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Leader's Political Ideology and Decision-Making Process: Nasser as Case Study

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ARTICLE INFORMATION

ABSTRACT

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This article explores the role of the political ideology on shaping the decision-making process in Egypt, and how the foreign policy orientation was formulated and affected by the leader's political ideology and beliefs. The article focuses on Gamal Abd El-Nasser as case study, and how during his presidency he dealt with challenges and obstacles, while shedding lights on his socialization, political background, affiliations, beliefs, perceptions, and his political discourse. In addition to concentrating on the reshaping of the Egyptians mindset and perception towards the kingdom.

I. Introduction

Ideology is one of the most used concepts in the study of international and domestic politics, as it can affect leaders' foreign policies by affecting their perceptions of the threats. Mark L. Haas (2005) concluded in his book "The Ideological Origins of Great Power Politics, 1789-1989" that the greater the ideological differences between decision-makers in different states, the more they are going to see one another as enemies and substantial dangers to their domestic and international power. Conversely, the greater the ideological similarities, the higher the probability they will see one another as supporters to their domestic and international interests.

Another example is from the American invasion to Iraq under George W. Bush's administration in 2003. According to Mark L. Haas in his book "The Clash of Ideologies: Middle Eastern Politics and American Security" (2012), Bush perceived the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks by al Qaeda was because of their profound ideological differences with the United States. Thus, these perceptions led Bush to make regime change in Iraq as a central component of his foreign policies. To Bush, increased liberalization in the Middle East would significantly improve America's security. As a result, Bush explained in one of his speeches that "America's vital interests and our deepest beliefs are now one. So, it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world" (13).

Understanding the decisions that took place in a country domestically and internationally requiring an understanding of the ideology of the leader and how he perceives the events that happening around him. The focus of this paper is going to be on the Egyptian President Gamal Abd El-Nasser, and how the ideology of Nasser affected the decision-making inside and outside Egypt, how the decision of adopting Socialism was made, as well as analyzing the application of his circles of interests, the Arab circle, the African circle, and the Islamic circle (Abdel Nasser 1955).

The paper seeks to provide an answer to a number of questions; what were the events that affected Nasser's personality? How did Nasser reshape the masses mindset after the reconstruction of the republic? What were the consequences of the Suez Canal Crisis? What were the consequences of 1967 defeat? What was the orientation of the Egyptian foreign policy under Nasser?

The overarching central question that the study attempts to answer is as follows: to what extent the political ideology of the leader could affect the decision-making process internally and internationally? This will be studied within the framework of the following hypothesis: the political ideology of Nasser does have an effect on the decision-making process internally and internationally.

II. Theoretical Framework

The study of beliefs and perceptions of political leaders are very essential in understanding of decision-making because every individual filter everything around him through his beliefs, and based on these beliefs he takes decisions and acts accordingly (Tukker 2018). This study is going to adopt the concept of Operational Code in the study of international relations. The operational code refers to a set of lenses that filter how decision-makers

perceive, process, and react to situations including external actors, such as countries (Walker and Schafer 2018).

The operational code theory is developed by Alexander George (1967) and originated from "A Study of Bolshevism" by Nathan Leites. In his book, Leites concentrated on the relation between elite belief systems and their decision-making. The elite belief systems are containing set of beliefs about fundamental historical issues and core questions on politics, and these beliefs gives hints, norms and guidelines that affect a choice of action made by the decision-maker. George added to Leites work a useful link to psychodynamic interpretations of the role of belief systems in an individual's behavior under certain circumstances (George 1967).

III. Conceptual Approach

The research paper is based on three main concepts which are; Ideology, Nationalism, and Identity.

i. Ideology:

According to Erikson and Tedin, they have identified Ideology in their book "American Public Opinion" as "set of beliefs about the proper order of society and how it can be achieved" (2014, 64). Another definition of ideology according to Denzau and North in their book "Shared Mental Models: Ideologies and Institutions" is "the shared framework of mental models that groups of individuals possess that provide both an interpretation of the environment and a prescription as to how that environment should be structured" (1994, 3). Jan Magnus Jansson defined ideology as "any set of ideas or opinions on which an individual or group may base, or profess to base, his or their political activity, and which, taken together, form in some sense a unitary whole" (1959, 1).

ii. Nationalism:

According to Ernest Gellner in his book "Nations and Nationalism", Nationalism is "a theory of political legitimacy, which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones, and in particular, that ethnic boundaries within a given state...should not separate the power holders from the rest" (1983, 1). In the book "Nationalism" by Elie Kedourie, she defined Nationalism as "Nationalism is a doctrine invented in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It pretends to supply the criterion for the determination of the unit of population proper to enjoy a government exclusively of its own, for the legitimate exercise of power in the state and for the right organization of a society of states. Briefly, the doctrine holds that humanity is naturally divided into nations, that nations are known by certain characteristics which can be ascertained, and that the only legitimate type of government is national self-government" (1993, 9). According to Montserrat Guibernau, he defined Nationalism in his book "Nationalisms: The Nation-State and Nationalism in the Twentieth Century" is "The sentiment of belonging to a community whose members identify with a set of symbols, beliefs and ways of life and have the will to decide upon their common political destiny" (2015, 262).

iii. Identity:

According to Hogg and Abrams in their book “Social Identifications” Identity is “people’s concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others” (1988, 2). Francis Deng defined identity in his book “War of Visions” as “Identity is used in this book to describe the way individuals and groups define themselves and are defined by others on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, language, and culture” (1995, 1). Jenkins in his book “Social Identity” has identified Identity as “refers to the ways in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectivities” (1996, 4).

