "Israel needed a war, not only in fulfilment of its central dream of expansion but, more so, to maintain the integrity and cohesiveness of the young state and the continued loyalty and support of the diaspora Jews."¹⁶

Israel unleashed an attack on the Jordanian village of As-Samou on 13 November 1966. This was done as a reprisal against the increasing Palestinian guerilla activities in the

16 See Mahmoud Nihad, The Struggle for Peace in the Middle East (London, 1981), p. 17.

Israeli border areas. The tension was further escalated when on 7 April 1967, Israel launched an air strike against the Syrians, destroying six of their MiGs. The concentration of the Israeli forces on the Syrian border and Israeli Chief of Staff, Yitzhak Rabin's statement that Israel would carry out a lightning attack against Syria, occupy Damascus, overthrow the regime there and come back, brought about the Egyptian response of massing its forces in Sinai so that Israeli pressure on Syria should decrease. As a further check to Israeli intentions, Egypt promulgated a law banning the passage of Israeli ships and strategic material through the Gulf of Aqaba. The details of the prelude to the June War are too well known to be repeated here.

Faction of interests which affected the role of Super Powers in this region, during the 1967 crisis are as follows: Because of the Soviet penetration in the area, the western oriented governments like Israel had become increasingly important to the United States. During this period Soviet military aid had been concentrated in Egypt, Syria and Iraq - the three countries which represented the greatest threat to Israel's security.

During 1967, Israel expected the United States to neutralize the chances of Soviet interference only, as it did not need military help from USA, since it was capable of dealing with the Arabs militarily. A statement was made by the Israeli

Premier Levi Eshkol on 17 April 1967, that Israel would rely primarily on her own army and that is why it should be strong as they had spent much more money on arms in proportion to the population.

The British dependence on Arab oil made it difficult for them to stand against these countries openly as their influence was slowly declining. Relations with Egypt had been severely strained over Yemen and officially broken over British action against Rhodesia. Though concerned for Israel, the British could not commit themselves to Tel Aviv as British interests in the Middle East became more dependent on Arab acceptance. The Americans were hesitant in involving themselves in the region for fear of another 'Vietnam'. Forcing the Gulf of Aqaba blockade would have infuriated Nasser and led to deterioration of relations and economic retaliation by the "progressive" Arabs.

During this period the Soviet policy was characterized by qualified support for Egypt and Syria, accompanied by cautious movements of Soviet naval forces in the Mediterranean. Since they did not want a confrontation with the USA, the Soviets asked Nasser 'not to fire the first shot'.¹⁸

The massing of Egyptian army in Sinai and the closure of the Gulf of Aqaba was interpreted by Israel as an act of war, for the waterway was as a lifeline by Israel. Bulk of its oil and other strategic raw material passed through that passage. The growing tension, the removal of UNEF, the massing

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 36.

of Arab armies on its frontiers and the strong Arab propaganda was used by Israel as a justification to launch a pre-emptive strike against Egypt on 5 June 1967, followed by attacks against Jordan and Syria. In this attack the Egyptian air force was neutralized on the ground itself. Some sources have admitted that the Israeli attack had been expected and the only reason for the catastrophe was lack of co-ordination and command in the Egyptian air force. Similarly, the misinformation supplied by Marshal Amer about the readiness and capability of the army was reportedly responsible for the relaxed attitude of the military planners. Thus the Israeli offensive caught them unawares and they were completely routed.¹⁹

On 6 June, India and France sponsored a draft resolution in the U.N. calling for immediate ceasefire. While Soviet Union and some other countries supported the resolution, the United States opposed any reference to Israeli withdrawal and continued employing pressure and delaying tactics. Israel meanwhile kept on its military operations till the 10 June till it had consolidated its position in the Sinai, the West Bank and the Golan heights.

The Russians were alarmed at the attrition rate (50%) of the Soviet supplied aircraft. One of the reasons given for the poor show of the Russian equipment is that it had not been modified for desert warfare. The Soviets became increasingly involved in the Syrian-Israeli conflict after the all-out

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 23-26.

Israeli offensive against the Syrians in the Golan Heights. The Russians "accused Israel of violating the ceasefire resolution at the U.N. ... that unless Israel unconditionally and immediately ceased operations against Syria, USSR foresaw confrontation and ... would take necessary action including military." ²⁰ The Soviets were worried about their image in the Arab world, as their ally's defeat would reduce their credibility. Probably for this very reason Russian advisers remained in the frontline artillery positions under Israeli attack.

Chances of US intervention on behalf of Israel decreased radically since there was no overt Soviet move to intervene and also since the war was short-lived, decisive and largely confined to land-air engagements. The Super Powers tacitly agreed to attempt to restrain the antagonists and to avoid direct involvement. The only element of uncertainty was that the Super Powers had no firm agreement to keep out of the conflict.

Following the six-day war the Soviet Union increased its arms supplies to Egypt and Syria, while USA increased its arms supplies to Israel. The French under de Gaulle changed their policy towards the Middle East. They not only imposed an arms embargo on Israel, but also supplied Mirage fighters to Lebanon. The weapon losses of all the countries were replaced

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J. T. Howe, Multicrisis: Sea Power and Global Politics in Missile Age (Massachusetts, 1971), p. 103.

by their respective donors. Though the replacements were often of a better quality than the previous weapons.

Jordan was hardpressed for replacement as US had imposed an embargo on weapon transfer to it. Russia was willing to supply arms to Jordan but King Hussein refused. When hardpressed by his army officers, and fearing a revolt, Hussein once again appealed to USA and UK for arms. His visit to Moscow in October 1967 forced the Americans to resume supplies of minor articles and spare parts. Afraid of the increasing Soviet interest in Jordan, the American tried to check it by signing a new arms sales agreement with Jordan which provided for the supply of tanks and aircraft.²¹

After the 1967 War, the Egyptian began to rebuild their military capability with the help of Soviet Union. Within a year the war of attrition intensified greatly. In reply to the Egyptian artillery barrages across the Suez Canal, the Israelis carried out air strike into the Egyptian interior with the help of the Sky Hawk and Phantom fighter bombers newly acquired from the USA. "In desperation President Nasser begged the Soviet Union to take over Egypt's air defence itself; Russian experts arrived to set up and man a screen of SAM missiles sites on the ground and Russian pilots joined Egyptian ones in patrolling Egyptian air space."²²

21 For details see Ghani, The Third World: Trade in Major Weapons (1968/69), pp. 61-64.

22 David Hirst and Irene Beeson, Sadat (London, 1981), p. 21.

The Soviet Union started its supply of men and equipment from February 1970. The new transfer of Soviet arms consisted of 80 MiG-21 interceptors; 27 battalions of surface-to-air missiles (SAM); banks of electronic equipment to counter that carried by the enemy intruders and four MiG-25 high altitude reconnaissance aircraft and the crew to man them; in all ²³ two Soviet air force brigades and an air defence division. By April 1970, the Soviets were fully operational but their role was defensive and they operated over defined areas of the country only.

Relieved from pressure, the Egyptians started building up their military capability, as the SAMs had neutralized the Israeli airforce to a large extent. The Russian presence helped as a moral booster to the Egyptian pilots who had had a couple (1956, 1967, experience. It enabled them to train, become more experienced so as to match the superior craft of the Israelis. By 1971 the Russians were reportedly operating 30% of the MiG-21s and 20% of the SAMs and maintaining most of their electronic ²⁴ equipments.

The Egyptian had started laying more stress on the SAMs for air defence role. Though effective, the SAM-2 and SAM-3 were not mobile and had to remain in static position which limited

23 Saad El Shazly, The Crossing of Suez: The October War (1973), (London, 1980), p. 16.

24 Ibid., p. 20.

their area of performance. Out of Egypt's 800,000 strong army, only 60-65 per cent were field troops as the rest were stationed to guard the vital installations. Only the Egyptian navy could be said to have been stronger than that of the Israelis. It gained more fire-power after the Soviet supply of KOMAR missile boats - which had proved its effectiveness by sinking the Israeli destroyer 'Eilat' on 21 October 1967.

Israel not only had a qualitative superiority over Egypt in airforce and the army, but its navy too was adequate for its needs. It had in its possession 12 SHARON vessels from France, and built their own NECHEM class boats in Haifa. It was a missile boat, carrying 7 Gabriel missiles and was the Israeli response to the Egyptian KOMAR. (Israel also indigenously built a light fighting vessel DABUR, which carried torpedo tubes and machine guns). Despite its qualitative superiority the Egyptian navy was neutralized, since it could not operate without adequate air cover, and was always vulnerable to Israel's air strikes.

The Syrian losses of 1967 were also replaced by the Soviet Union. The Syrians also tried to approach to West (1968) and to China (1969) for arms. Probably it was a method of pressurizing the Soviets into selling them advance weapon systems. But Syria had to depend ultimately upon the West for its weapons. Within a year it received from the Soviet Union arms worth approximately \$300 million. About 1000 Soviet advisers and technicians arrived in Syria. The Soviets bombers paid visits to Syria, and the Russians supervised the construction

of naval facilities in Latakia and Tartous - useful for both the Syrian, and the Soviet navy operating in the Mediterranean.

By 1970, Syria was totally dependent upon USSR for its military hardware. Among the supplies received were 175 late model MiG-21s and SU-7 fighter bombers, and 85 MiG-17s fighters; 250-300 tanks, over 100 armoured personnel carriers, 40 field guns and mobile rocket launchers; 40 SA-2 SAM missiles; two minesweepers, 6 KOFAN-class missile patrol boats and 12 motor torpedo boats. Another military aid agreement was signed with USSR in 1971 for 35 aircraft and twenty two helicopters.²⁵ But in spite of all this, the Syrian forces remained of poor quality partly because of the legacy of the eight major coups d'etats in Syria, which had seriously damaged its military elite.

The induction of large-scale of new arms in Egypt and Syria on one hand and Israel on the other, as well as the war of attrition between Egypt and Israel threatened to involve even the Super Powers not only because of active US support to Israel but also because of the direct Soviet military presence in Egypt. Such a confrontation would have seriously harmed the growing detente and the SALT negotiations going on between USA and USSR at that time. A way had to be found to contain the situation with the help of Super Power dialogue. The attempt at bringing

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Roger F. Rajak, The Soviet Syrian Military Aid Relationship in Anne Sinai and Atten Rollack, eds., The Syrian Arab Republic (New York, 1976), pp. 97-98.

peace to this region through the initiative of the US Secretary of State William Rogers, and his peace plan, were initially met with failure as Israel rejected them in December 1969. But finally through Super Power co-operation a ceasefire was brought about by August 1970 and the actual fighting stopped till it was renewed with the October War.

Throughout this period, the pattern of dependency followed by different states of the region were varying. Israel while operating within the framework of unipolar dependency of the West had shifted from UK and France to USA as the prime donor of arms aid. In the Arab World, the unipolar dependency of Jordan and Saudi Arabia on the West continued, while Egypt, Syria and Iraq were largely dependent upon the Soviet Union. This model of Egyptian dependency was to continue even under Sadat till 1974 when Egypt broke off with the USSR after the October War and under the pressure of Kissinger's diplomacy. Egypt then went back to its unipolar dependency of the West. These dramatic alignments during decade 1964-74 were conditioned not only by the fury of the Arab-Israeli conflict and Great Power support to their regional friends but also by the enhanced strategic importance of the Mediterranean for the Super Powers.

