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United States Department of State

*Washington, D.C. 20520*

Case No.: 200701753

**MAR 25 2010**

I refer to your letter dated March 11, 2007 regarding the release of certain Department of State material under the Freedom of Information Act (Title 5 USC Section 552).

We searched for and reviewed the self study guides that you requested and have determined that all except one of them may be released. They are on the enclosed disc. One of the guides is being released with excisions.

An enclosure provides information on Freedom of Information Act exemptions and other grounds for withholding material. Where we have made excisions, the applicable exemptions are marked on each document. With respect to material withheld by the Department of State, you have the right to appeal our determination within 60 days. A copy of the appeals procedures is enclosed.

We have now completed the processing of your case. If you have any questions, you may write to the Office of Information Programs and Services, SA-2, Department of State, Washington, DC 20522-8100, or telephone us at (202) 261-8484. Please be sure to refer to the case number shown above in all correspondence about this case.

We hope that the Department has been of service to you in this matter.

Sincerely,



*for* Margaret P. Grafeld, Director  
Office of Information Programs and Services

Enclosures:  
As stated.

**63934 Federal Register/Vol. 69, No. 212**  
**Rules and Regulations**

Subpart F – Appeal Procedures

§171.52 Appeal of denial of access to, declassification of, amendment of, accounting of disclosures of, or challenge to classification of records.

- (a) *Right of administrative appeal.* Except for records that have been reviewed and withheld within the past two years or are the subject of litigation, any requester whose request for access to records, declassification of records, amendment of records, accounting of disclosure of records, or any authorized holder of classified information whose classification challenge has been denied, has a right to appeal the denial to the Department's Appeals Review Panel. This appeal right includes the right to appeal the determination by the Department that no records responsive to an access request exist in Department files. Privacy Act appeals may be made only by the individual to whom the records pertain.
- (b) *Form of appeal.* There is no required form for an appeal. However, it is essential that the appeal contain a clear statement of the decision or determination by the Department being appealed. When possible, the appeal should include argumentation and documentation to support the appeal and to contest the bases for denial cited by the Department. The appeal should be sent to: Chairman, Appeals Review Panel, c/o Appeals Officer, A/GIS/IPS/PP/LC, U.S. Department of State, SA-2, Room 8100, Washington, DC 20522-8100.
- (c) *Time limits.* The appeal should be received within 60 days of the date of receipt by the requester of the Department's denial. The time limit for response to an appeal begins to run on the day that the appeal is received. The time limit (excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal public holidays) for agency decision on an administrative appeal is 20 days under the FOIA (which may be extended for up to an additional 10 days in unusual circumstances) and 30 days under the Privacy Act (which the Panel may extend an additional 30 days for good cause shown). The Panel shall decide mandatory declassification review appeals as promptly as possible.
- (d) *Notification to appellant.* The Chairman of the Appeals Review Panel shall notify the appellant in writing of the Panel's decision on the appeal. When the decision is to uphold the denial, the Chairman shall include in his notification the reasons therefore. The appellant shall be advised that the decision of the Panel represents the final decision of the Department and of the right to seek judicial review of the Panel's decision, when applicable. In mandatory declassification review appeals, the Panel shall advise the requester of the right to appeal the decision to the Interagency Security Classification Appeals Panel under §3.5(d) of E.O. 12958.