IV. Egypt Before the Republic: A General Overview

Egypt during the interwar period was characterized by a real desire to get independence from British occupation. The 1922 British declaration of Egypt’s independence may have eliminated the protectorate, but it did not eliminate the continued control of Britain over Egypt’s defense and military, keeping British bases as it is, controlling the Suez Canal, as well as protection of foreign interests in Egypt and Sudan, among other forms of colonial interference (Derfel 2003). This left Egypt in a constant struggle, and in 1936, the British negotiated the 1922 declaration and the result was the Anglo-Egyptian treaty that once again recognized Egypt’s independence but also recognized the British military presence in the Suez Canal and reasserted Britain’s right to defend Egypt. What made this treaty different from 1922 declaration is that it was signed by the elected Wafdist government, which was dominating the political scene in Egypt since 1923 (Arif 2017). Many years later, Nasser revealed that 1936 was the year he lost faith in the nationalist elite (Alexander 2004).

The Egyptian Government was not able to secure the independence from Britain made the situation worse and increased the unrest within the country and fueled anti-Western resentment. King Farouk also failed to gain support from the people and continued to be involved in many scandalous personal behaviors and his association with Egypt’s shameful defeat in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. To add to this, the growing gap between rich and poor, as well as declining wages and increases in the cost of basic goods, in addition to the massive inequality in land distribution. All of these reasons worked to make people stand away from the ruling elite (Cleveland and Bunton 2009).

The Anglo–Egyptian Treaty allowed Britain to have great influence over Egyptian affairs; it also gave the Wafdist government greater control over the Egyptian military. An outcome of this development was the liberalization of the military’s admissions policy and the consequent recruitment of Egyptian youths from all socioeconomic backgrounds to the army corps. As a result of the new policy, the circle of Nasser’s military group that made a popular support coup against the monarchy in July 1952, were from low and middle-class backgrounds (Cleveland and Bunton 2009).

Nasser and a group of 300 Egyptian officers came together and organized a secret movement called “The Free Officers” with a goal of restoring the honor of the army and

liberating Egypt. The Free Officers were disappointed from Western version of democracy and refused to give the fate of Egypt to the hands of voters once again. Although lacking a clear ideology, they were driven by their conviction that Egypt's interest rested on eliminating all pillars of the power triangle: the Wafd, the King and the British (Goldschmidt 2004).

When they realized that the Government started to gather information about their plan, they chose the evening of 22 July 1952 to take control of the main military bases and the radio networks, announcing the success of the popular support coup, and vowing to rule for the interests of no one but the Egyptian people (Arif 2017). General Muhammad Naguib had been treated as a front to give legitimacy to the movement through his reputation as a senior officer. After the event, he was elected the first President of the Republic (Al-Sayyid 1985). The following years were marked by a state of uncertainty, with the Free Officers divided over the future of Egypt's form of government. In 1956, Nasser emerged as the leader of the new revolutionary regime. In the course of the next decade, he would become "the embodiment of what the Arab world wanted to be: assertive, independent, and engaged in the construction of a new society freed of the imperial past and oriented toward a bright Arab future" (Arif 2017, 12).

V. The Political Ideology of Nasser

Gamal Abdel Nasser was born in Januray 15, 1918, at 18 Qanawat Street in the popular Bakos district in Alexandria. Gamal Abdel Nasser was the eldest son of Abdel Nasser Hussein, who was born in 1888, in the village of Bani Mur in Upper Egypt, in his family of peasants. Nasser's father, worked at a small local post office, he earned very little amount of money from his work, but being the postmaster gave him some respect. Fahima, Nasser's mother, came from Upper Egypt, and her father Mohammed Hammad lived in Alexandria and had good living conditions (Abdel Nasser 2022). When Nasser was two years old, his uncle Khalil Hussein was arrested by the British authorities for organizing demonstrations. Nasser's father feared that he would get affected by his brother's actions and might lose his work and decided that no one of his family would get involved in politics. When Nasser was six years, his family moved to another small village near Cairo called "Khatatba". At that time, he had two younger brothers, and it was his first time to leave his village. He was comfortable in the new village because of its wide-open spaces and the fresh and clean air. He went to the only kindergarten in the village, and only the children of government employees could join. When Nasser was eight and finished the kindergarten course, his parents decided to send him to Cairo to continue his education at his uncle Khalil's home, who was out of prison and living in Cairo. It was the first time for Nasser to live in a city, and he like the new environment. Due to his uncle's work conditions, his uncle often worked to late times, and Nasser had no choice except looking after himself, and this made him so independent and enjoyed to keep secrets. Nasser's mother died when he was nine years. Nasser was much closer to his mother than his father, and after his mother's death, he asked his father if he could live with his mother's parents in Alexandria and his father agreed (Witte 2004).

Nasser attended the Attarene primary school in Alexandria for the next three years, but because he did not do well in his study, his father sent him back to Cairo. By this time, Nasser's father had remarried, and Nasser had several half-siblings that he did not meet them before. When Nasser visited his grandparents in Alexandria that summer, he saw a

protest against the British, and because he was influenced by his uncle's thoughts, he joined the protest and ended up in jail with other protestors, "I was crossing Al-Manshiya Square in Alexandria when I found a clash between a demonstration of some students and police forces, I did not hesitate to state my position. Without knowing anything about the reason they were demonstrating for, I immediately joined. It was unquestionable. I saw members of the masses clashing with the authority, as I took my stand without hesitation on the anti-authority side" (nasseryouthmovement 2022). As a result, his father sent him to another school in Helwan. After two years, Nasser returned to Alexandria. In 1934, when Nasser was sixteen, his father moved to a post office in Cairo, and summoned Nasser to Cairo again. His relation with his father, stepmother, and half-siblings was not good, thus, he began to spend more time away from home. Nasser joined Al-Nahda school in Cairo, and it was known for organizing student demonstrations and Nasser became so involved in politics. In the period of 1934-1935, Nasser was the chairman of a committee of Cairo secondary school students interested in Egyptian political reforms, and during this period, he emerged as a leader and organized three days of protest with other schools and university students. As a result, the British police opened fire on the protestors and Nasser was wounded in his forehead. Nasser did not go to the hospital because he was afraid that he might get arrested, and the wound left a permanent scar. After that, the newspaper mentioned the demonstrations and Nasser by his name (Krasno and Lapidés 2015).