Chapter V

REVERSING THE OPTIONS - SADAT POLICY

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Emergence of Sadat

The emergence of Sadat after the death of Nasser, saw the former delink himself gradually from the Nasserite formula of continuing confrontation between Egypt and Israel under the framework of Pan-Arabism. He sought to delink the two aspects; Pan-Arabism including support for the Palestinian cause and his desire to regain the lost territory of Egypt through political negotiations with Israel. While maintaining his Pan-Arab posture he initiated a dialogue with Israel under the auspices of the USA. This shift also highlighted Sadat's new look at Egypt's relations with the Super Powers. "Sadat and the information media under him seriously doubted the willingness of the Soviet Union to support Egypt against Israel in the context of the newly emerging detente between the Super Powers. In the light of this new orientation in its foreign policy, the Sadat regime started its search for new options after 1971."¹

Sadat was of the opinion that if Egypt broke away from the Soviet Union, then the USA might be convinced into pressurizing Israel to negotiate and thus take Egypt out of the 'no war - no peace' situation. By breaking away from

1 K. N. Singh, "Egyptian Non-Alignment," International Studies (Ghaziabad), vol. 20, nos. 1-2, 1980, pp. 328-9.

Russia, Sadat also saw an opportunity to win over the support of traditional Arab states, like Saudi Arabia, which would provide him with an additional leverage vis-a-vis America and also furnish Egypt economical relief. The oil was gaining unprecedented importance during this period and thus, Arab oil-producing countries held a powerful leverage over the West which was mostly dependent upon the Arab oil for its economic and industrial growth.

By delinking itself from the Soviet Union, Egypt could also initiate an open-door policy and thus attract investments not only from the pro-Western Arab states but also from the West itself. Thus, these perceptions of Sadat made Egypt gradually return to the unipolar dependency, as opposed to the dependency pattern followed by Egypt under Nasser. In the initial phase, especially from 1970-72, Sadat despite his intentions to break away from the Russian influence, was forced to maintain a pro-Soviet stance. This was essential since Sadat needed time to establish his regime, and at the same time to weed out the pro-Nasser and pro-Soviet elite from power.

When the ceasefire between Egypt and Israel was about to expire on 7 February 1971, Sadat proclaimed that he would renew the ceasefire for three more months if Israel gave a definite time-table for withdrawal of its forces from the East bank of the Suez. Even the arrival of Gunnar Jarring, the UN mediator could not influence the Israelis into making any

concessions.² Sadat stated that the Americans were continuing the same policy of helping Israel but not forcing it to come to a negotiated settlement.

In an attempt to wean the United States away from its commitment to Israel, Sadat sought to put diplomatic pressure by once again approaching the Soviet Union. But this attempt of Sadat failed as Richard Nixon, the United States President,³ refused to submit to this pressure tactic. But at the same time the Americans were worried about the escalated arms airlift by the USSR to Egypt - which in the long run might lead to a confrontation between the Super Powers themselves.

Neither Egypt nor Israel were prepared to accept each other's terms for a ceasefire and a solution of the border problem. Whatever pressure the Americans tried to put over Israel, was over-ruled by the counterpressure created by mobilizing public opinion in the domestic politics of America by the Zionist lobby.

The status quo of 'no wavy no peace' was proving to be a costly phenomenon to Egypt.⁴ While the war of attrition was

2 William B. Quandt, "The Arab-Israeli Conflict in American Foreign Policy", in Itamar Rabinovich and Haim Shaked, eds., From June to October (New Jersey, 1978), p. 17.

3 Ibid., pp. 17-24.

4 For details see: Shimon Shamir, "Nasser and Sadat, 1967-1973, Approaches to the Crisis", in Itamar Rabinovich and Haim Shaked, eds., From June to October (New Jersey, 1978), p. 198.

constantly draining men and material, nothing positive was emerging out of it, while at the same time it was demoralizing the military. At this juncture the Egyptian opinion was that the Soviet Union was the only power which had the capacity and the will to help Egypt in liberating her lost territories. Egypt needed more Soviet arms for creating a 'credible' capability for armed confrontation - if so needed for starting a political dialogue.

As a monopoly supplier USSR controlled the release of arms to the Egyptians. A major reason for this was that the Russians wanted to prevent an arms race in the region and control the course of events in West Asia and at the same time avoid a confrontation with the United States. In return of cheap and speedy delivery of arms with no strings attached, the Egyptians were prepared to offer military facilities to the Soviets if it did not cause the Egyptians any hindrance.

In May 1971 the Soviet Union approached the Egyptians for expanding the Soviet naval facilities at Alexandria and Mersa Matrouh, where they wanted to station a Soviet fighter brigade. The Russians also wanted to build two radar stations, both at the East and the West side of the base. The Egyptians thought that this was more of a political than a military request, and offered a compromise. They agreed to grant naval facilities to the Soviet Union provided the Russians were prepared to defend the Egyptian air space from Alexandria to the Libyan frontier. They further demanded that the Soviet brigade

should be put under Egyptian high command and the Soviet fighter pilots were to be replaced as soon as Egypt had enough pilots of her own. As the Egyptians were demanding more than what the russians were prepared to risk, there was no agreement and talks came to an end.⁵

To pressurize the United States to mediate between Egypt and Israel, and also at the same time to reassure the Egyptian pro-Soviet elite that by removing Ali Sabry from power Sadat had not severed ties with USSR, Egypt signed a Treaty of Friendship with the Soviet Union on 27 May 1971. To the Western observers this step made Sadat a staunch Soviet ally, for even Nasser had not taken such an extreme step to show solidarity with the USSR. This treaty, which came into force from 1 July 1971, contained military implications for both the parties in Articles 7, 8 and 9.⁶ By signing the Treaty of Friendship, Sadat's strategy was "to keep and strengthen over relations with the Soviet Union until we have built a modern and powerful country both economically and militarily."⁷

In 1971, the year of decision, Sadat was playing a very complex game. While maintaining a arms-defence relationship with the Soviet Union he was also very keen to enlist US

5 Saad el Shazly, The Crossing of Suez: The October War, 1973 (London, 1980), pp. 71-72.

6 For details see Singh, n. 1, p. 329.

7 Shazly, n. 5, p. 72.

help to solve the Egypt-Israeli crisis. This led to his initiative to engage the United States, under the Roper's Plan, to mediate between Egypt and Israel. Many attempts were made by Egypt to bring about a peaceful solution, but Israel's hardline approach served as a obstacle towards a negotiated settlement. In an effort to please the United States and other parties concerned Sadat was even prepared to concede to several Israeli demands provided that Egypt could recover Sinai.⁸ Roper himself had remarked that "Egypt had made a major concession in February when it agreed that it would enter into a formal peace treaty with Israel, something which all Arab States had avoided in the past."⁹

After the failure of Ropers to bring about a peace settlement Sadat tried to use the new US Secretary of State, Joseph Sisco, in 1971-72 to open a fresh dialogue with Israel. But the terms and conditions put by Israel were not acceptable to Egypt, as it would have alienated Egypt from the Arab world since a constant Israeli demand was to delink Egyptian-Israeli negotiations from the broader Arab-Israeli conflict.¹⁰

The idea of a peaceful settlement and America's help to achieve it, might have crossed Sadat's mind when Henry Kissinger

⁸ For details see Mahmoud Nihad, The Struggle for Peace in Middle East (London, 1981), pp. 187-206.

⁹ John Bullock, The Making of War: The Middle East from 1967 to 1973 (London, 1974), p. 27.

¹⁰ see Singh, n. 1, p. 329.

said that the American goal was to 'expel' the Russians out of Egypt. This US perception and the Saudi influence might have motivated Sadat to experiment with the idea of removing the Russians, in order to gain the confidence and allay the fears of the United States. But even now, Sadat was carefully watching the turn of events in the Indo-Pak war of 1971. The resulting Indian victory (with Soviet military aid) might have put into his mind the thought that if the Soviet Union sincerely wanted, it could provide Egypt with arms necessary for winning her next armed conflict with Israel.

In July 1971, it was finalized by the Egyptian High Command to go ahead with arms buildup, specifically keeping in mind the planned offensive on Israel.¹¹ The Soviet Union was taken into confidence over this matter and a formidable list of arms required by the Egyptian forces was presented to them. The arms deal which materialized in October 1971 included: 10 TU-16 bombers with air-to-surface missiles (range of 95 miles); 100 MiG-21FM, out of these 50 were to be delivered before the end of 1971; 20 MiG-23, to be supplied in 1972 with Soviet pilots to man them till they could be replaced by trained Egyptian pilots; one brigade of mobile Quadrat (SAM-6) missiles; one battalion of 240 mm mortar; 3 PMP bridges etc.

Besides supplying Egypt with the above mentioned equipment, the USSR was also required to help Egypt to manufacture the D-30 120 mm gun; 23 mm twin-barelled anti-aircraft gun;

AKM automatic rifle and RPG anti-tank rocket launcher; as well well as the manufacture of ammunition for all the above mentioned weapons. The Russians were required to set up spare parts factories for the aircrafts, and manufacturing units for units for radar (B-15) and tank radios (A-123, A-124).¹²

The Americans objected to the Egyptian acquisition of the TU-16 bomber, as it was a weapon system capable of being used against ships - and that it was a Russian ploy to introduce it in the area for their own interest in the Eastern Mediterranean region. Sadat jokingly retorted to the American fear that 'Egypt had no intention of waging war on the United States'.¹³

The Soviet reluctance to furnish SCUD, surface to surface missile, MiG-23 interceptors and TU-22 supersonic bombers led to a squabble between Sadat and the Russians, in which the former was able to get most of the demands fulfilled. A feeling had emerged that the Soviet Union did not want to supply what it had promised, and also that the Russians were getting more out of the deal than the Egyptians. In the army, the feeling was the strongest. The presence of 20,000 Soviet advisers was a constant source of friction for the Egyptian military officers.

Egypt was hardpressed for an enhanced military capability. Sadat wanted that Egypt should be self-sufficient and

¹² *ibid.*, p. 78.

¹³ *ibid.*, p. 80.

capable of producing modern armament and electronic equipment. Britain and France had shown interest to cooperate with Egypt in this field. As Sadat knew that it would be impossible to get help from the Western countries till the Soviets were in Egypt, his move to remove the Russians might have been to assure France and Britain also that he was not totally tied up with the Soviet Union.

On 8 July 1972 Sadat informed the Soviet ambassador of his decision of expelling the 20,000 Soviet advisers within two days. The expulsion of the Soviets from Egypt was supposed to be a signal to the United States and Israel that Sadat was prepared to sacrifice Russia to come under the unipolar dependency of the West, provided that the United States came forward to help Egypt.