## The Freedom of Information Act (5 USC 552)

### FOIA Exemptions

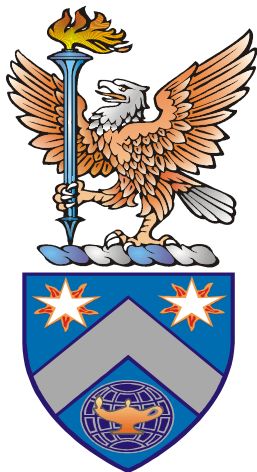
- (b)(1) Withholding specifically authorized under an Executive Order in the interest of national defense or foreign policy, and properly classified. E.O. 12958, as amended, includes the following classification categories:
  - 1.4(a) Military plans, systems, or operations
  - 1.4(b) Foreign government information
  - 1.4(c) Intelligence activities, sources or methods, or cryptology
  - 1.4(d) Foreign relations or foreign activities of the US, including confidential sources
  - 1.4(e) Scientific, technological, or economic matters relating to national security, including defense against transnational terrorism
  - 1.4(f) U.S. Government programs for safeguarding nuclear materials or facilities
  - 1.4(g) Vulnerabilities or capabilities of systems, installations, infrastructures, projects, plans, or protection services relating to US national security, including defense against transnational terrorism
  - 1.4(h) Information on weapons of mass destruction
- (b)(2) Related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of an agency
- (b)(3) Specifically exempted from disclosure by statute (other than 5 USC 552), for example:
  - ARMEX Arms Export Control Act, 22 USC 2778(e)
  - CIA Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949, 50 USC 403(g)
  - EXPORT Export Administration Act of 1979, 50 App. USC 2411(c)(1)
  - FSA Foreign Service Act of 1980, 22 USC 4003 & 4004
  - INA Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 USC 1202(f)
  - IRAN Iran Claims Settlement Act, Sec 505, 50 USC 1701, note
- (b)(4) Privileged/confidential trade secrets, commercial or financial information from a person
- (b)(5) Interagency or intra-agency communications forming part of the deliberative process, attorney-client privilege, or attorney work product
- (b)(6) Information that would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy
- (b)(7) Information compiled for law enforcement purposes that would:
  - (A) interfere with enforcement proceedings
  - (B) deprive a person of a fair trial
  - (C) constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy
  - (D) disclose confidential sources
  - (E) disclose investigation techniques
  - (F) endanger life or physical safety of an individual
- (b)(8) Prepared by or for a government agency regulating or supervising financial institutions
- (b)(9) Geological and geophysical information and data, including maps, concerning wells

### Other Grounds for Withholding

- NR Material not responsive to a FOIA request, excised with the agreement of the requester

# ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

## SELF STUDY GUIDE



**GEORGE P. SHULTZ  
NATIONAL FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS TRAINING CENTER**  
School of Professional and Area Studies  
Foreign Service Institute  
U.S. Department of State

# **Self-Study Guide to the Arab Republic of Egypt**

The **Self-Study Guide: Arab Republic of Egypt** is intended to provide U.S. Government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of important issues related to Jordanian history, geography, politics, economics, culture, religion, media, and international relations. The Guide should serve an introductory self-study resource.

The topic is far too complex to be covered in depth using only the text in this Guide. The reader is encouraged to explore the questions and issues introduced, using the Internet and bibliographic sources provided in the text and in the resource sections. Most of the referenced material can be found on the Internet or in the Foreign Service Institute or Main State Libraries.

The first edition of this Guide was prepared by Dr. Louis J. Cantori, Professor of political science, University of Maryland, Baltimore county. The views expressed in this Guide are those of the author and attributable sources and do not necessary reflect official policy or positions of the Department of State or the National Foreign Affairs Training Center (NFATC). Staff members of the NFATC made final but minor edits to the draft study submitted by Dr. Cantori.

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First Edition

**April 2003**

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## EGYPT: CHRONOLOGY OF IMPORTANT EVENTS

### Ancient History

5000-304 BC Pharaonic Rule

### Foreign Rule

333-323 BC Construction of Alexandria  
525 BC-640 AD Ptolemaic, Roman, Byzantine Rule  
640 AD Arab Conquest  
1517-1914 Ottoman Rule  
1789-1801 Napoleonic Conquest  
1805-1849 Muhammad Ali  
1882-1914 British Control  
1914-1952 British Control and Interference

### Egyptian Rule

1919 Revolution Against British  
1922-1952 Egyptian Independence-Parliamentary Period

### Republican Egypt-Nasser

July 22, 1952 Egyptian Revolution Led By Free Officers Under Nasser  
1952-1954 Leadership Of Muhammad Naguib  
1952-1970 Presidency of Nasser  
July 26, 1956 Nationalization of the Suez Canal  
Oct. 29-Dec. 22, 1956 British, French, Israeli Invasion  
1958-1961 United Arab Republic(UAR) Egypt, Syria, Yemen  
1960 The Socialization Of The Economy  
September 1962 Egypt Intervenes In The Yemeni Civil War  
June 5, 1967 Israel Invades Egypt  
September 28, 1970 Nasser Dies of Heart Attack and Sadat Is President(October 15,1970)

### Republican Egypt-Sadat(1970-1981)

May15, 1971 "Corrective Revolution" –The Failed Coup  
July 1972 Soviet Advisors Ordered Out  
October 6,1973 Egypt Attacks Israel  
June 5, 1975 After Negotiations, Sadat Reopens The Suez Canal  
November, 1977 Sadat Visits Israel  
1979 Peace treaty with Israel  
October 6, 1981 Sadat Assassinated

Republican Egypt-Mubarak(1981- )