Nasser also joined the Young Egypt Party (Misr al Fatat) and it was the party which organized the protest he found in Alexandria before. Nasser started to organize demonstration in his school (Al-Nahda) and in other areas. However, the party was more interested in gaining profit than ideals, and after few months he had quit Young Egypt (Witte 2004). After getting graduated from Al-Nahda, Nasser joined Fuad I university to study law because he wanted to understand the rules that kept people poor and unhappy in order to change these laws, but many people studied law and could not find jobs, and after few months Nasser left the university. Then, Nasser tried to join the Military Academy but he was refused because his family was poor and his father was a government employee (Krasno and Lapidés 2015). Then, in 1936 the Anglo-Egyptian treaty was made and the Egyptian military started to act independently after being an arm of British occupation. As a result, Nasser was able to enter the Military Academy in March 1937 as an officer, and there he found his home and his leadership talents and charisma were recognized. His graduation from the academy coincided with the beginning of the Second World War (Gordon 2006)

Nasser was born in an era of Egypt where the Egyptians were struggling with poverty and full of despair. Growing up in an environment of flourishing Egyptian nationalism, Nasser became a believer in the necessity of dignity in Egypt's national affairs. He believed that restoring the Egyptian dignity will not happen without gaining complete and unconstrained Egyptian independence. This belief became his guiding light all through his life. A decade later, the British occupation to Egypt, along with the defeat of the Arab by Israeli army in 1948, all worked together to shape Nasser's perception that the Arab unity was the only way to restore the dignity of its people. According to Nasser's perception, the Egyptian and the Arab nationalist had to coexist, he saw Egypt as the heart of the Arab countries and as a member of the greater Arab entity. Despite Nasser's commitment to the Arab nationalism, he was identified first as an Egyptian. He was asked whether he considered himself more as Egyptian of Arab, and he replied: "I am Egyptian.

And I feel Arab because I am deeply affected by the fortunes and misfortunes of the Arabs, wherever they may occur". Nasser was proud of Egypt's distinctiveness and of its historical role as the source of civilization and human knowledge. He believed also that the spirit of Egypt was Arab, and refused the concept that considered Egypt as Mediterranean or western character (Arif 2017, 16).

Beyond Nasser's Egyptian and Arab nationalism, the following years of the revolution lacked an ideological commitment. Steven Cook mentioned in his book "The Struggle for Egypt: From Nasser to Tahrir Square" (2012) that the main motives that drove the Free Officers to intervene were anger, shame, and fear of arrest that led them to put tanks and troops on the streets on 23 July, but not for the sake of promoting a specific ideology. Despite the absence of an action framework, the free officers were guided by six principles that were created in 1951 by them and remained loyal to it, these were; the elimination of the British occupation and its Egyptian supporters, the elimination of feudalism, ending the domination of capitalism over the political power, the establishment of social equality, the establishment of a strong popular army, and the development of a healthy democratic life (Goldschmidt 2004). Therefore, article 1 of the constitution of the National Union described Egypt as a socialist, democratic, co-operative society, free of all social and political exploitation (Gordon 2006). Until the late 1950s, the regime was adopting capitalism to promote economic development, but after 1961, the official ideology of the republic was socialism, which considered as a middle solution between the extremes of communism and marxism (Crabbs 1975).

Nasser's identifications of the three circles of influence in his book "The Philosophy of the Revolution" (1954). He arranged them according to their importance to the Egyptian policy making; these were the Arab circle, the African circle and the Islamic circle. In his book, he declared that the Egyptian people cannot ignore that there is an Arab circle surrounding them and that this circle is as much a part of them as they are a part of it. Neither can they ignore that there is a continent of Africa in which fate has placed them and which is destined to witness a terrible struggle on its future. According to Nasser's perception, Egypt's geographical location and historical significance were not produced by coincidence, and Egypt could not run away from its role in the construction of the future of humanity.

VI. Decision-Making under Nasser

As events went out of control in the early 1950s, and the intellectuals condemned the "Country of Failure", many people began to call for a "Just Tyrant" to straighten out the mess (Gordon 1992). As a result, on 23 July, a message from a new General Command informed the Egyptians about the beginning of a new era guided by democratic principles. During the following days, the Free Officers appointed a civilian Prime Minister Ali Maher, who was recognized by his honesty, and on 26 July, the Officers exiled king Farouk without holding trial. The Free Officers turned to General Muhammad Naguib as their official front man because he was in a high rank comparing to them and because of his advanced years of experience (Mansour 2022). In September, the Officers appointed Naguib instead of Ali Maher as Egypt's Prime Minister and began measurements of land reform that land owners had opposed because the measure limited landholding to 200 feddans (Gordon 2006).