Though the Soviet expulsion was made to look like a rebuff against the Soviet inability to supply advanced weaponry to Egypt, it could also have been a premeditated and a well-planned move. By 1972 Sadat's and Sadek's public criticism of the Soviet Union had increased in intensity. "Sadek's hostility to communism blinded him to the distinction between communism as an ideology and the Soviet Union as a Super Power

14 See David Hirst and Irene Beeson, Sadat (London, 1981), pp. 129-36.

16 Ibid., pp. 137-8. In 1971, Rogers had suggested to Sadat that if Russian presence in Egypt was reduced then America might come in to help. This hint was repeated by Prince Sultan of Saudi Arabia.

with national and global interests ... (and) the strategic
 fact of Soviet indispensability to Egypt.¹⁶

The removal of the Soviet advisers and technicians left a huge gap in the Egyptian military capability. Some highly sophisticated weapon systems and electronic equipment like the four MiG-23s (used for reconnaissance); Smalta (electronic devices used for jamming HAWK SAM's of Israel; Takan (electronic devices used for jamming enemy's radar transmission), plus the Soviet electronic reconnaissance and jamming squadron were withdrawn by the Soviets. The Quadrat SAM system was very essential for the Egyptian air defence and, therefore, the Soviets were requested unsuccessfully to stay behind.

By this time Sadat was feeling insecure. He was suspecting that his regime was being undermined and that the Russians did not want Egypt to go to war. The detente between USA and USSR had eroded the tensions of the Cold War. Sadat probably felt that the Soviet Union wanted Egypt to reach a peaceful solution so that it might not be dragged into a direct confrontation with the USA.¹⁷ But that perception was not correct. The Soviets were adamant that the detente would not affect their relations with Egypt, and that they would keep on supporting Egypt and keep on supplying her with the required weapons.¹⁸

16 See Shazly, n. o, p. 34.

17 Ibid., p. 119.

18 Ibid., p. 120.

The expulsion of the Russians might have also served two other purposes. Firstly it relaxed the enemy (Israel) which thought that without the Soviet presence Egypt would totter. Secondly, with the Soviets out of the way Egypt could wage a war with Israel without direct Soviet interference - arising out of their presence - to wage or control the conflict.

Though Sadat had publicly expelled the Soviet technicians, he still needed the Soviet support either as an incentive to the USA to initiate diplomatic moves or if that failed to break the deadlock by resorting to force of arms. Thus, it is not surprising that even after expelling the Soviets, Sadat went to them again, this time only for arms - despite his fear that the Russians were a political threat to him, both in internal and external affairs.

In October 1972 and early 1973 the Egyptians and the Russians once again made an attempt at rebuilding their relations. Egypt was desperate for sophisticated armaments and the Soviet Union wanted to retain the facilities provided for its Eastern Mediterranean fleet at Mersa Matrouh and Alexandria, though since July 1972 the use of Mersa Matrouh had dropped off slightly.¹⁹ Sadat also indicated that the Soviets could continue to use these naval facilities.

19 Jesse W. Lewis Jr, The Strategic Balance in the Mediterranean (Washington, 1976), p. 67.

20 See Jon D. Glassman, Arms for the Arabs: The Soviet Union and War in the Middle East (Baltimore, 1975), p. 95.

A new agreement was reached between the Soviet Union and Egypt in February-March 1973 under which the Soviets were to supply Egypt with one squadron of MIG-23 fighters, one brigade of R-17E (SCUD) surface to surface missile, 200 BMP (mechanized infantry combat vehicles), 50 MALOTKA (SAGGER) anti-tank guided weapon system, one QUADRAT (SAM-6) brigade and field artillery including 180 mm gun. Reportedly Soviet Union also supplied Egypt with STRELA (shoulder fired SAMs). The Soviet Union also agreed to send back the MIG-25 reconnaissance and electronic counter-measure squadron consisting of four aircraft that had been withdrawn earlier.

Although the Egyptians were able to salvage their military supply problem, the departure of the Russians from Egypt seriously affected the latter's air defence system. Although Egyptians had absorbed most of the SAM battalions, they could not bring out enough pilots to man the MIG-21s. For solving this problem of fighter pilots, Egypt approached the Democratic Republic of Korea and met with some success. In June 1973 the Korean pilots arrived in Egypt and became fully operational by July 1973, and even though they were a small force of 20 pilots²¹ only, they put up a splendid performance.

The October War

Despite repeated attempts and signals to the United States and Israel to resolve the border issue, Sadat met with failure as Israel kept to its hard-line approach. Therefore,

21 see Shazly, n. 3, p. 60.

in order to break this impasse of 'no war, no peace', and to bring the issue to a juncture where both, Israel and USA could not sit quietly, Sadat proceeded with a calculated escalation of the conflict. Egypt, after deliberate planning and preparation in collusion with Syria, launched a pre-emptive strike across the Suez and the Golan Heights against Israel. In the history of Arab-Israeli armed conflict this was the first instance when Arab states had attacked first with premeditated planning and with some success. The military capabilities of Egypt, Syria and Israel on the eve of the October 1973 war were as follows:

22 Military Strength of Egypt, Syria and Israel, Oct 1973

Forces	Egypt	Syria	Israel
<u>Army</u>	260,000	120,000	275,000 (on mobilization)
	2 armoured divisions	2 armoured divisions	10 armoured brigades
	3 mechanized infantry divisions	3 infantry divisions	9 mechanized brigades
	5 infantry divisions	1 armoured brigade	9 infantry brigades
	2 independent infantry brigades	1 mechanized brigade	5 parachute brigades
	1 airborne brigade	1 infantry brigade	3 artillery brigades
		2 commando brigades	Approx. 1,7000 medium tanks including 400 M-48, 250 Ben Gurion, 600 Centurion, 200 Sherman and Super Sherman, 100 T1, 150 M-60.
	1 parachute brigade	1 reconnaissance battalion	
	3 artillery brigades	3 parachute battalion	3000 AFV, including AML-60
	26 commando battalion	7 artillery regiments	15-AML-90, Staghound armoured cars;
	30 JS-3 by tanks	12 SAM batteries with SA-2 and SA-3	1000 M-2 and M-3 half-tracks
	1,550 T-54/55 tanks	30 JS-3 by tanks	
	100 T-62 tanks	240 T-34 tanks	
	2000 BTR-40	900 T-54/55 medium tanks	
	BTR-60P, BTR-50P, OT-64 and BTR-152	76 SU-100 SP guns	
	150 SU-100 and JSU-152 SP guns	100 PT-76 lt. tanks	
		1000 BTR-50/60, BTR-152 APC	

The crossing of the Suez Canal was a complete success as the Israelis were caught by surprise. Egyptian planning and innovative approach helped it in blasting through the so-called impregnable Bar Lev line across the Suez. But the

(previous footnote contd.)

750 122 mm, 130 mm and 152 mm guns	Some 122 mm, 130 mm and 152 mm guns	450 M-113 APCs
40 203 mm howitzers	Some ATGW.	250 howitzers including
900 57 mm, 85 mm and 100 mm ATK guns	37 mm, 57 mm	105 mm, 155 mm and some
SNAPPER ATGW	85 mm and 100 mm	175 mm SP how.
24 FROG-3 SSM	Anti-Aircraft guns	155 mm how. on Sherman
Some FROG-7 SSM	SA-2, SA-3 and	chassis;
100 SAMLET SSM	SA-7 STABLA	900 120 mm and 160 mm
23U-23-4 or AA guns	SAMS	mortars on AMX chassis
23U-67-2 or AA guns		120 mm guns and how.
SA-7 STABLA SAM		130 mm guns
reserves: 500,000		50 90mm SP ATK guns
		and jeep mounted recoiles
		rifles
		COBRA and mobile SS 10/11
		ATGWs
		300 20mm, 30mm, 40mm
		Anti aircraft guns
		reserves 180,000
<u>Navy</u>		
16,000 (including coast guard)	2,000 personnel	5,000 (on mobilization)
6 'W' class sub- marines	3 'T-43' class mine- sweepers	5 submarines
6 'A' class sub- marines	2 'CH' class submarine chasers	1 destroyer
5 destroyers	2 Coastal Patrol vessels	1 'RESNET' class FPB with 'Gabriel' SSM
4 escorts	'KOMAN' and 'OSA' class FPB with	12 'SAAN' class FPB with 'Gabriel' SSM
1 corvette	'Styx' SSM	9 MIB
12 S01 submarine chasers	12 motor torpedo boats	23 small patrol boats
10 fleet minesweepers		9 landing craft
12 inshore mine- sweepers		300 Naval commandos
12 'OSA' class patrol boats with 'Styx' SSM		
7 'KOMAN' class pat- rol boats with 'Styx' SSM		
36 MTB		
14 landing craft		

Israeli armed forces soon recovered from the shock and halted the Egyptians a few kilometres beyond the Suez Canal in the Sinai before they could reach the passes.

The Egyptian attack had limited objective, up to Mitla Pass, and was planned to hold on there. ²³ But Egyptian Minister

(previous footnote contd.)

<u>Air Force</u>	23,000 personnel	10,000 personnel	20,000 personnel (on mobilization)
	25 Tu-16 'Badger' medium bombers	Some Il-28 light bombers	12 Vautour light bombers
	5 Il-28 'Beagle' light bombers	80 MiG-17 fighter/ground attack aircraft	95 F-4E fighter/bomber/interceptor
	210 MiG-21 'Fishbed' interceptors	30 SU-7 fighter-bombers	30 Mirage III B/C fighter-bomber-interceptor
	80 SU-7 'Fitter' fighter bombers	20 MiG-21 interceptor	160 A-4E/H Skyhawk fighter bombers
	100 MiG-17 'Fresco' fighter bombers	8 Il-14 transports	24 Barak fighters
	200 MiG, Yak and L-29 trainers	3 C-47 "	18 Super Mystere B.2 interceptors
	50 Il-14 light transports	50 helicopters including 4 Mi-1, 8 Mi-4, and 22 Mi-8	6 RF-4E reconnaissance aircraft
	20 An-12 medium "		23 Mystere IV A fighter bombers
	190 Mi-1, Mi-4, Mi-6 and Mi-8 helicopters		30 Ouragan FB
	130 SAM sites each having 6 SA-2, SA-3 and some SA-6 launchers		85 Magister trainers
			10 Stratocruiser transports
			20 Noratlas, transport
			10 C-47 transports
			2 C-130E transports
			12 Super Frelon helicopters
			12 CH-53 G helicopter
			20 AB-205A "
			26 UH-1D Iroquois "
			5 Alouette II "
			10 SAM batteries with 60 HAWKS

22 See The Military Balance 1973-1974, The Institute for Strategic Studies (London, 1973), pp. 31-32, 33, 36.

23 Shazly, n. 5, p. 165.

of War, Ismail, reportedly pressed his military commanders to move on further thus exposing the Egyptian army to Israeli air attacks as the Egyptian SAM umbrella could not provide air cover over the extended area of combat. The Israelis fully utilized the opportunity provided by the thinly spread out Egyptian army. A determined Israeli counter-offensive led by Ariel Sharon crossed the Suez Canal near lake Bitter and succeeded in totally cutting off the Egyptian Third Army.