1982	Israeli Withdrawal From Sinai(1979 Peace Treaty)
1987	Second Elected Term
November, 1987	Arab Summit : Arabs Resume Relations With Egypt
1988	Egypt Rejoins Arab League
1991	Egypt Leads Arab Alliance, Iraqi War
1992	Third Elected Term
June, 1995	Attempted Assassination, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
1999	Fourth Elected Term
2000	Parliamentary Elections
2001-2002	Intermediary Diplomatic Role In 2 <sup>nd</sup> Palestinian Intifada

## I. Preliminary

Unlike most such study guides, the present one does not present the important and complex country of Egypt in simple descriptive terms. Instead, the reader is asked to master a couple of interpretive concepts and these concepts then become the thread that is followed throughout. These concepts will not only lay bare the factors of stability and instability in Egyptian politics but they will also prove useful in the understanding of the politics of other Arab states.

The most striking feature of Egypt is the high degree of the unity of its geography, its ethnic make up, its culture and even to a certain degree its politics. This also explains its continuity of history and its stability. It also explains why it is said with some truth that practically anyone can rule Egypt.

It is also the argument of this study guide, however, that in fact Egypt is an example of a dual state. A dual state is one, which can be analytically divided into a political state on the one hand, and a social state on the other. The political state conforms to the conventional view of the state in terms of sovereignty, territorial boundaries, centralized executive authority, a ruling class, a national economy and an army. In the Middle East it is sometimes termed the mukhabarat or security state. It contains no more and probably less than twenty percent of the wealthiest of the population. It is this state that is engaged with in terms of foreign relations and US foreign policy.

The social state consists of the overwhelming numbers of the remainder of the population. To be sure, it consists of a hierarchy of classes such as peasants, workers, small landowners, small businessmen etc but it is not class divisions that are so important as are its group structures. These structures consist of the informal ones of family, peer group and high school/college/military academy graduating classes. Equally important are the formal ones reflecting the division of labor in society such as bar associations, trade unions etc. these

organizations carry out functions necessary for the maintenance of the state. They are in a licensed relationship to the political state in that there actually exists a law of organizations that stipulates the political quietism of these groups. In exchange, these groups are permitted to have a monopoly over these activities at a profit to themselves and as a refuge from the excesses of the authoritarian state. In the case of Egypt and many underdeveloped states, the political state does not penetrate the social state in terms of law or tax collection. It is also where the informal economy operates. It is this theme of the dual state that constitutes the theme of much of what follows. Related to this dualism, is also the controversy of whether Egypt is a “strong” state or a “weak” state. It can be said that the ability to sustain political order and stability makes it “strong” and its inability to develop, makes it “weak”.

## **II. Introduction**

**Unity.** The single most important thing to understand about Egypt is its unity. This unity is determined by the geography of being crammed into the spine of a single north-south river valley. This unity is also that of a single ethnic group, a single language of Arabic, a 90% Sunni Muslim population (approximately 10% of the population is Coptic Christian) itself without serious internal disunity and a common history stretching across millennia in stable epochs of long duration. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century this comes to cumulatively express itself in stable political rule and a deep, self-confident national identity.

**The Land.** In the third century BC, the Greek historian Herodotus noted that “The Nile is Egypt and Egypt is the Nile”. This remains the case today. The Nile originates 5000 miles to the south in Uganda and flows north towards Egypt where it stretches from its southern border with

Sudan northwards for 1500 miles to empty into the Mediterranean Sea. It represents a sliver of narrow green cultivation until it reaches Cairo where it then fans out into a delta possessing the richest agricultural soil on earth. In the delta, it is common to raise three crops a year on a single plot and to multiply this productivity further by planting different crops of different varieties and heights right next to each other. For all practical purposes, Egypt has no measurable annual rainfall so that its only source of water is this river.

The result of this reliance upon the river is that the country has mastered the management of a complex irrigation system for 7,000 years. One scholar has theorized that this has created a top down, politically authoritarian society that he terms a “hydraulic society “ similar to those of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in Iraq, the Indus river in India and Yellow river in China.