After the dismissal of Naguib, Gamal Abd El-Nasser emerged to the public as the real leader of the revolution and became the Prime Minister. Nasser appeared in the press as the pyramid builder and “Armor-Shield Against Reactionary Terror” and people began to approach him whenever they saw him to greet him or to share personal complaints, especially after the incident of “El-Manshiya Square” in Alexandria and his words to live and die for his country: “I am Gamal Abd al-Nasser, of you and for you ... I will live until I die for your sake, on behalf of you and on behalf of your freedom and your honor” Then came the phrase that is most remembered: “If Gamal Abd al-Nasser should die, I will not die – for all of you are Gamal Abd al-Nasser – Egypt’s well-being is linked not to Gamal Abd al-Nasser but to you and your struggle” (Gordon 2006, page 44).

VII. The Effect of Nasser’s Ideology Domestically

i. The Construction of the Egyptian Ideology

The popular supported coup of July was in need for a historical anchor to link the present with the nation’s past, but the fact that Egypt was under foreign rule since the pharaohs era made this a difficult task. In order to overcome this, Egypt’s past had to be ignored and the nation’s history had to be rewritten. Nasser’s regime chose Arabism to be established as the most important element of the Egyptian identity (Ghali 1978). Historical reinterpretation has to exist to unify the Egyptian and the Arab past in order to defend the new Pan-Arabism orientation of the regime. The Nasserite historian had to focus on some historical periods and deemphasize other periods according to the regime’s ideological limits (Crabbs 1975). Two relevant areas are important to focus on in examining the nation-building process in Nasser’s era; the classroom and the cinema (Arif 2017).

ii. School Curriculum

Textbooks have the ability to transfer cultural norms and values in a systematic way. Textbooks do not only deliver facts, they also reflect profound political, economic, and cultural relations and histories. Thus, controlling schools’ curricula was very important to Nasser’s regime “... educational curricula must be reconsidered according to the principles of the revolution” –(Egypt’s National Charter, 1962). Mona Arif in her article “History Writing and Nation-Building in Nasser” (2017), argued that year nine textbooks in schools demonstrated the policies of the regime itself. For instance, the phrase “Liberation Movements” was repeated 184 times, the phrase “Political Leaders” was presented fifteen times as secondary factor to the role of the people in national liberation movements, “Arab Nationalism” was mentioned 712 times. In order to clarify more on how history was rewritten at that time, Mona Arif focused on the works of Hamed Ammar, professor of Educational Sociology and Ahmed Fouad Al-Ahwani, professor of Philosophy and supervisor in the Ministry of Education during Nasser’s era. Ammar argues in his studies in 1964 that foreign rulers left no space for the people’s social history to be written. He said that the Arab human was marginalized from labor, from production, and from the organization of his existence, and that the revolution came and bring the Arab human back

to life. Ammar was speaking about the Egyptians when he mentioned the word “Arab human”. Ammar also described the era before the revolution as nothing other than corruption, feudalism and injustice, and the revolution came and erased all of that (Arif 2017; Folmar 2020)

Al-Ahwani's book manifested the regime's effort to unify the Egyptian and the Arab past in order to give legitimacy to the state's ideology of Pan-Arabism. Al-Ahwani in his book countered the territorialist argument that Egyptian are not Arabs, said that Arabs are those who are content to be called Arabs. Al-Ahwani focused on the superiority of the Arabic language over other languages because it is the language of the Quran and because it has survived for many centuries of attacks, whereas languages such as Latin and Ancient Greek did not survive. He also aimed at establishing the Arabization of the Islamic past by substitute “Islam” with “Arab Nationalism”. For instance, he said that Arabs prevailed over the Persians and the Romans in the Seventh century because of the strength of Arabism and the values of freedom, equality, justice and peace. He compared Arab conquests to Turkish ones, saying that the Arab wanted to spread peace, while the Turkish were violent and oppressive. Thus, the Islamic past became part of the Arab history (Arif 2017; Folmar 2020).

iii. The Film Industry

Nasser's regime paid attention to the film industry, despite the fact that most of the Egyptians at that time could not access to the television and the cinema. The regime used the cinema as an influential tool to reinterpret the history of Egypt. The July regime introduced a cinema that is involved in addressing the political problems instead of “neo-colonial” cinema that avoided the social and political problems of the Egyptians. Thus, the cinema became part of the nation-building process as it was used to form a new ideology and to help in transforming the people from being traditional subjects to become active citizens. To achieve this goal, the regime nationalized the cinema and took complete control over the film industry. To spread the regime's ideology, the cinema was engaged in the rewriting of history through two ways; first, to produce political films that criticized the regime before the 1952 and to demonstrate how the people lived a miserable life, second, to produce historical films that Arabized the Islamic past and to create a sense of pride in the Arab people. For instance, the political film “Rodda Qalbi” produced in 1957; in which it celebrated the Egyptian revolution and condemned the former regime. Another example is “Al-Nasser Salahuddin” by Yusuf Chahine, produced in 1963; the film explained the war between the Kurdish leader of the Muslim and the Latin Crusaders as a war between Arab nationalist hero and Western imperialism (Arif 2017).

iv. The Radio Stations

Under rule of Nasser, the radio was the popular and the most used medium. Nasser created “The Voice of the Arabs” radio station to promote societal values and to spread Pan-Arabism in the Middle East. It was used as a state apparatus to spread propaganda against colonialism and Israel, and to spread certain ideas and beliefs (Mom 2018). Nasser was aware of the presence of radio within the Egyptians and Middle Eastern societies, and was keen to invest revenues to achieve more developments to the radio broadcasting system

(Diong 2015). William Rough in his book “Arab Mass Media” (2004) concluded that the Egyptian government paid great attention to radio, as it used it as a political tool to propagate specific ideas.