Israel was not militarily weak in any aspect during the 1973 war. In January 1971 the US Congress had authorized \$600 million as military assistance to Israel. The aid package had included 18 Phantoms and 18 Skyhawks, Shrike air to surface missiles and Walleye glide bombs for use against SAMs, 180 tanks including M-60s etc. These supplies were suspended after the breakdown of Jarring talks. After Prime Minister Golda Meir's visit to US in December 1971, US agreed to supply Israel with 80 Skyhawk bombers and 42 Phantoms. These were delivered during 1972 and 1973. In March 1973 the United States agreed to sell an additional 48 Phantoms and 36 Skyhawks.²⁴ Further on, as the war progressed, the United States supplied Israel with some of its latest weaponry through a massive airlift.

²⁴ See "Oil and Security": A SIPRI monograph Humanities Press, New York, 1974, pp. 106-7.

These sophisticated weapons included the MAVERICK T.V. guided air to surface missile which was used most tellingly against the trapped Egyptian Third Army.

Egypt and Syria received help from the other Arab states in different forms. Though the help offered was more often financial than military, Egypt had realised, due to past experiences that financial aid did not help when the battle was joined. Ultimately Egypt and Syria thought it better to be provided with fully trained and equipped soldiers along with aircrafts and other weapon systems.

When acquiring help from Iraq, Egypt had to tread cautiously as its ally in war, Syria, had strained relations with Iraq. As the Iraqis were to be posted in Syria, the problem of overall command came up. But this was solved and Syria agreed that Iraq could build up their bases and install their equipment on the Syrian soil. Iraq during this period was facing the perennial problem of Kurdish insurgency and the border dispute with Iran over Shatt al-Arab. Therefore, it was not in a position to commit a large number of its troops to the Arab-Israeli War.

Despite its pressing problems, Iraq put seven million dollars in a London bank at Egyptian disposal to cover urgent defence needs and sent a manned squadron of Hawker Hunter aircrafts to Egypt in March 1973. On the Syrian front Iraq sent 3 MiG-21 squadrons and 1 MiG-17 squadron which started combat missions from 8 October 1973. Iraq also sent one armoured division and one infantry division to Syria which fought on the

Golan front.

Algeria sent one squadron of MiG-21, one squadron of SU-7, one squadron of MiG-17 and one armoured brigade to the Egyptian front. In addition, Algeria deposited 200 million dollars with the Russians to cover Egyptian and Syrian arms purchases. Libya sent two squadrons of Mirage IIIs to Egypt out of which one squadron was manned by the Libyan pilots and the other by the Egyptians. It also sent one armoured brigade to Egypt. Morocco sent one infantry brigade to Egypt and one tank regiment to Syria. They could not send the promised F-5 squadron to Egypt because its pilots were arrested following an attempted coup d'etat. Jordan sent two armoured brigades to Syria. Egypt received one infantry brigade from Sudan, one infantry battalion from Tunisia and one infantry battalion from Kuwait. However, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait failed to send the 'Lightening' squadrons which they had promised.

All in all, a very good show of unified help was put up by eight Arab states which sent their forces to the Arab-Israeli front. Yet, the fact remains that the oil rich pro-West Arab states did not help in a big way. The possible restraints could be internal problems or external pressures from their donors. Saudi Arabia for example, could offer only one infantry brigade to the Jordanian defensive front. Another problem which affected these loaned forces was the delay in the arrival. Even if they did arrive, many were ill-equipped and without active combat experience and hence could not add much to the war effort.

The military option of Sadat failed miserably and ended in the disastrous routing of the Arab forces. The Egyptian Third Army was completely cut off and was virtually held for ransom by the Israelis. Sadat himself was to be blamed for it as he himself interfered in military matters, often overriding the decisions of his more able and experienced military commanders.

Sadat Negotiates: On seeing Egypt in a desperate position Sadat asked the Soviets for political help in the UN. The result was the US-USSR sponsored ceasefire which was approved by the Security Council on 22 October 1973. Resolution 338 called on all parties to cease fire within twelve hours, and to begin 'the implementation of Security Council Resolution 242 in all its parts.' When Israel refused to abide by the Council decision and kept on pressing its military objectives, Brezhnev threatened that "if the United States was not prepared to join in the dispatch of forces to impose the ceasefire, the Soviet Union would act alone."²⁵ To enforce this the Russians alerted their airborne divisions to be 'ready to move'. In response the Americans ordered a grade-three nuclear alert.²⁶ Ultimately, after two more Security Council resolutions, a United Nations Emergency Force arrived in the battle zone but by that time the Israelis had attained their military objectives.

25 See Hirst and Beeson, n. 14, p. 164.

26 Ibid., p. 165; Lewis, n. 19, pp. 80-86.

The halt in fighting provided fresh opportunities for diplomatic initiatives. Sadat, while still keeping his Soviet option open, began to lean more and more on the USA. That was the beginning of the so-called Kissinger diplomacy which paved the way not only for a US-Egyptian detente but also Egypt-Israel peace treaty. The Americans were finally successful in coaxing Sadat into 'going it alone'. Henry Kissinger, during this period of his 'shuttle diplomacy', wanted to isolate Egypt from the other Arab states especially from Syria. Therefore he literally blackmailed Egypt on the issue of the trapped Egyptian Third Army, and was able to secure Egypt's approval for the resumption of diplomatic relations with the US, which the American administration had striven to achieve all through the previous five years. The United States used its increased military supplies to Israel as well as its leverage with oil rich pro-West Arab states like Saudi Arabia, to press Egypt to come to the negotiating table on American terms.

Though the Soviet Union had stuck through the whole October Crisis with Egypt, it was now facing difficulty with maintaining the same link with Egypt as a result of Kissinger's diplomacy. The Soviet Union continued to extend its military as well as political support to Egypt. It not only supplied Egypt with advanced weapons like MiG-23 fighters, T-62 tanks and anti-tank missiles but backed Egypt politically in the UN and outside it. But the USSR was often surprised at moves made by Egypt which could weaken their negotiating power with the US,

as when Egypt's peace project was communicated to Moscow after it had been announced by Washington.²⁷

The Russians who were till then very active on the Arab side, were facing new problems. Egypt had nearly isolated them from the first Sinai disengagement of 1974. After 1974 there was a clear waning of relations between Egypt and the Soviet Union, as Sadat influenced by Kissinger became more and more dependent upon the United States.

Sadat's willingness to switch over to the Western camp and the return to unipolar dependency system at last brought positive response from America. It succeeded in pressurizing Israel to accept the second disengagement agreement which was signed in October 1975. This pattern of dependency led to the subsequent peace processes, all under the US initiative and supervision, leading to the Camp David Accord,²⁸ and the final peace treaty in 1979.²⁹ Sadat's shift towards America was now complete. In 1976 he had already abrogated the 1971 Friendship Treaty with the Soviet Union, and over and above all, refused all the Egyptian facilities used by the Soviet forces. The Egypt-Soviet dependency breakup was now out in the open.

Previously (post-1973) Egypt had received support from the moderate Arab states, but after Sadat's Jerusalem visit in

27 See *Kiad*, n. 8, p. 268.

28 For details of Camp David Agreement, see The Jerusalem Post, Peace Supplement, April 1979.

29 *Ibid.*

November 1977, the subsequent Camp David Agreement and the final peace treaty, Egypt was totally isolated in the Arab world. Sadat had for the first time in the Arab history withdrawn Egypt from the Arab-Israeli conflict. By that action, Egypt, the strongest frontline state, had left other Arab states in the lurch in order to secure itself from further Israeli aggression. This compromise on behalf of Egypt was the acceptance of defeat - both political and military, though in terms of territory Egypt got back what it had lost in 1967.

In this new dependency upon the United States, Egypt was reduced in its political power and manoeuvrability. Because while it could not match the Zionist lobby in America, it also lost leverage vis-a-vis the US due to its isolation in the Arab world. To gain more leverage Sadat tried to pursue an 'open door' policy, but this resulted only in Western economic penetration in Egypt, putting it more firmly in the clutches of the Western economic system. In order to compete with the Israelis for US attention, Sadat even offered Egyptian soil to be used for US strategic interest and as a base for the Rapid Development Force. But this attempt also failed because in US perception Israel remained the more dependent and competent ally to serve their interests in the West Asian region.

Chapter VI

EMERGENCE OF NEW PATTERNS OF DEPENDENCY

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Till the early seventies, the pattern of dependency in the region had been directly influenced by the interaction of two forms of bitter rivalries, the Cold War and its off-shoot the Great Powers' strategic interests in the region, and the regional rivalries, especially the Arab-Israeli rivalry. The Great Powers have, over a number of years, exploited the long-standing Arab-Israeli conflict to strengthen their linkages with regional powers, especially by supplying them with modern arms.

Initially, since the West had a near monopoly over arms supply to this region, it could distribute favours amongst the regional powers depending upon their willingness to follow the Western line, especially in relation to the Cold War issues. Others, who were seeking to follow a more autonomous line of approach to Cold War issues, were often ignored. The military constraints of these states were finally reduced after 1955 when the new Soviet regime under Premier Khrushchev made it a policy to supply arms to non-communist countries also. Thus, the earlier unipolar dependency was replaced by a bipolar dependency as discussed in the previous chapters.

But these above factors began fast losing their importance to influence the role of military dependency within the context of regional and global alliances. Since the advent of the seventies oil emerged as a new factor in influencing Great Powers. Since all the Western industrialized nations

depend upon oil for their sustenance and economic growth the West Asian region became symbolic of their source of energy. Thus, there was a new panic to control their life-line (oil) areas, especially after the oil crisis of 1973, and the Great Powers, especially the Western Powers modified their strategies to the new situation.

In 1973, following the October War, the oil producing Arab states put an embargo on oil going to several of the Western countries. To a great extent the embargo served as a pressure on the Western Powers to stop aiding Israel unconditionally and at the same time it led the Western Powers, especially America, to pressurize Israel into seeking a political settlement rather than a military one. Another factor which emerged as a considerable temptation was the recycling of the petro-dollars of the oil producing Arab states to the Western countries through the transfer of modern technology including military technology. Therefore, the Arab threat to sell or not to sell oil did in fact give them more options and a leverage over the Western Powers than enjoyed by them before. Ultimately it did affect the pattern of arms sales also.

"The energy crisis that emerged from the Yom Kippur War in October 1973 illustrated the linkage that existed between the political and economic dimension of the Middle East crisis and reinforced the will of the EEC to develop a Euro-Arab policy outside the diplomatic confines of the Arab-

Israeli conflict from which they were excluded by the Super powers, as illustrated by the agreement between the USA and USSR to limit attendance at the Geneva conference to themselves and the parties directly engaged in the conflict.¹ The West European states like France, Britain, Italy, Spain and West Germany are not only more dependent on Arab oil but are also greatly interested in the recycling of petro-dollars. They are more willing now to sell their arms to the Arabs in return for assured oil supply and to recycle the petro-dollars.

Events after 1978-79 had yet another impact upon their policies. The fall of the Shah of Iran and the Soviet military intercession in Afghanistan in 1979 had brought the Soviets closer to the coveted oilfields, thus making it much more important on part of the Europeans to maintain a pro-Western influence in the area and thus reduce the danger of instability.