**The People.** The people of Egypt at first glance appear to be as uniform as the factors of unity suggest. In physical terms they appear to have the physiognomy of the people of pharaonic inscriptions except that they are also the result of significant Arab infusions from the time of the Arab conquest of 644AD onwards. But then there is the ebony of the Nubian people south of Luxor stretching to Sudan who possibly predates the Pharaonic period. If this is not enough to dispel simple generalizations, then there are the people to the south of Cairo in the so-called Said or the “Saidi’s”. In Egyptian burlesque humor these are considered “country bumpkins” while in fact they are a nomadic people who came to Egypt perhaps in the 8<sup>th</sup> century from the Arabian peninsula. To this day, their social structure is that of the Bedouin lineage despite the fact their sedentary agricultural pursuits resemble those of the delta to the north of Cairo. It is said that even now they can trace family genealogies to present day Saudi Arabia. There is a story that one them as a labor migrant to Saudi Arabia showed up on a doorstep introduced himself as a cousin from 1000 years earlier! In fact their Arabic dialect is that of the Arabian peninsular and not that of Cairo e.g. the word for coffee is neither “qahwa”(classical) nor “ahwa”(Cairene) but is “gahwa”(Arabian peninsular).

**The Culture.** Egyptian culture in its musical, literary, poetry and cinematic aspects is looked upon with great pride by Egyptians and as worthy of emulation by other Arabs. Poetry is the main feature of Egyptian literary culture, but it is also the case that the first novel on the model of the Western format was written in Egypt prior to World War I. In all artistic and cultural forms, it is Egyptian versions of classical and modern culture that sets the example for other Arab peoples. As a result, even Egyptians at the most humble level of the society feel a strong sense of cultural pride. For example, when an American passenger speaking in Arabic expressed his admiration of Egypt to a taxi driver, the response was, “Yes, Egypt is the mother of the world”! This pride can become one of disdain as in the case of an Egyptian friend after seeing the film, “Lawrence of Arabia” declaring that he did not understand why an entire film should be devoted to a Bedouin i.e. a barbaric or Arab (Egyptian colloquial for Bedouin) people!

**History.** It would be too difficult in the short length of this self-study guide to sustain the thesis of the dual state in any detail and this is especially the case of the complex history of Egypt. At the same time however, some of its basic features are apparent even from the beginning of Egypt’s history. The first is the theme of unity already touched upon in the preceding text. This unity has two implications. The first is the relative ease with which the political state has been able to impose its authority on a homogeneous population. The second implication is that while the political state often consisted of foreign rulers who changed over time, the social state tended to remain stable and constant. One indication of this is the cumulative dialectical interpenetrating of cultural and religious traditions from one epoch to another e.g. the persistency of things pharaonic into the Greek and Roman periods and the synthesis of all into the period of Christianity and then Islam. This is so much the case that even today, the pharaonic language is preserved in the ritual of the Coptic Christian church and one is aware of the survival of pharaonic traditions in Islam e.g. the bearing of the image of the Muslim saint Abu Hagag by boat from side of the Nile to the other at Luxor, a ritual similar to one in the



ancient past when a pharaonic god was conveyed in the same way at the very same time of the year.

Throughout recorded history the civilization of the Nile Valley flourished as a result of a combination of plentiful water, good soil, and climatic conditions contributing to a long growing season. The Nile River also provided swift, efficient, and cheap transportation and became the focal point of both ancient and modern civilizations. In ancient days a series of great kingdoms ruled by pharaohs developed in the valley and made important and long-lasting contributions to civilization in the fields of science, architecture, politics, and economics. These ancient kingdoms provided a base for the development of the modern Egyptian political system. Throughout its history Egypt has remained essentially a united entity, ruled by a single government, in part because of its need for overall planning for irrigation and agricultural production.

After the sixth century B.C., Egypt fell under the influence of Persia, Greece, Rome, and the Byzantine Empire. Beginning with the Persian conquest in 525 B.C., Egypt was ruled for nearly twenty-five hundred years by alien dynasties or as a part of a foreign empire. This represented changes in the composition of the political state while the social state remained less liable to change. This foreign domination did however, leave its imprint. Christianity was brought to the Nile Valley, and in 639 AD Arab invaders from the east entered Egypt. In a process that was to take hundreds of years, the social state of Egypt was converted from the Christian society of that time to the Arab and Islamic society that it has remained ever since. Even today, however, Egypt remains 7% Coptic Christian. The period of Arab political domination, however, was broken by other powers, notably the Mamluks (1251-1517) and the Ottomans (1517-1914), with a monarchy of foreign origins ruling until 1952. This legacy of foreign control of the political state has been a significant factor in Egyptian political culture and world outlook.