Nasser succeeded in integrating nationalist ideologies to promote a national consciousness into the state of mind of the people across the region, to the extent that the culture and local identities were integrated into the music to intensify the spread of Pan-Arabism ideology. Nasser used the artists like Umm Kulthum, Mohamed Abdul Wahab, and Riyadh al-Sunbati to sing and broadcast songs related to Pan-Arabism and nationalist ideologies (Arabi and Sharara 2019). Nasser used certain words to spread forms of propaganda within the region, and varied between using aggressive and soft language when he broadcast on the radio. For instance, when he referred to the West or Israel, his language was mainly aggressive by saying “extermination of Zionism... Zionist cooperation with local communists”, and even sometimes challenged Israel directly by saying “we challenge you, Israel!”. These examples clarify the choice of words by Nasser to spread anti-colonial sentiments (Alahmed 2011, 21). In addition to that, Nasser made sure that when he spoke to people, he had to speak in simple Arabic rather than more formal or “fus’ha” Arabic to make the language easy to be understood by the listeners. This shows how much Nasser was aware of the importance of the radio at that time and how to use it perfectly to promote his ideologies (Diong 2015).

v. The Propaganda War Against Zionism

Nasser’s speeches included many anti-Zionist and anti-Israel words and motifs, to the extent that Nasser was propagating the book called “The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion” because in his point of view, it proves a doubt that three hundred Zionists governed the European continent. Robert Stephens argued in his book “Nasser: A political biography” (1971) that Nasser was not anti-Jewish, he lived with Jewish neighbors in his early years and he maintained contact with some of his old Jewish friends. Nasser said to a British interviewer that “I have never been anti-Semitic on a personal level. We have so many basic links; after all, Moses himself was an Egyptian. My feelings and actions against Israel later were inspired solely by the Israelis’ actions as a state” (391). However, from year 1956 to 1967, Nasser forced the Jews who lived in “Haret el-Yahud” to leave the country on a “Never to Return” agreement. The state of Israel was not considered as a threat in Nasser’s perception before 1955; instead, he saw it as an artificial outcome of the Western imperialism. Nasser once said to the British Minister of Labor in 1953 that he had no intentions in destroying Israel and the idea of throwing the Jews into the sea was propaganda. Nasser had positive views of Zionism and Israel, to the extent that the United States and Britain viewed him as a moderate leader who is capable of reaching and signing a peace treaty with Israel (Sharnoff 2012).

The paradox is that, Nasser wanted to unite the Arab world under his leadership, and in order to do so, he had to find a solution to the Palestinian issue, and thus, Nasser perceived Israel as an obstacle to the Arab unity and started to describe Israel as a crime against the Arab world. This shows that Nasser’s actions were contradictory to his rhetoric. Nasser decided not to confront Israel directly, and started an intensifying terrorist campaign against Israel. Nasser started to support Palestinian fedayeen against Israel and encouraged them not to give up their hopes and dreams on liberating their homeland. In 1960, in a speech to the Indian parliament, Nasser blamed Israel and the West for conspiring against

the Arabs and the Palestinian people. Later on, Nasser suggested to fight Israel by military forces as the Israeli leaders claimed that the expansion of the Israeli state will be from the Nile to the Euphrates, which included Egypt, Syria, part of Saudi Arabia, all of Jordan, and part of Iraq. In 1962, in the Egyptian National Congress, Nasser introduced Egypt's official charter which included a single page in chapter four describing Zionism as a racist, illegitimate movement which sought to divide the Middle East. In 1964, Nasser organized and created the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and called the Arab leaders to support it by weapons and money to make it strong enough to fight against Israel. Although Nasser stated many times that the liberation of Palestine was an essential factor in order to achieve complete Arab unity, he began to adopt an open and long-term struggle against Israel (Sharnoff 2012).

vi. Nationalizing the Suez Canal:

Nasser decided on July 23, 1956, to nationalize the Suez Canal as a result of the refusal of the United States a few days before to help Egypt in building the High Dam, and to use the income from the canal of \$100m a year to build the Aswan high dam. Then, he started to take control of the Canal Company from British and French authorities by taking over company's headquarters in Ismailia, Port Said, and Port Tewfik (The guardian 2021). The result was that the United Kingdom, France, and Israel attacked Egypt to take back the Canal. However, the United States and the United Nations supported Egypt's decision of nationalizing the Canal and its sovereign rights, and the aggressors withdrew from their attack, thus boosting Nasser's prestige as an Arab leader (Krasno and Lapides 2015).

vii. Creating the Arab Socialism

Nasser's regime tried to reconstruct the Egyptian state included the economic and social dimensions. In his attempt to change the social basis and to implement socialism, major socialist laws came into effect in 1959 such as fixing the working hours per week at forty-eight hours, stating that a quarter of a company's profits will go back to the employees, and insisting that every board contain a workers' representative. During 1961 and 1963, all the big projects of the nation were nationalized (Pascoe 2015).

Derek A. Ide argued in his book "Socialism without Socialists: Egyptian Marxists and the Nasserist State" (2015) that despite the nationalizing of the most of the companies in Egypt at that time, but the private ownership was still dominating the means of production in the economy. According to Ide, there was a "new power elite" dominated the market consisted of the medium and large landowners instead of the old landed aristocracy, thus, Egypt was achieving high economic growth with a central state capitalistic sector, this reason, along with regime's oppression to the Marxist left, encouraged the economic cooperation with West Germany and the United States of America. Ide argued that Nasser sought support from both the United States and the Soviet Union in order to raise Egypt's economic power as Nasser visualized Egypt as the leader of the Arab world.