The Arab states, since they were paying for the arms (oil or money), were now in a position to go and shop anywhere and thus had a new option outside the traditional unipolar or bipolar model of dependency. In response to this choice, the European arms manufacturing countries pursued an active arms sales policy in Arab markets, in which France took a leading role. The oil factor did help in qualitatively changing the

1 Dominique Moisi, "Europe and the Middle East", in Steven L. Spiegel ed., The Middle East and the Western Alliance (London, 1982), p. 26.

ethos of dependency, since the recipients were now not totally dependent upon the donor states as they had been earlier. Saudi Arabia and Iraq, by placing bulk orders with France, diversified their sources of arms supply and broke the earlier monopoly on their arms supply.

Iraq had started to look for options as early 1970, when it made an arms for oil deal with France and obtained 70 armoured cars urgently needed for the Kurdish War. But the real opportunity came for the French after 1973. Iraq had gained a lot by the oil price hike and had accumulated some capital, which was used to buy arms from the West."Iraq's trade patterns shifted completely in the space of a year or two from heavy dependence on the Soviet bloc to an equally heavy dependence on the West."²

Seeing this trend of the Iraqis shift towards the West, the Soviet Union tried to pressurise them by effecting an arms embargo in June-July 1975, but it proved futile. Instead of being pressurized by the Soviets the Iraq took this opportunity to diversify their sources further and offered to buy more from the French. In September 1975 Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi Chief of Staff, Abd al-Jabber Shanshal, visited France to negotiate the new arms deal and the arms on order began to arrive in Iraq in 1975.³ Iraq reportedly placed an

2 Francis Fukuyama, "New Directions for Soviet Middle East Policy in the 1980s: Implications for the Atlantic Alliance", in Steven L. Spiegel, ed., The Middle East and the Western Alliances (London, 1982), p. 133.

3 See Sirri, World Armaments and Disarmament Yearbook, 1979, pp. 218-220.

order for 130 French helicopters which included 50 Alouette 111s, 60 SA-342N Gazelles, 40 SA-330L Fumas and 10 Super Frelons, armed with air-to-surface missiles to be used in an anti-ship role. Besides the helicopter it also negotiated for 40 Mirage F-1, Jaguar and Hawk (armed trainer planes), ⁴ AMX-20F AMX-30 tanks and patrol boats.

In 1979, the Iraqi Defence Minister made another trip to France and Spain in order to supplement and replace bulk of Soviet equipment by the 1980s. While the Iraqi placed a \$250 million order with France for arms, they chalked out a plan for purchase of \$900 million worth of weapons and war-⁵ships over a period of five years. In 1979, following the start of Iran-Iraq dispute over Shatt el-Arab (which escalated into a war in 1980), the Iraqi placed new orders with France which included another 40 Mirage F-1 planes, two 3,200-ton anti-submarine frigates, six Cherbourg-class fast patrol boats, Super Frelon helicopters and a large number of AMX-30 tanks, Iraqis also held talks with the Spanish to set up a⁶ factory in Iraq to produce small arms. As a quid pro quo, in exchange of arms, the Iraqis promised to supply an additional⁷ 100,000 barrels a day of oil to France. Thus, while securing its enhanced oil supplies, France also profited by increasing

4 See A. N. Singh, The Persian Gulf: Arms and Arms Control (Canberra, 1980), p. 45.

5 See Fukuyama, n. 2, p. 134.

6 See Washington Post, 13 July 1979.

7 Ibid.

its arms output to cater to the demands thereby enlarging its arms industries in the process.

Though Iraq was leaning more towards the West for arms in the post-seventies era, and more so after the start of the war with Iran in 1980, it still depended to a large extent upon the Soviets not only for arms which were provided for in earlier contracts (worth \$800 million annually, but also for its national security vis-a-vis internal trouble (Kurds), and also to check any external aggression. But even though Iraq depended to a great extent upon the Soviet Union, the latter was left with very little leverage over Iraq which had been under its total dependency till ^{the} end of the sixties. This was openly demonstrated at the Tripoli Summit in 1977 (following Sadat's Jerusalem visit, where the Iraqis, in spite of Russian pressure, demanded that Syria should explicitly retract its acceptance of UN resolutions 242 and 338.

Saudi Arabia has till date not been involved in any direct or indirect armed conflict with Israel. Though being an Arab state, its threat perceptions are ironically from the radical Arab states themselves. The Camp David Accord and Sadat's isolation from the Arab states gave Saudi Arabia the opportunity to prove itself as a leader of the Arabs. So, to fulfill this role, it needed to fight for the Palestinian cause in a more active manner. At the first Baghdad Summit after the Camp David, the Saudis were anxious that the meeting concentrate on deciding to take cohesive action against Israel rather than a vendetta against Egypt. ⁸ Another factor which

8 See Graham Benton, Arms Sales and the Military, Arms Sale to Saudi Arabia, Middle East Yearbook 1980.

spurred the Saudi buildup of armed forces was the recent Israeli bombing of Iraq's nuclear reactor, which confirmed the Saudi fear that Israel would stop nowhere in its aggressive role to stop any Arab state getting a military edge over itself.

Saudi Arabia had throughout the past followed the unipolar dependency model and had relied heavily upon the West, especially America for its arms acquisition. This dependency has increased now because the West is ~~now~~ backing the Saudi candidacy to succeed the Shah of Iran as the dominant power in the Gulf region. The Saudis have also stepped up their efforts to establish a prime role for themselves as the number one ally of the United States in West Asia, thus deserving US consideration both as a key component in security planning for the region and as a recipient of some of the latest US weaponry. Nevertheless, the Saudis are using oil, petro-dollars and tools of diplomacy as their main weapons rather than guns.

Though depending heavily upon American arms and political support, the Saudis have taken a different approach toward their arms acquisition. As the oil became more crucial to the world the fear of external threat (even from Great or Super Powers) increased, and thus, the Saudis began to suffer a loss of trust in their ally's abilities and willingness to defend it. For when their own economical survival is at stake, old allies may not prove trustworthy. It is well known that twice in 1974-75 and again in 1978-79 there were strong

pressure groups in the USA openly advocating the advantages of seizing the Saudi oil core.⁹

In order to be less dependent on its arms acquisition and security upon the USA Saudi shifted from the earlier total dependency upon the Anglo-Saxons, USA and Britain, and started diversifying the sources of its arms acquisition programme to other European countries like France and Italy. At the same time, the Saudis started laying stress on regional cooperation among the princely rulers of the independent Arab Gulf states, to unify their military capabilities and to help preserve that part of the world from foreign intervention. Interestingly Saudi Arabia proposed a 'unification of the source of arms supply to the interested countries with a view to permitting the development of co-operation in the fields of training and use of their respective weaponry.'¹⁰

Hoping to defend the world's largest pool of oil, Saudi Arabia has embarked upon an expensive crash programme to modernize its armed forces. From 1975-76 there was a spurt of arms purchase from the west, which included F-5E Tiger fighter aircraft, American M-60 tanks, French AMX-30 tanks, British Scorpion tanks, anti-aircraft guns, artillery and armoured cars, French CRORALE and British BARBERS anti-aircraft missile systems

9 For details of American Plan to seize the oil fields of Saudi Arabia, see Military review, May 1979.

10 See Saudi's aspire for Prime role, Hindu, March 1981.

etc. In the anti-tank guided weapon system the Saudis preferred the MAVEN and the DRAGON. They also showed interest in the Anglo-French low-level strike aircraft, Jaguar and the French Mirage 4000.

In the Saudi Army, most units have US equipment although four separate mechanized battalions are being equipped with French tank chassis mounting a specially designed SUAHLE anti-aircraft missile system. Support items come from all over the world viz, radar from Britain, and other equipment from West Germany, Taiwan, Korea and Belgium. The biggest contract of all, belongs to the Raytheon Corporation which supplied the HAWK missile network.

The Airforce of Saudi Arabia is one which is undergoing a rapid development to increase not only its defensive role but also its strike capability. Most of the aircraft come from the United States. Lockheed not only provides the Hercules transport aircraft, but also a variety of training and other services. In 1973 the US failure to provide the Saudis with F-4 Phantoms forced the latter to go to France and reportedly a Mirage deal of about 35 aircraft was finalized during the visit of French Defence Minister's visit to Saudi Arabia in September 1973, and aircraft were delivered by 1974.¹¹ Later on the Saudi military chiefs chose the American F-15 in preference to the French Mirage-2000.

¹¹ See for details, Singh, n. 3, pp. 49-50.

To countries which have lately been competing with USA for arms sales to Saudi Arabia have been France and Britain. While Britain signed its biggest ever export deal with Saudi Arabia in 1978 (a five-year training programme which would provide work for 750 British companies), the French have sold more armour to the Saudis than they possess themselves, and in 1980 were negotiating a contract with France worth about 6000 million francs.¹² Italy is the only newcomer to the Saudi market. At present it supplies the Augusta Bell helicopters. The Saudi Navy is also undergoing a crash development, stress being laid on fast vessels carrying surface to surface missiles. The ships ordered include 5 Spruance-class destroyers, six corvettes and 9 Tacoma patrol boats - fitted possibly with Harpoon Missiles.¹³ Since 1974 the Karachi dockyard has been building eight ships for the Saudi Navy at the cost of \$145 million.¹⁴

But, in spite of all the arms input, Saudi Arabia can offer only a defensive role due to lack of adequate manpower and narrow technological base. Though it can put pressure at different quarters due to its economic power as it did on the USA to stop further supplies of the F-15 fighter aircraft to Israel since these aircraft, fitted with extra fuel tanks and

12 See Benton, n. 8,

13 For details of arms sales to Saudi Arabia, see Singh Yearbook 1980, register of the armstrade with industrialized and third world countries, pp. 155-6.

14 See Singh, n. 3, p. 52.

bomb racks~~s~~ were perceived by the Saudis as a threat to their own security, it is still dependent to a large extent upon not only the western countries but also upon Pakistan for its own internal security and for manning the sophisticated equipment necessary for the defence of its country. As far as the Arab Israeli dispute is concerned, the Saudis can only play a diplomatic role; in encouraging a peaceful solution. During the second half of the seventies, Saudi Arabia continued to underwrite Egypt's economic and military development to the tune of several billion dollars a year which enabled Anwar Sadat to carry out the final negotiated settlement with Israel.¹⁵ It had also, as a quid pro quo for American assistance in building up of Saudi defence establishment, provided bases manned by pro-Western technicians and thus likely to be useful to the USA in its Rapid Development Force strategy and the newly created US Central Command. It has also induced America to sell four AWACs more as a prestigious instrument rather than of military importance - for they would be manned by the Americans for a long time to come.

Egypt, in the mid-seventies, had been better off in terms of arms acquisition, since it was financed to a great extent by its Arab neighbours. But following the Egyptian peace treaty with Israel in 1979 the Arabs boycotted Egypt politically

¹⁵ See Jim Hoagland and J. P. Smith, "Saudi Arabia and the United States: Security and Interdependence", Survival, March-April 1978, pp. 81-82.

and economically. Thus Sadat was forced to ask United States for economic and military help. From this time onwards, Egypt became totally dependent upon the West, and USA in particular, for its economic survival and also the supplies of military hardware. The economic boycott from the Arab states forced Sadat to pursue an 'open door' economic policy which totally destabilized the Egyptian economy as it had developed till then.