In some respects, the most significant external influence came after the Ottoman Turks gained control of Egypt and made it a province of the empire in 1517. The Napoleonic invasion of 1798 and the modernization developments that followed modified this basic Ottoman influence. This assisted in the transition from the military feudalism of the past to a new system. The Western impact of the French intervention, the important reforms of Muhammad Ali (1805-1849), known as the founder of modern Egypt, and the construction of the Suez Canal in the mid-nineteenth century all contributed to the development of the modern Egyptian state.

Muhammad Ali was neither an Egyptian nor an Arab, but an Albanian who came to Egypt from Macedonia as an army commander in charge of a unit of the Ottoman army sent to deal with Napoleon. In 1805 the Ottoman sultan appointed him governor of Egypt with the title of pasha. Muhammad Ali brought significant change to the country and, to a large degree sought to gain independence from the Ottoman sultan. Under Muhammad Ali, Egypt began to develop the elements of a modern state and a more European cultural orientation. It is important to appreciate that he launched a series of ambitious domestic projects designed to improve the economy and the general condition of the state and that this was done free from the colonial inspired modernization of other third world countries in the modern period. This “self-reliance” was to have its impact upon later Egyptian political self-consciousness and nationalism. In the process, the political state was strengthened and it gained control over the social state. The political state was beginning to become organically related to the social state. Agricultural production was improved and reorganized, and a program of industrialization was inaugurated. Muhammad Ali forced Egyptian products into the European market and replaced grain production with the export crop of cotton. Turks were replaced with Egyptians in the administration and especially in the army. He stressed education and sought to improve its quality. He created a modern national army, organized on European lines in which Egyptians were increasingly being recruited even into the officer corps. During his reign, he militarily

challenged Ottoman rule to the point that his troops penetrated the Anatolian peninsula, only to have the British and French rescue the empire in the treaty of London of 1841. He created the base for a modern political system and the conditions for the rise of Egyptian nationalism. He put the elements of the political state and the social state in place.

Although European powers had been interested in Egypt for some time, the opening of the Suez Canal to world navigation and commerce in 1869 vastly increased great-power interest in Egypt. This great power interest was to interfere with the emergence of the Egyptian nation as an organic expression of a political and social state. England, the greatest sea power of the time, was particularly concerned with the canal because it provided a shorter and more efficient link to much of the British Empire, especially India. Problems associated with the operation of the canal and Egypt's financial mismanagement provided the framework for the British occupation in 1882. Foreign creditors, anxious about the funds they had entrusted to Muhammad Ali's grandson, Khedive Ismail(1863-79 ), pressed their respective governments for relief and assistance. As a result, foreign creditors controlled Egyptian finances and Ismail was deposed in 1879. Popular opposition formed against the khedive, his court, and the foreign powers. Khedive Tawfiq(1879-92 ), who succeeded Ismail, ruled a country that was heavily taxed and also under British and French financial supervision and political control.

In response to this situation, Colonel Ahmed Arabi led a group of Egyptian nationalists who, scorning the weakness of the khedive, protested British and French interference in the sovereignty of Egypt and the lack of indigenous political participation. They sought constitutional reform, liberalization of Egyptian political participation, and an end to foreign interference in the affairs of Egypt. The British and French supported the khedive. In July 1882 British forces landed in Egypt and crushed the Arabi revolt and quelled the expression of Egyptian nationalism. Although they were originally supposed to leave after the restoration of political and financial order(this was achieved in the 1890's), British forces remained in Egypt

until the 1950s, and real control over the affairs of state resided in British hands for seven decades, thereby giving Britain control over the canal. The khedive (and later king) remained the titular authority, but the British representatives (under various titles) were the final authorities on the affairs of state.

World War I added a new dimension to the commercial and strategic importance of the Suez Canal for Britain and the West. In December 1914 Britain proclaimed Egypt a British protectorate, ending the theoretical control of the Ottoman Empire, and the title of khedive was changed to that of sultan.

Opposition among Egyptians to the British intensified during World War I. Exasperation and frustration characterized the Egyptian nationalist movement. There had been some hope engendered by such events as the Arab revolt against the Ottoman sultan (portrayed so graphically in the film, "Lawrence of Arabia") and the democratic declarations of Wilson's Fourteen Points. Within Egyptian society there emerged the beginnings of nationalistic ideas of a political nature that were to spearhead the movement to remove British control and establish indigenous Egyptian rule over the country. In this post-World War I context a new political organization was formed, al-Wafd al-Misri (the Egyptian Delegation that sought unsuccessfully to attend the Versailles Peace Conference), known as the Wafd. Under the leadership of Saad Zaghlul (died 1927) and later Nahas Pasha, the Wafd sought independence from the British and self-rule in Egypt. The Wafd hoped to present its position to the great powers at the postwar conferences—especially at the Paris Peace Conference, where the fate of the Ottoman territories was to be determined. British opposition to Egyptian independence prevented the Wafd from achieving its goal.