The High Dam project had a great role in affecting Nasser's decision to nationalizing firms. The complexity of the political, military, economic issues with the United States led John Foster Dulles to refuse to give Egypt the financial aid to build the High Dam. This refusal led Nasser to take his decision of nationalizing the Suez Canal to

finance the High Dam project, then, as a result, the tripartite aggression took place against Egypt. The result was that about Fifty-five firms owned by the French and the British were nationalized (Abdel-Malek 1964).

viii. The Ulema of Al-Azhar:

The modernization process of Al-Azhar led by Nasser in 1961 had an unintended result. The process was about integrating the ulema into the modernizing part of the society, but the result was the emergence of a new political behavior among the ulema. Nasser's regime used the ulema to appear in the political scene during the 1960s and played a major role in reshaping of Al-Azhar's function concerning the public sphere. In 1961, Nasser's regime introduced two new laws to Al-Azhar; first, modernizing the educational content in the institutes and universities of Al-Azhar such as natural sciences, mathematics, geography, beside the religious subjects, as well as introducing new faculties in Al-Azhar universities like medicine, engineering, and pharmacy. Second, the administration of Al-Azhar became under the control of the head of the state. The regime needed religious support to play a role of a counterbalance to the political influence of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic Saudi regime in the Muslim world. The 1961 reforms made the teacher in the modern faculties, the professor, the imam, and the khatib (preacher) educated at Al-Azhar civil servants and get salary for performing religious services. The president had a full control on Al-Azhar and can appoint shaykh of Al-Azhar and the Academy of Islamic Research. Nasser neither followed Taha Husayn's suggestion in 1955 to remove Al-Azhar, nor the idea of the Ministry of Education at that time to remove the Kuttab system and to transform Al-Azhar University into a faculty of theology. Nasser had already used Al-Azhar as a symbol for national independence as well as giving him legitimacy; hence, Nasser preferred to go with 1961 reform (Zeghal, 1999).

ix. The 1967 Defeat

Nasser was informed by the Soviet Union of a planned Israeli attack on Syria, as Israel a few days before shot down six MiG- 21s of the Syrian air forces. Nasser had to take a reaction, either to do nothing and appear weak, or prepare the Egyptian army and threat Israel, but the obstacle was that the army was not prepared for a war, as many troops were in North Yemen, at the same time Nasser did not want to appear weak. Thus, he decided to take a series of steps to enhance his image as a strong leader. The first step was the request of the chief of staff, General Fawzi, to the United Nations Emergency Force to leave from the buffer zone it had occupied since the 1956 Suez crisis, and the United Nations Secretary General accepted the request. The second step was, beside the heavy concentration of the Egyptian forces in the Sinai Peninsula, to prohibit the Israeli ships from passing through the straits of Tiran. The latter step was considered by Israel as an act of war, because the Tiran straits were a key port and the only access to the Indian Ocean. Then, radio Cairo started to broadcast aggressive threats stating that Egypt would destroy Israel. However, despite all these threatening steps, Nasser insisted that he would welcome a war which the Zionist state chose to start (Krasno and Lapides 2015).

Israel interpreted Nasser's actions and language as a beginning of an aggression and Israel responded to these steps by declaring a preemptive attack and the Israeli air

forces made an unexpected attack against Egypt and Syria on June 5, 1967. Within hours of the attacks, most of the Egyptian air forces were destroyed. The war ended on June 10 with Israel occupying the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights. As a result of the defeat, Nasser felt humiliated and had to gain domestic support. Hence, Nasser decided to resign and broadcasted his resignation live to the Egyptian people. Immediately, a lot of demonstrations were poured into the streets shouting for support to Nasser and rejecting his resignation (Krasno and Lapides 2015).

After the defeat, the West expected that Egypt and the Arab countries would seek peace with Israel. Instead, Nasser and the Arab states rejected the United Nations resolution 242, which called for the Israeli withdrawal from the newly occupied territories in exchange for peace. Nasser led the Arab countries to announce the “three no’s” which referred to no peace with Israel, no negotiations, and no recognition. Nasser’s goal from that was to regain the occupied territories without any concessions or peace treaty. Eventually, Nasser died on September 28, 1970, at the age of 52 (Krasno and Lapides 2015).

VIII. The Effect of Nasser’s Ideology on the Foreign Policy Orientation

Nasser, in his early youth, was affected by the environment of the country at that time, which resulted in his feelings of deep grievances against colonialism and the West. However, in order to achieve the two major goals of the regime, Nasser approached to the United States of America and its Western allies. The most important goals of Nasser’s regime were promoting the economic development, and building a strong army. The project of the High Dam symbolized the first goal, while the defeat of the Egyptian army in 1948 and the Israeli raid on Gaza strip in 1955 emphasized the importance of the second goal. Negotiations took place between Egypt, the World Bank (WB) and the USA. WB and USA decided to withdraw their funds from financing the High Dam, as well as the refusal of USA to supply Egypt with military requirements. Nasser turned to the Soviet Union in order to achieve the two main objectives, and because of his feelings of being humiliated, and to keep the revolutionary credentials. This shift in policy had its consequences on the Egyptian foreign policy (Shalaby 1992).

Egypt’s rapprochement with the Soviet Union resulted in the acceleration of the cold war and increasing in the strategic and ideological importance of the Middle East within the conflict between the East and the West. The US and its Western allies expected to gain Nasser to their line as part of the global containment policy to create regional defense in the Middle East, but Nasser refused to cooperate and worked against them in the whole area. As a reaction to the Western refusal to finance the High Dam, Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal; the consequence was the tripartite aggression on Egypt in 1956. The support in which Egypt received from the Arab and third world countries after the withdrawal of the invaders enhanced Nasser’s picture and power internally and internationally, as well as strengthened his policies on Arab nationalism, his support for national liberation movements, and on opposing the US and Western policies (Shalaby 1992).