Egypt's switchover to US and Western arms began to be revealed in statistical studies after 1975 when the deal for F-5E was being negotiated. Later on, when the United States failed to provide and deliver the F-5Es to Egypt, since Saudi Arabia refused to foot the bill after Egypt signed the Camp David agreement, they delivered a batch of F-4 Phantoms in 1979. France has captured a large chunk of the Egyptian arms market - where it has sold Mirage-5 fighters, helicopters, the Crotale (SAM) system and the Euromissile MILAN. It is also reported that Egypt might purchase Mirage-2000 and Mirage F-1C fighter from France in the 1980s. Britain entered the Egyptian arms market after 1975 handling the AMIC project for licensed production of Hawk trainer aircraft, Swingfire anti-tank missile and Lynx helicopters. Even though the ^{AMIC} ~~AMIC~~ was dissolved in 1979 after the Camp David agreement, the projects are likely to continue.

The peace treaty ^{negotiation} ~~signed~~ between Egypt and Israel on 14 February 1978 was accompanied by a military aid package for both countries from USA. Egypt's share out of the whole

deal was worth \$1,500 million. The arms which Egypt was to acquire under that deal were F-5E fighters, with possibility of further purchase of F-16s; 760M-113-A2 armoured personnel carriers and several hundred other vehicles. Among the precision guided munitions, Egypt received the AIM-7 and AIM-9 air-to-air missiles and 500 MAVENICK T.V. guided air to surface missiles. ¹³ As noted earlier, F-5E deal fell through.

Sadat's peace initiative enabled the USA to offer Egypt military assistance without jeopardizing its commitments to Israel. The US-Egyptian arms relationship gained a strong momentum following the downfall of the Shah of Iran. The vacuum left behind created a suitable candidacy for Egypt as a regional ally of the USA. Egypt was offered \$1.5 billion in military credits from USA. Egypt opted now for the more advanced F-4 and placed orders for 35 aircraft, instead of earlier F-5Es. Egypt further placed orders for 800 M-113 armed personnel carriers and eleven improved HAWK anti-aircraft missile batteries. For the fiscal year 1981-82 Egypt obtained additional US credits to purchase 244 M-60 A3 tanks in addition to forty F-16 jet fighters, 500 APCs and one additional Hawk surface-to-air battery. ¹⁷ "In July 1980 the administration asked Congress to approve the sale of sixty-seven additional M-60 A3 tanks to Egypt. And in early September it was announced

16 For details of Egyptian arms procurement till 1979 see SIPRI, n. 13, pp. 142-3.

17 See Washington Post, 26 July 1980, p. 6.

that Washington would sell Egypt 52 TOW anti-tank missile launchers in addition to their carriers and twelve 65-foot patrol boats."¹⁸

USA and Egypt are proceeding on a relationship which might include transfer of military technology, licensing and coproduction of arms since other Arab states had withdrawn their support of AMIO. France and Britain were reluctant to proceed with similar arrangements in the light of Cairo's inability to cover the expenses, and also because they feared that such an arrangement would offend its more rich customer, Saudi Arabia.¹⁹

The Egyptians have repaid for American military help by providing facilities for the deployment and exercises of the Rapid Deployment Forces in the area. USA sent two AWACS in January 1980 for intelligence gathering and combat experience, and in August 1980 announced a plan to construct an RDF base near Ras Banas on the Red Sea.²⁰ Since siding with the West, Egypt has also taken on the threat perceptions of the Americans, and are equally vocal in denouncing the Russian supported regimes in their neighbourhood. The massive arms acquisition by the Libyans became a source of concern for the Egyptian political

18 Ibrahim Karawan, "Egypt and the Western Alliance: The Politics of Westmanship", in Steven L. Speigel ed., The Middle East and the Western Alliance (London, 1982), p.171.

19 Ibid., Washington Post, 9 August 1979, p. 1.

20 See Karawan, n. 18, p. 172.

and military leadership. Sadat had also planned with the USA, both under Carter and more so under Reagan Administration, to invade Libya or to launch a joint armed response to a Libyan attack on Sudan (if it took place).²¹ There were also serious ~~to~~ border clashes between Egypt and Libya.

In spite of the massive US military assistance, Egypt could not be said to possess a capable offensive army especially vis-a-vis Israel. It faces a lot of practical problems such as replacement and standardization of equipment purchased previously from Russia and which still form an enormous bulk of the Egyptian armoury. It will still take a long time for the Egyptians to absorb the technology and operational capability of the sophisticated new weapon systems supplied by America and other western suppliers. The present Egyptian total dependence on the West and specially on America and the granting of Egyptian territory for US to use against any operation in the Gulf area questions the legitimacy of Egypt's proclaimed non-alignment.

After the death of Sadat in 1981, Hosni Mubarak took over the presidency of Egypt, and along with it he inherited the Western-dominated legacy from Sadat. Mubarak's first attempts were to assure Washington and Israel of his honest desire to pursue Sadat's peace initiative. But nevertheless the total dependency of Egypt on the West was not lost on him and

²¹ For details see Michael Neese and John Walcott, "Uniting Against Libya", Newsweek, 19 October 1981, p. 25.

he knew the limitations which it provided on the political and economic development of Egypt. Hosni Mubarak's willingness to change and have another option is seriously limited due to the constraint imposed by the pro-west elite of Egypt left over from the Sadat period. Nevertheless, he has tried to start a low-key dialogue with the Soviet Union, which might benefit the nation, as well as provide Egypt with some leverage vis-a-vis the United States.

Israel continues to depend totally on the West for its arms supplies, especially on the United States. Though previously the US could exert a certain amount of leverage on Israel vis-a-vis the Arab-Israeli dispute, this leverage is diminishing since 1970 due to enhanced importance of arms transfer for interstate relation, and USA has now turned to inducements to modulate the Israeli policy.²² Soon after the October War military capabilities of Israel were strengthened by the United States^e by providing \$2.423 billion of military aid to Israel in response to the improved Arab capabilities.²³ The Nixon Administration in 1972 increased the volume of arms transfer^{and} thereby strengthened the political bond and the US commitment to Israel's security. In 1975, while the second

22 See Thomas A. Wheelock, "Arms for Israel: The Limit of Leverage", International Security, vol. 3, no. 2, Fall 1978, p. 124.

23 Ibid., p. 126.

Sinai disengagement plan was being negotiated the United States in order to placate the Israelis, promised them \$1.5 billion military aid package. The supply of the advanced military equipment was on a long term basis. ²⁴ During this period Israel continued to depend solely upon the American arms except the German-designed IKL submarines delivered from Vickers in Britain in 1977 and 1978 armed with Blowpipe SLAM ²⁵ missiles.

negotiations

From the 1978 peace treaty, Israel's share of the American Military package was about \$3000 million. Out of which \$800 million were MAP grants for the construction of two airfields in the Negev. The arms for Israel included in this deal were 35 additional F-16 Eagle fighters and 75 F-16s armed with AIM-7 and AIM-9 missiles, plus 800M-113-AZs and other ²⁶ vehicles and MAVERICK and SHALKE missiles.

The fall of the Shah of Iran prompted the United States to give Israel a more serious look as a front line US ally in the region. Thus it was quite natural that the US kept on enhancing its military and economic aid to Israel not only to improve Israel's security vis-a-vis the Arabs but also to enable Israel to play a more dominating role in the region,

24 For details see Edward M. F. Sheehan, The Arabs, Israelis, and Kissinger (New York, 1976), pp. 245-57.

25 See SINAI Yearbook, 1980, Third World Importers, p. 104.

26 For details of arms procured, see *ibid.*, p. 147.

the type which was previously played by the Shah.

The close identity of interests between Israel and the USA was reflected in the security guarantees given to Israel by the USA when Israel signed the Second Sinai disengagement agreement in October 1975. The USA also agreed to underwrite Israeli security when the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty was signed in 1979. But that did not satisfy Israel which wanted a joint commitment and deeper understanding between the USA and Israel about their joint role in the so-called security of the Middle East, both in the Eastern Mediterranean region and the Gulf region. Thus, in 1982 Premier Begin offered bases and base facilities to USA on its soil. For some time, during and after the direct Israeli military involvement in the Lebanese War, the USA could not openly accept the Israeli offer. But, of late, the two countries are coming closer and have reached a situation of an alliance partnership without explicitly signing any open document to that effect. Of course, that raises the question of the US credibility as a neutral power trying to play the role of a mediator between the Arabs and the Israelis, but that is a question for the Arabs to decide.

Israel's peace treaty with Egypt in 1979 aggravated the Arab-Israeli conflict rather than reduce it. It sharply focussed it on the more difficult Palestinian issue especially in Lebanon. It also put an additional economic pressure on Israel, for it had to give away the Sinai oilfields while it was investing heavily on building new alternative airfields to

the ones which had existed before. "Israel is now spending 30 per cent of its GNP in the purchase of oil and defense expenditure and the degree of its dependence on the USA in these two respects is embarrassing."²⁷

Even though the Israeli peace treaty with Egypt is considered fragile, Israel, by isolating Egypt away from the front-line Arab states, has not only neutralized its biggest opponent in the region but also strategic pressure that the Arabs could bring upon it from two sides. Now, Israel can concentrate much more on the Syrian side. Since 1970 onwards, Israel has incessantly played an aggressive role vis-a-vis Syria. This has led to the conflict of the two parties in Lebanon. Israel has taken to offensive tactics to deal with the Syrian and the Palestinian presence in Lebanon especially in the south and in the Bekaa valley.

There are several reasons that have forced Syria to come closer to the USSR. They are - the near total isolation of Syria in the Arab world, its status not only as a front-line Arab state but also as a major contender in power, its military weakness, its lack of economic and technological resources and its Baathi ideology of Pan Arabism and socialism on which it justifies its full support for the Palestinian cause as seen by the Syrian ruling elite. Thus despite the low key interest shown by the Soviets in the Arab-Israeli dispute,

²⁷ Itamar Rabinovitch, "Israel and the Western Alliance", in Steven L. Spiegel ed., The Middle East and the Western Alliance (London, 1982), p. 203.

especially since 1974-75, the USSR has been sucked into the conflict, especially in support of its Arab friend, Syria. A friendship treaty was signed in 1981 between the two. In 1982 Syria lost heavily in the war of attrition during the Lebanese crisis. The Soviets not only made good the military losses but provided an air umbrella to Syria composed of several types of SAMs, radars and other electronic equipments manned by Soviet technicians. In terms of its effectiveness and political implication it is comparable to the Soviet planned air defence of the Suez area in 1970.

In 1970 the Super Powers were still moving forward within the framework of detente and the USA, despite Israeli pressure, did not transfer the counter-measures to Israel at that time. They were given the counter systems ^{once} ~~over~~ the October War broke the ceasefire. Now, the new Cold War does not put any constraints on the activities of the Super Powers. Rather their direct and active involvement in regional affairs reflects the intense hostilities between them. One way this hostility is reflected is the ongoing process of 'matching' each other in the region either directly or through the supporters. This had led to a new spiral of arms race in the area. The fear is that the new Cold War rivalry, the high tensions on the Syrian-Lebanese-Israeli-East Mediterranean front and the active military presence and direct and indirect military involvement of the two Super Powers on the regional conflict might lead to a direct confrontation among the Super Powers

themselves. The intransigence of the regional powers might act as a catalytic agent in that process.