In the aftermath of World War I, Egyptian opposition to British rule became increasingly hostile and culminated in the Revolution of 1919 led by an indigenous nationalist elite who were in effect contending with the British for the control of the political state. In order for the latter

group to be successful, they had to mobilize the social state. In the face of such pressure, the protectorate was terminated and in February 1922 the British unilaterally proclaimed Egypt a constitutional monarchy. However, the British formally reserved their freedom of action on four matters: the Sudan, the defense of Egypt against foreign intervention, the security of the canal (which remained the communications link of the British Empire), and the protection of foreign interests and minorities. In March, Sultan Fuad became the king of Egypt. Thus, by 1922 Egypt had become technically an independent country with its own king but it was a country in alliance with Britain (which provided assistance in defense and related matters). The reality was continued British control.

A constitution was written and promulgated in April 1923; a parliament was elected, and a government was formed. Domestic politics began to operate, and rivalries between power blocs and political institutions began to develop. Domestic politics reflected the rivalry between the king on the one hand and the government and parliament on the other (both of the latter were generally dominated by the Wafd, which opposed both the king and the British). The control of the political state was thus a contested one. Many of the concerns of Egyptian society, especially of the vast majority of the population who were peasants in the social state, were not effectively dealt with because the main political forces devoted their energies to conflict with each other. While there was agreement in opposing the British, the politics of Egypt for control of the political state was a triangular process of the Wafd opposing the monarchy with the British alternately playing one actor off against the other.

British influence remained paramount. British troops and officials were stationed in Egypt, mostly but not solely concerned with the canal and the security of the imperial communications system. Through them, the British were able to influence political activity and policy decisions. British-Egyptian negotiations continued, on a somewhat sporadic basis, until 1936. At that time a new Anglo-Egyptian treaty was written that altered but did not terminate the

British role. On many of the key issues little changed and British influence remained significant, although its formal trappings were modified.

World War II provided an important milestone in the political development of Egypt. Its territory was used as a base of Allied operations, notably in the German and Italian advance on Alexandria early in 1942. But the monarchy and some elements of the army (including Sadat as a young officer) were strongly against Britain as the hated occupier and in fact were sympathetic to the Germans. Britain's straightforward use of force in February 1942, when the British high commissioner surrounded the palace and forced the pro-German king to appoint Nahas Pasha and a pro-British government, highlighted British control and infuriated young nationalists. Following this incident, many nationalists, including some young officers, began to turn against the Wafd as well as the king. The war, however, sapped British strength and financial resources, and Britain was soon forced to reconsider its position throughout the Middle East, setting the stage for a major political realignment throughout the area, especially in Egypt and Palestine.

After World War II Egypt became involved in two related matters that laid the foundation for the Egyptian revolution. The first was the creation of Israel—which Egypt opposed—following the British withdrawal from the Palestine mandate in 1948, which, in turn, led to the Arab-Israeli war of 1948-1949. With some individual exceptions, the armed forces of Egypt performed poorly. The corruption and inefficiency of the government of King Farouk (whose rule had begun in 1936) were later cited as major causes for the poor performance of Egyptian military forces against the new state of Israel. The war was probably the most important single event in Egypt's political development before the 1952 revolution. It helped to complete the rupture between the king and the army, many of whose officers believed they had been sent to battle poorly equipped and ill trained. Nasser, in his memoirs, noted that he came to realize that the war was in Egypt and not in Palestine. The government in response to the political turmoil that followed the war instituted increasingly ruthless police actions. Egypt's economic crisis also

worsened as mismanagement and corruption became rampant. Who actually held authority over the political state remained contested in the midst of corruption and ineptitude.

The second issue was the continuing opposition to the British role in Egypt and the desire of the nationalists to eliminate British control of Egypt. Negotiations to revise the 1936 treaty, especially those aspects of the agreement relating to the questions of the Sudan and the canal, were unsuccessful. Throughout its existence, the Wafd opposed British imperialism and sought Nile unity, with the Sudan as a part of Egypt. Clashes between the British and Egyptian nationalists became increasingly frequent. On October 15, 1951, the government of Egypt under Prime Minister Nahas Pasha unilaterally abrogated the 1936 treaty and proclaimed Farouk king of Egypt and the Sudan.