Some analysts concluded that Nasser’s policies towards the Arab and the African countries resulted from his understanding of Egypt’s geographical location and historical heritage, which determines Egypt’s destiny. Nasser realized that the security of Egypt

depended on two main things; first, the Nile, which meant that the ruler of Egypt must have an African policy, and second, the land bridge to Asia which meant that he must have an Eastern policy. Nasser's concept of Egypt's location in the area and its geostrategic repercussions are correct. However, Nasser failed to realize the boundaries between his vision and the actual capabilities of Egypt (Shama 2021).

The Israeli attack against Egypt in June 1967 cannot be separated from the conflict which developed between Nasser and the Western alliance, as Nasser was regarded as a threat to the Western interests in the region. Whether the reasons for the Egyptian defeat in 1967 was because of the structural deficiencies, or in Nasser's miscalculations of the situation, the result of the war discredited Nasser's policies internally and regionally and was like settling of accounts in the long conflict that lasted over a decade between Nasser and the US. After the defeat, Nasser adopted the policy of using force to restore what had been lost by force (Shama 2021). He began a process of rebuilding the military, entered into a war of attrition against Israel, and engaged in diplomatic efforts to give signals of his willingness to restore diplomatic relations with the US. At the same time, Nasser sought to the Soviet Union as a source of military supplies and became a total dependence on the Soviet Union by the end of the 1960s as a consequence of 1967 war. Thus, 21,000 Soviet experts were sent to Egypt and started to work within the Egyptian Army (Shalaby 1992).

Shalaby (1992) argued that Nasser's foreign policy should be viewed in the light of his time. The people at that time were searching for a national hero. A lot of national independence movements emerged in the third world and its leaders such as Nehru, Sukarno, Nkrumah, Ben Bella and Lumumba, all of them were acting under the pressure of the Cold War.

i. Non-Alignment Movement (NAM)

Before 1952, the neutralism or nonalignment was not on the foreign policy agenda of Egypt, only the Syrian socialists had showed some neutrality and formed a policy of nonalignment, but it was not one of the priorities. After 1952, Nasser came to power and began to adopt nonalignment to the Egyptian foreign policy. The first Arab country that succeeded in overthrowing the old regime and to be totally independent from any external power was Egypt. Thus, the other Arab countries became influenced and inspired by its policies. In addition to this, the Egyptian educational and religious institutions along with its culture have always been noticed and respected by the Arab countries. Nasser was pragmatic in issues related to foreign affairs, improvised to suit each occasion, and the ideologies that were developed in foreign policy was because of purely successful and logical reasons. When these policies proved to be beneficial, they were adopted as doctrine (Peretz 1965).

After 1955, Nasser began to focus of nonalignment with either of the world blocs, especially after Bandung conference. During this time, the Soviet Union established good relations with Egypt and the West saw this as a threat to their interests in the region, particularly after the Egyptian-Czech arms deal, and implementing Socialism in the Egyptian domestic affairs. According to the Western point of view, Egypt was moving towards alignment with the Soviet Union, but according to Nasser and his Arab supporters, Egypt was moving towards achieving independence from the West along with Soviet

assistance (ecfa 2021). The Egyptian supporters argued that the Soviet aid to Egypt did not seek to threaten their freedom of action. The Egyptian interpretations saw the Egyptian policy of nonalignment as positive neutrality between the two world blocs, but in certain issue, Egypt may take side with one of the two blocs because it is in favor of the Egyptian interest and foreign policy (Peretz 1965).

Nasser in the second conference of nonaligned countries in 1964 took a leading role in calling for the Economic solidarity. The official newspaper of the United Arab Republic "Al Gomhuriyya" stated that the nonaligned countries had a mission of convincing the world about two things; first, the solidarity of the nonaligned economy, second, the existence of a third force not only on slogans but also on economic reality (ecfa 2021). Nasser also supported the Afro-Asian Solidarity Movement as a counterpart to the Western hegemony, as well as encouraging the National Liberation Movements in Africa against the Western imperialism (Peretz 1965).

IX. The Effect of Nasser's Ideology on the Egyptian International Relations

According to Nasser in his book "Philosophy of the Revolution" (1954), he identifies three circles of interests on the top of his foreign policy agenda, the Arab circle, the African circle, and the Islamic circle.

i. The Arab Circle: The Case of Egypt and Syria

One of Nasser's dreams was to create a federation of Arab countries, but the one union he succeeded in establishing lasted less than four years. In 1958, President Nasser and President Shukri Al-Kuwatly announced the union of Egypt and Syria under the name of United Arab Republic (UAR). Before merging the governments, the two countries had a defense agreement in 1955. The temporary constitution states that Nasser would be the first president of the UAR, and the first National Assembly established in 1960 consisting of 400 Egyptian deputies and 200 Syrian deputies. The UAR formed a short-term association with Yemen. The Syrians, after getting united with Egypt, started to feel bad of the increasing dominance of Egypt in the UAR, and an opposition started to grew up from conservative landowners, the communists and the Baath socialists. The Syrian army officers were transferred to duty in Egypt and the power of Syrian leaders decreased. When Baathist leaders left the government in 1960, General Abdel Hakim Amer became the virtual head of state in Syria. Then, President Nasser replaced the two regional executive councils and the central cabinet with a single central government in August 1961. On September 28 of the same year, the Syrian Army made a coup d'état in Damascus and announced the withdrawal of Syria from the union. However, Nasser did not oppose Syria's decision of independence and the UAR came to an end, but Egypt kept the name (The New York Times 1971).

ii. The African Circle: The Case of Egypt and Algeria:

Egypt's interest in the African continent as a whole began after World War II with the establishment of the Arab League, establishing a center for Sudanese studies in 1947, and

the institute for African studies in the beginning of 1950s. After the revolution of 1952, Africa became the second sphere of interest to Egypt. The revolutionary regime under Nasser supported the African liberation movements. In 1955, at Bandung conference, Egypt declared its support for the Algerian revolution against the French colonialism (Nouri 2019).