In 1982 Israel asked the United States for a loan of \$3000 million in military and economic aid. This economic aid is very vital for Israel because of its heavy defence burden (more than \$21,000 million in foreign debt) and economic difficulties. ²⁸ While looking towards the United States for help, Israel continues to actively participate in military activity on the Syrian front. Israel still relies on its airforce for military superiority. In June 1982 within the span of 24 hours, Israeli jets shot down 70 Syrian aircrafts. Most of the Israeli ground air defence is covered by the mobile HAWK SAM system which are deployed in northern Galilee. Reportedly Israel had set up a HAWK battery in 1982 in Beit Meri (Lebanon) against the U.S. guideline, and shot down a Syrian MiG-23 reconnaissance aircraft.

Moshe Arens, the Israeli Defence Minister, has been warning the American of the growing participation of the Soviets in Syrian military field, which could prove to be a menace to the Israelis. This perception could be true to a certain extent, as both in Damascus and Tel Aviv, officials swear that the input of two new Soviet manned SAM-5 batteries (with increased range and precision) represents a major shift

in the balance of power between Israel and Syria in favour of
 the latter.²⁹

To offset this Syrian threat, the Reagan Administration has decided to sell 75 advanced F-16 fighter aircraft to Israel, worth about \$2.5 billion - the largest arms sale to that country in four years. In the last ten years the United States has sold \$8.5 billion worth of arms to Israel. President Reagan has proposed further sales totalling \$1.4 billion in 1982 and \$1.7 billion in 1983, to continue modernizing the Israeli forces.³⁰ Despite these inputs the US. is unable to control the actions of Israel. America ^{had} unsuccessfully ~~was~~ tried to pressurize Israel into leaving Lebanon in April 1982, by cutting off approximately \$100 million in economic aid and by refusing to the further supply of 75 F-16 aircrafts. It failed.

Syria remains the only confrontation state which is to a great extent dependent upon the Soviet help. Besides replacing the Syrian war losses of 1973, the Soviet Union provided it with the advanced MiG-23 fighters in spring 1974. Besides these fortyfive MiG-23s, other sophisticated equipment provided to Syrian included 30 SCUD surface-to-surface missiles with a range of 180 miles, 100 P-00 short-range tactical missiles, vehicle mounted multiple SA-7 SAM launchers and new 180 mm

29 For details see Times (London), 13 May 1983.

30 International Herald Tribune (Paris), 23 May 1982.

31

howitzers.

In 1975 President Assad of Syria visited the Soviet Union and concluded a major arms agreement to further strengthen the Syrian forces. The arrangement included a further Soviet supply of 500 T-55 tanks over a period of two years, and also additional advanced aircraft and surface-to-air missiles. In return the Soviets were to be provided air base facilities in Syria where they could place several MIG-25 FOXBAT reconnaissance aircraft to be used for surveillance of US naval activities in the Eastern Mediterranean. These planes arrived in Syria by November 1975.³² Besides the purchase of these arms from the Soviet Union, Syria also reportedly purchased 15 Super Frelon helicopters and approximately 2,000 anti-tank missile from France.³³ This deal was funded by Saudi Arabia.

Since the break up of Egypt-Soviet relationship in 1976, Syria remains the only country in the Middle East which is of great importance to the Soviet Union. Notwithstanding the arms sales, Syria also provide the USSR with the naval and air base facilities from where the Russian can maintain their East Mediterranean presence and as well as check any growing western presence in the littoral. It was the importance of the East Mediterranean presence which led the Soviet Union to give more military aid to Syria and this mutuality of interest and threat

31 See Roger F. Pagan, "The Soviet Syrian Military Aid Relationship", in Anne Sinai and Allen Pollack, eds, The Syrian Arab Republic (New York, 1976), p. 100.

32 New York Times, 18 November 1975.

33 For details see, Washington Post, 17 October 1975.

perception led to the signing of the peace treaty between these two countries in 1980.

Like Iraq, Syria has also shown a slight trend to diversify its source of arms purchase whenever Arab oil funds were made available. France, F. R. Germany, Italy and Switzerland have entered the Syrian arms market since 1975. Syria has purchased the Euromissile HOT and MILAN systems ostensibly from France, It also purchased two US transport planes in 1976. Despite these Western purchases, the bulk of the sophisticated equipment comes from the Soviet Union. By 1979 Syria had received 1000 MILAN anti-tank missiles from France and had on order 50 SA-342K Gazelle helicopters and 40 Super Frelon Helicopters. From the Soviet Union it received 12 MIG-25 Foxbat fighter interceptors, 15 MIU-27, 3 SU-22 Fitter C fighter bomber, 400 SAMs consisting of 200 SA-8 Grecko and 200 SA-9 Gaskin missiles, and 100 T-72 main battle tanks - the latest and best tank out of the Soviet inventory.

The Syrians, knowing the limited capability of their airforce, have been placing more stress on the ground-based air defences consisting of a variety of SAMs. At present there are about four Soviet made SAM-5 missile batteries fully operational in Syria. At least 24 of these 150-mile range anti-aircraft

34 See chart in SIPRI Yearbook 1980, register of the arms trade with industrialized and third world countries, 1979, p. 158.

missiles are placed in sites outside Damascus and Homs. An estimated 500 Soviet air defence personnel are working on these sites. These missile sites are supported by a self-contained fire coordination unit and some of the latest Soviet manufactured radars installation³⁵ - each includes '6 height-finders, 2 backdrops, a 'spoonrest' and a 'tall-king' which is used to identify and lock on an enemy aircraft. The S.M-5, having a ceiling of 100,000 feet, was brought in response to the destruction of S.M-6 caused by superiority of Israeli aircraft. The Syrian ground forces on the other hand performed well against the Israeli troops. In June 1982 they wiped out an Israeli armoured unit near Machaye and captured 5 M-60 tank - one of which was reportedly even sent to Russia to be analysed by Soviet Armour specialist.

Soviet military advisers and Syrian airforce personnel have completed a sophisticated anti-aircraft missile system which stretches from Latakia to Deraa on the Jordanian border. This is the most complex and modern air defence system brought into the Middle East by the Soviet Union. The Russians have increased their presence and military commitment to Syria. Soviet technicians have also entered Lebanon in the past to calibrate Syrian S.Ms.³⁶ There are approximately 3000 Soviet military advisers and families training the Syrian army, but

35 Rovert Fisk, "Syrians Instal 100 Mile Missiles",
Time (London), 7 March 1983.

36 Times (London), 13 May 1983.

there are no confirmed reports of Soviet combat troops in Syria. Reportedly the Soviet Union is sending the new SS-21 missiles to Syria.³⁷ This has a range of 120 miles, about 50 kilometre more than that of the FROG, and is more accurate. Thus, it would enable Syria to hit Israeli targets as far away as the Mediterranean port of Haifa. Though capable of carrying a nuclear warhead, the russians will send probably only the missiles fitted with conventional warheads.

Soviet-Syrian relationship has been summed up by the Syrian Minister for Information, Iskander Ahmad Iskander, who says that "we have had good relations with the Soviets since 1955. It is no secret that we have had Soviet experts here from Euphrates Dam to agricultural projects to our army battalions. Our friendship reached its peak with the signing of the treaty of friendship the year before last (1981)",³⁸ Syrians and russians find it mutually advantageous to object to Reagan peace proposals. The Syrians want the Golan Heights back and considers the Israeli-Lebanon patrolling of their borders a security risk. Thus they want Israel to be removed first from Lebanon. The Soviets think that the longer the Syrians keep on rejecting the American sponsored withdrawal plan, the more desperate the Americans will become to make concessions to Syria.

³⁷ See Saudi Gazette (Riyadh), 9 October 1983.

³⁸ Interview in an article published in Times (London), 8 March 1983.

The period after the October war, thus, has qualitatively changed the patterns of dependency. This has been affected due to two factors. The one is the new surplus oil money which enabled the oil producing states to overcome the earlier economic constraints and to shop for arms in alternative sources. The flow of arms was also eased due to the need for recycling of petro-dollars. The second factor is the interaction of the new Cold War rivalry and more direct involvement, both political and military, of the Super Powers in the regional affairs. In this case the pattern of dependency is not the same as before. Earlier, the regional powers depended more on the Great Powers. Now due to newly emerging international strategic environment, the Super Powers have also started depending upon these regional partners. In such a case, though the petro-dollars might reduce some constraints, on arms purchase, the enhanced regional conflict would increase the dependency of regional powers and Super Powers, thus posing greater threat to peace and security of the region.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

In these days of interdependence no state can be totally autonomous. Dependency has, therefore, become an acceptable norm in international relations. In these days terms like North-South dialogue and New International Economic Order are very legitimate. This dependency is mutual, and though small powers are more dependent than others the Great Powers are also not fully independent. The oil dependency of the West upon the Gulf states is an illustration of this phenomenon.

Dependency can be economic, political and military and its nature is determined by the donor-recipient relationship. Since this relationship is not altruistic, the donor as well as the recipient, enjoy some leverage vis-a-vis the other. This relationship is sharply focused in military relationships. Arms transfer becomes a touch-stone of these dependency models.

Three main models of dependency emerge in international relations, depending upon the options available to the potential donors and the recipients. They are unipolar if there is one donor, bipolar if there are two donors and multipolar if there are more than two sources. In the first model the recipient has little option. The options increase in the bipolar model. But this model has its major limitation, that the recipients as well as the donors find it difficult to steer clear of the Cold War rivalries inbuilt in the bipolar system of today. The recipient has more

options in a multipolar system in the sense that, if it so wishes, it can bargain with its donors, despite the earlier framework of unipolar or bipolar models, for greater autonomy. All these models can be studied when one analyses the donor-recipient relationship between the Great Powers and the countries of West Asia.

In the last four decades the Arabs and the Israelis have fought four major wars and innumerable skirmishes in which they have depended to a large extent on the political, economic and military help provided by Great Powers. The desire and effort on the part of the regional powers to enhance their military capability by acquiring more arms has been a crucial variable in their relationship with Great Powers. Over the years, relationship between Great Powers and regional powers has undergone major variations. From the Second World War to 1955 both the conflicting parties were dependent upon the West for arms, and thus, were under a unipolar dependency. From 1955 to 1975 this dependency became bipolar when some of the confrontation states, especially Israel, was supplied arms by the West. On the other hand Russia supplied arms to Syria, Libya, Iraq and Egypt. The seventies, especially from 1975 onwards, saw the new model of multipolar dependency influencing the arms transfer in the region, where due to oil money the states seeking to acquire arms could ignore the bipolar system and seek arms from alternative sources like France. Thus, the recipients were, economically, in an advantageous position which enabled them to diversify their military sources and thus reduce their dependency on the traditional donor state.