By the beginning of 1952 the new government had become unable to govern. There developed an impasse in the relations between King Farouk and politicians of the Wafd, the most important political party in Egypt until its abolition following the 1952 revolution. This deadlocked the processes of government. Political disturbances, which had been growing in number since 1949, broke out, and mobs attacked foreign establishments in Cairo. The British protested, and clashes between British troops and Egyptians intensified. January 26, 1952, a day of great violence, came to be known as “Black Saturday”; the ouster of Nahas Pasha and the proclamation of martial law followed it.

### **STUDY QUESTIONS: II**

1. Why is Egypt “The most important country”?
2. What is there about Egypt that gives it its subjective feeling of being “The Mother of civilization”?
3. What might be said to be the “unities” of Egypt?

4. In the modern period, when did Egypt come to be ruled by Egyptians? Was it in 1805, 1881, 1919 or 1952?

### **III. The Egyptian Political and Social “Dual” State**

The control of the Egyptian political state until the Revolution of 1952 had been in political contest. The Revolution resulted in this political authority becoming consolidated and stabilized in the hands of a populist/authoritarian ruler and a ruling class. During the reign of Nasser until his death in 1970, the social state was to receive significant economic and social benefits. These benefits were to take the form of a redistribution of land and wealth. What was not to occur, despite much political rhetoric to the contrary, was economic development that would benefit the masses of the population. The benefits of massive infusions of foreign economic assistance and even some modernization of the economy were instead to go to the ruler, and to the ruling class. The ability of rulers to perpetuate themselves in power, to maintain the political and military security of the state and to provide economic benefits to themselves and their supporters took precedent. What was to continue to elude the state is the ability to mobilize and inspire the population to make sacrifices in the path of development. It was political stability that mattered.

**The Egyptian Revolution of 1952: The Formation of the Political State.** On July 23, 1952, members of a small, clandestine military organization known as the Free Officers launched a coup d'état that established a new system of government. This group of officers, whose inner circle numbered about a dozen, had been meeting secretly since the Arab-Israeli war, in hopes of



overthrowing the corrupt and unpopular monarchy. King Farouk was forced to abdicate and left the country on July 26, 1952.

The 1952 coup was swiftly and efficiently executed. A new group now was in control of the political state. The military controlled the major instruments of force, and there was no significant opposition to its actions. The guiding hand of the new system was the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), whose titular head was a senior military officer, General Muhammad Naguib, one of the few successful Egyptian officers in the Arab-Israeli war of 1948. General Naguib had not been one of the inner circle of the young Free Officers, but he had been asked to join the conspiracy because of his rank and his fine reputation as an officer. An additional reason was probably because he was half-Sudanese by birth-the young officers still shared the dream of previous Egyptian governments: to bring the Sudan into union with Egypt.

The immediate concern of the RCC was to dismantle the corrupt structures of the monarchy and to create a new political order that would institute major social change. Since the ouster of Farouk was the major objective of the coup, the Free Officers did not have a specific and articulated plan for the ordering of Egyptian life after the coup. Their basic goal was to end political corruption and inefficiency and to prevent further humiliations such as the Arab-Israeli war of 1948-1949 and the British control of Egypt. Moreover, the Free Officers had not determined how to achieve their long-term goals of ousting the British from Egypt (especially the canal zone) and securing the linkage with the Sudan. A six-point statement of position was one that any nationalist could endorse. It proclaimed that the new regime declared its opposition to colonialism, imperialism, and monopolies and asserted its support for social justice, a strong military, and a democratic way of life. This constituted an appeal for the support of the social state.

Although Farouk was forced into exile, the constitutional monarchy was preserved at first, and a regency council was established to preside in the name of Farouk's infant son, Fuad

II. A general purge of corrupt officials was instituted, and land reform was declared to be a major goal of the RCC. At this time, the RCC said that it intended to return Egypt to a civilian government as soon as possible.

After a period of some uncertainty concerning the organization and structure of the government, the RCC decided that the changes envisaged were not possible within the existing political system. In December 1952 the constitution of 1923 and the parliamentary form of government were suspended. The following January General Naguib announced that all political parties had been banned and their funds confiscated— constitutional government would not operate for a three-year transition period. In February 1953 an interim constitution was proclaimed that provided the terms for the operation of the government during this time. This constitution noted that the people were the source of all authority, but it vested all power in the RCC for the transition period- the political state was to dominate the social state. With the abolition of political parties, the RCC created a new political organization called the National Liberation Rally to help mobilize political support for the new regime.