The Algerian revolution was declared from Cairo in 1954, and Egypt supported the revolution in the political, military, and media stages. As a result, the tripartite aggression by France, Britain, and Israel started against Egypt. For France, the reason of joining the aggression was clear, as the French General Andre Beaufre who led the attack of the French forces stated that if Nasser was removed, France would have fewer problems. In a conversation between US Secretary of State John Dulles and US President Eisenhower, it was said that France would prefer to fight at the center of trouble namely Egypt, as a reference to Nasser support for Ben Bella and the National Liberation Front. However, Egypt did not suspend its support for Algeria and struggled for achieving United Nations resolution to recognize the right of independence for Algeria in 1960. Fathi El-Dib, was one of the Nasser's advisors, gave evidence that Egypt was providing Algeria with arms and supplies through Libya, in order to avoid further international conflicts after the 1956 aggression (Ibrahim 2009). After eight years of bloody struggle, Algeria got its independence in July, 1962. Then, Nasser made his first official visit to Algeria (Al-Wahaidy 2017).

iii. The Islamic Circle: The Case of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and North Yemen war

In 26 September, 1962, group of Yemeni officers, called the Free Officers Movement, organized a coup to throw out the king of North Yemen. Then, a civil war happened between Royalists of kingdom of Yemen and Republican factions of the Yemen Arab Republic from 1962 to 1970. When the coup happened and the Republican factions controlled the government, Egypt began to defend and support the new government with forces and arms, and Saudi Arabia supported the Royalists with money and equipment (Thorn 2018). The civil war turned to be a proxy war as the Soviet Union funded the Egyptians troops and supported it, and the United States funded the Saudis. The civil war lasted for eight years, about 60,000 Egyptian troops were sent to North Yemen, which many believe contributed to 1967 defeat, in addition to the cost of million-dollar per day on the burden of the Egyptian government. Because of these reasons, the war is known as Egypt's Vietnam (CoolBen 2015).

After the revolution in Yemen broke out, King Faisal, the king of Saudi Arabia at that time, received a report informed him about the massive Egyptian support for the republican factions. Faisal was worried and doubtful about the intentions of Nasser toward Saudi Arabia, and was certain that Nasser will use the Yemen as a step toward taking over Saudi Arabia directly or by proxy forces within the country (Hart 1998). The Saudi Prince Talal Bin Abdulaziz said that in 1958, when Saudi Arabia withdrew the passport from him and he was abroad at that time, he resorted to Egypt to give him the Egyptian passport as a replacement to the Saudi one to be able to move freely between states, and President Nasser welcomed the idea. When Prince Talal arrived at Cairo International Airport, the Egyptian media started the propaganda of "Free Princes Movement". Prince Talal claimed that he

did not know or think in the idea of Free Princes before and the first time he heard about it was from Nasser and the Egyptian media (Al Jazeera Arabic Archive 2018).

X. Conclusion

Egypt before the republic under King Farouk suffered from corruption, increasing in poverty, inequality in land distribution, and offensive decreasing in the capabilities of the Egyptian army which resulted in 1948 defeat, in addition that Egypt did not get its complete independence from the British colonialism. Nasser clarified in his book "The philosophy of the revolution" his ambitions in creating an Arab unity in order to be able to fight Israel, and identified three circles of interests to Egypt which are, the Arab circle, the African circle, and the Islamic circle (Alterman 1998).

In order to secure his rule, Nasser began to reformulate the main domestic institutions to fit with his ideological orientation. First, he began with the reinterpretation of history, and changing in the school curricula as well as integrating the cinema industry in shaping the state of mind of the people. Nasser then went to the radio station and created the Voice of the Arabs to broadcast certain news and ideologies to the whole Arab region in addition to propagate against the West. Al-Azhar institution was included in the reformulation process, and changes were conducted to it, one of them was to integrate the ulema into the political sphere.

After 1956 crisis, Nasser made a huge change in the economic sector by nationalizing more than fifty-five firms owned by the British and the French as a respond to the tripartite aggression. This reaction could be understood from his personality traits, as Anwar Sadat stated that "alongside his shyness and quiet disposition, he had a typical Saidi (from Upper Egypt) personality, he turned into a ferocious lion the moment he felt that anyone even simply thought of insulting or hurting him" (Shalaby 1992, 108). Hence, his reaction of the massive nationalizing process and adopting socialism was because he felt insulted by the Western aggressors.

In terms of Nasser's decision-making domestically, the regime under Nasser focused on providing a re-interpretation of the historical process only on the disadvantages of the Monarchy and the political system that existed, and the obstacles that faced the king were not mentioned in the film industry or the classrooms. Nasser felt humiliated when the United States refused to finance the High Dam project, and as a result, he decided to nationalize the Suez Canal in order to build the dam because it was part of his economic priorities. However, Nasser did not put in his consideration the reaction of Britain and France. After the Israeli attack on the Syrian air forces in 1967, and in order to not to lose his prestige as an Arab leader, Nasser did a serious of steps to threat and deter Israel and closed the straits of Tiran, and did not expect that Israel will respond by declaring war.

In terms of Nasser's decision-making internationally, Nasser established good, relations with the Soviet Union after adopting the nonalignment policy, this considered as a double standard. Nasser sought to dominate the United Arab Republic by all means, and this was a key reason behind the failure of the UAR. Nasser wanted to build an Arab unity, however, Egypt entered into proxy war against Saudi Arabia which increased the tension between both countries.

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