During the phase of unipolar dependency the Arabs were dependent upon the West for arms because they had a colonial heritage and the military links with their ex-colonial powers had remained unchanged. Most of the Arab armies were created by British or French during their colonial rule. Consequently these local armies which had been trained and equipped by these European powers, continued to depend upon their traditional donors. Britain was the most dominant of the donor states, since it had followed an active West Asian policy and wanted to maintain an influence in this area. The transfer of arms to the Arabs became an instrument of gaining influence. Another factor which contributed to the Arab dependence upon the West was the approach taken by the Soviets, especially during the Stalin period, which did not offer any option even to those Arab States which wanted to break this unipolar monopoly.

Israel was not constrained by any of these factors. Its dependence upon the West for its arms supplies and security was a more compact issue. The Israelis had access to the West due to the political and domestic links with the donor country itself. Since the USA, France and Britain as well as the USSR had been very much active in creating the state of Israel for their own reasons, its future security was also treated as a part of their responsibility, though the Zionist lobby in the respective donor countries did play an effective role to mobilize support and commitment for Israel. During the period of 1948-50 Israel enjoyed the tacit support of the Soviet Union which also supplied it with ex-German arms through Czechoslovakia.

In contrast to Israel and the Zionist movement, the Arab rulers' enforced dependence upon the ex-colonial powers, and the hatred of the masses towards these powers, influenced not only the extent of the military capability of these countries but also the nature of their dependency. This pattern favoured the Jews rather than the Arabs, as was revealed in the First Arab-Israeli War of 1948-49. This pattern was further consolidated by the tripartite agreement on regional arms control as agreed upon between the British, French and the United States of America in 1950.

The earlier pattern of unipolar dependency suffered a serious challenge since 1955, when it was replaced by bipolar dependency. The pattern of bipolar dependency was unbuilt in the East-West competition, and began to influence the region during the Khrushchev period when the USSR started looking beneficently upon 'progressive' Arab regimes. The Arms aid policy of the donors began to be directly affected by the Cold War syndrome. With the intensification of the Cold War and the enhanced strategic importance of the region these Super Powers began making greater use of arms aid as an instrument of diplomacy.

The pattern of unipolar dependency was broken in 1955 when Egypt and Syria began to acquire modern arms from the Soviet Bloc. This basic change coincided not only with the intensification of the Cold War rivalry on the region but also of the Arab-Israeli dispute. Israel, during this period, was supported by British and France which sought to build it as a counterweight to the rising tide of Arab nationalism as led by President Gamal Abdel Nasser. Iraq and Jordan maintained their ties with Britain during this period. United States on the other did little

directly to militarize Israel. The US arms reached Israel through Third Party.

The Egyptian arms deal with the Eastern Bloc caused concern among the Israeli military elite. The Americans were also displeased and withdrew their financial support for the Aswan Dam. That led Nasser to nationalize the Suez Canal Company, which infuriated the British and the French and prepared the ground for the French, British and Israeli collusion to attack Egypt in 1956. The Americans resented the closeness of leftist regimes like Nasser's with the Soviet Union and therefore followed the British and aligned firmly with the traditional forces in the Arab world. Iraq, meanwhile, after the 1958 revolution had turned towards the USSR for its military needs.

The advent of the early sixties brought about another change in the dependency of the regional powers. Whereas Egypt, Syria and Iraq continued to depend upon USSR, Israel changed its dependency gradually from the European countries to the USA. The growing importance of the Eastern Mediterranean because of the Super Power naval rivalry based upon the newly developed Far East Suez, the change in French thinking during and after de Gaulle, and the rivalry between Greece and Turkey over Cyprus projected Israel as the 'dependable' Western ally in the Eastern Mediterranean and the West Asian region. The United States began to replace France and Britain as the major supplier of arms to Israel. One can even trace the roots of the

present strategic consensus between the USA and Israel to that period.

During that period the Super Power rivalry got linked up not only with the local rivalries among the Arabs themselves but also with the Arab-Israeli rivalry. Jordan under King Hussein, hardpressed by the growing threat from the Palestinian nationalist movement to his own regime, became more dependent on the West. This period witnessed a greater dependency of the recipient vis-a-vis the donor. The pattern of dependency established in the early sixties remained more or less constant even after the coming into power of Sadat in Egypt. Sadat wanted to disengage Egypt from the Arab-Israeli conflict and hence made overtures to the Israelis and the Americans, and it was as a gesture of his willingness to realign his policies, that he expelled the Soviet technicians from Egypt in 1972. After the failure of Sadat's military option - reconquest of the lost territory by use of force in October 1973 - Egypt had no option under Sadat's leadership except to go to the negotiating table and agree to the conditions laid down by Israel and the USA. The newly found 'help' from America and the territorial benefits in Sinai, prompted Sadat to depend more upon the West and to break his ties with the USSR. It led Sadat to abrogate the Friendship Treaty signed with the Soviets in 1971.

The advent of the seventies saw the new importance given to oil, especially after the oil-price hike of 1973, followed by the energy crisis. Western countries, especially France, have come to depend heavily upon the Arab oil for their economic survival. On the

other hand, the oil wealth acquired by the Arabs in recent years has attracted the European countries to compete with each other for an arms market in this region, so that they could siphon off some of the petrodollars. While the British and the West German presence is on a comparatively small scale, France helped to break the barriers of the bipolar system by its willingness to sell sophisticated arms irrespective of the ideological orientation of the state concerned. This approach helped France to sell arms to several countries including Libya, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria etc.

This availability of arms against cash gave a new direction to the dependency model by adding the concept of diversifying the source of arms supply. The Arabs benefitted by this as they had new options now, which decreased their dependency. The economic importance of these oil-rich markets to France and Britain is so great that sometimes it forces them to change policy decisions. The French embargo on Israel and the British embargo on South Africa have raised serious questions in the political fields about the rationale of losing such lucrative markets. The deals concluded by Britain in late sixties with the oil-rich underdeveloped countries like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Libya bear witness to their economic importance.

By 1976 Egypt under Sadat had become an anti-Soviet power, and even though Hosni Mubarak, the present President, is now seeking to correct this imbalance, the dependency of Egypt on the West is complete. Syria is the only country which remains dependent upon the Soviet Union, and increasingly so now since it faces isolation

from other Arab states and has to singlehandedly face the combined attacks of the USA and Israel, as seen from the recent events in Lebanon.

The dependency patterns are sought to be legitimized by donors and recipients by putting forward several arguments. In the context of the Cold War rivalry it is done by forming alliance partnerships. Since the fifties, America has tried successfully to bring several regional powers into defence pacts i.e. the Baghdad Pact, CENTO and NATO so as to form a defensive line across the southern perimeter of the Soviet Union to counter any military threats from the north and also to utilize the regional allies in checking the spread of Soviet influence in the region. In this, Saudi Arabia and Israel played an important role as they were both supported fully by the United States in order to play a satellite role. This concept of security understanding between Saudi Arabia and Israel, vis-a-vis the United States, grew more in intensity after the fall of the Shah of Iran in 1979, and the USA tried to project these states as the new policemen of the West Asian region to safeguard the American interests in the region, especially in the Mediterranean and the Gulf.

National security was also used as a pretext for legitimizing the 'dependency'. Israel utilized the Arab threat, in the context of the Arab-Israeli rivalry, to gain support of the United States, which supplied it with huge amounts of sophisticated equipment in order to ensure Israel's security. Egypt, Iraq and Syria, till 1973, were, in the same context, supplied heavily with military equipment from the Soviet Union, though after 1979 Syria remained the only

pro-Soviet state left to face the wrath of the Israelis on one hand and the pro-western Arab states on the other. This has legitimized its need for enhanced supplies of military equipment from the USSR, and consequently its enhanced dependency.

Apart from the Cold war rivalry and the Arab-Israeli conflict, regime security, threat from insurgency and possible designs of the neighbours have been advocated as arguments to legitimize this dependency. Aid to the Gulf states is justified as helping the regime to survive. Help to Oman was justified in the context of insurgency in Dhofar. For a long time, Saudi dependency on the USA was rationalized as a means to protect Saudi Arabia from the so-called radical regimes in South Yemen and Iraq. Iraq justified its dependency on the USSR for a long time on the basis of Iraq-Iran conflict.

As mentioned in the beginning of the chapter the dependency model is not always a one-way model. It is based upon an interaction of the donor and the recipient. In several cases it does happen that the recipient too has leverages which it can use to pressurize the donor. Thus, the dependency models have thrown up some interesting cases of small power diplomacy.

In the case of alliance partnership, the regional powers were very much needed by the Super powers to check the 'other Power'. Thus, when the regional powers demanded arms, even though sometimes in such quantities and quality which they were not able to absorb, the Super Powers had to comply for they could not dare to refuse due to the fear of losing a valuable ally. Iran under the Shah, Israel and Syria today etc. are good examples of countries which

benefitted from this phenomenon. In the Cold War competition, the threat by regional powers to change alliance partners, unless conditions are fulfilled, does give an enormous leverage to the recipient vis-a-vis the donor. The policies of Egypt since 1976 and of Somalia and Ethiopia since 1977 illustrated the nature of small power diplomacy in such cases.

Another important leverage is the threat to diversify its sources. Since the oil boom, the Arab states have not been totally dependent upon the mercy of the East or the West, as they had been earlier, for the supply of military aid. The new found oil wealth has enabled them to pick and choose. No longer dependent upon aid, they can go to any country to buy whatever equipment they choose. The threat of diversification, and the fear of losing the arms market in these oil-rich states does give the recipient an adequate leverage over the donor, in which the latter mostly compromises. Thus, the Arab states have been able to buy even from reluctant donors. The case of Saudi Arabia illustrates this point. One reason it obtained F-15 from the USA was its threat to finance the research and development of Mirage-4000 in France and to acquire it. The United States, despite the pressure from the Israeli lobby, had no option but to sell advance version of F-15 to Saudi Arabia.

In the race to acquire arms, the recipient country may make a sudden change in the source of its supply. This change may be due to the regional shift in the alliances or change of the threat perception or due to the negative response from a donor country. Many such changes have taken place eg. Somalia's shift from USSR to USA, Ethiopia's shift from USA to USSR and lately Egypt's shift

from USSR to the United States. These moves, though attractive from the short-term point of view, might not always be beneficial to a country in the long run. The politico-military dependency of the regional powers upon Great Powers or Super Powers still persists; the latest line-up being that while Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Iraq and Saudi Arabia are dependent upon the West. Only Syria and Libya to some extent, remain totally dependent upon the Eastern Bloc.

Till the tension prevails in this region, one Great Power might be replaced by another as a donor to a recipient state or group of states. But it will not solve the problem of regional security. The oil boom in the seventies, by introducing the multipolar model and by enhancing the bargaining power of the recipient, had reduced the dependency of the recipient. But those gains have been frittered away. The oil boom has passed and most of the oil producing states have become more dependent upon the West than before. Simultaneously, the Super Power involvement in the region has increased. The net result has been that today, despite the options of the multipolar model, the regional powers are squeezed more tightly into the bipolar model. That combined with the increased intensity of the new Cold War and the Super Power rivalry makes the region a highly explosive powder keg. Only a determined search for greater autonomy by the recipients vis-a-vis the donors and a determined drive towards conflict resolution at the regional level can help to reduce the tension and enhance the security of the region.

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