In June 1953 the RCC moved to the next step in the conversion of the political system. The monarchy was conclusively abolished and a republic was declared, with Naguib as both president and prime minister.

**The Patrimonial Leader( Nasser and the New State).** Gamal Abd al-Nasser (1952–1970), Anwar al-Sadat (1970-1981) and Hosni Mubarak (1981-present) can all be characterized as patrimonial or father-like leaders, both in terms of how they presented themselves and how they were perceived. Their leadership was often self-consciously styled on their resembling the father of the Egyptian national family. The principle of legitimacy of the patrimonial leader is an ascribed one; that is, it is a characteristic of both the leadership role itself and it is attributed to the leader by his followers. This principle, while strengthening the authority of the leader, also is not sufficient in itself. Each of these leaders was also operating as the leader of a regime that was

legitimized by the dominant idea of its time. For all three this was pan-Arabism, although from Sadat onwards, the political Islamism of the Islamic religious revival dialectically challenged pan-Arabism.

In the case of patrimonialism, all three leaders when addressing the Egyptian people often used the vocabulary of the family. This was especially the case with Sadat, who, in 1978, when he was negotiating the Camp David peace agreement with Israel, began a radio address by saying, “My brothers and sisters, my sons and daughters, I have terrible news to relate to you tonight. Today our sons prevented their fathers from going to work [i.e. students on university campuses were engaging in a campus boycott by way of protest against the policy].” It was Nasser among the three leaders who were able to go beyond the inherited patrimonialism of the leadership role and connect himself with the ideological principal of Arabism. In so doing he exceeded patrimonialism and by a combination of personality and ideology, his leadership became charismatic. His leadership was to cross borders and influence politics in other countries. His anti-colonialism not only helped force the British military to withdraw from the Suez Canal Zone in 1954, but led him to join the positive neutralism of the Bandung Conference of 1955 and to become a dominant leader in the Third World.

**The Formation of the New Ruling Class: Officers in Power.** The most crucial factor in the period immediately following the 1952 coup d'état (always called *the revolution* in Egypt) was the emergence of Gamal Abdul Nasser as the primary force in Egyptian national life. Although it became clear later that he had been the leader of the Free Officers movement since its inception, Nasser appeared in the public view rather slowly. When the Free Officers overthrew Farouk, attention was focused on General Naguib as the titular and apparent head of the new regime. Nasser appeared to be no more than another field grade officer in the RCC, an institution of the ruling elite. The RCC in the years ahead was to eventually evolve into a presidential cabinet but its membership was always to be long lived and to change only slowly

over time. This cabinet was composed of the Free Officers who donned civilian clothes but who retained the solidarity of their conspiratorial origins.

Slowly Nasser's role as the guiding force behind the revolution began to become clear as he emerged as the victor of a power struggle within the RCC. The struggle for control between Nasser and Naguib went through several stages, culminating in the ouster of Naguib on November 14, 1954, and in his being placed under house arrest. Thus Nasser's dominant position was secured within the system, allowing him to become the undisputed leader of Egypt and, later, of the Arab world.

As the years went on, the ruling elite remained composed of free officers. Only under the impact of the military defeat of 1967 was this to change. From that year until 1970 and the death of Nasser, the ruling elite changed to a technocratic civilian one as the army withdrew from politics.

**The Group Structure (Corporatism) of the Organic Political State.** Corporatism is the organization of the state not only in terms of bureaucratic structures but also in terms of the functional division of labor necessary for its maintenance e.g. trade unions, corporations, bar association etc. The important point is that these organizations exist only because the state authorizes them. Under Law 32 of 1964 and subsequent similar laws any such organization has had to formally apply for permission to exist. This licensing process actually is a compact(mithaq) between an organization and state. The state gets a function necessary for its existence carried out and also an understanding that the organization will not politically oppose the state. In exchange, the organization gets a monopoly of that function, including special economic rewards for its leaders. If the terms of the compact are adhered to, the organization is also free from the direct interference of the state. Corporatism is thus a form of devolution of authority.

It was Nasser who was to put in place the corporatist building blocs of the new state. Under his leadership, the state was preeminent. In the period leading until 1961 he organized the economy on the principle of state guided capitalism. After that date it became a state directed socialism. The succession of political parties that were organized were also state dominated. They were intended to rally support to the regime and also to act as instruments of control over the corporatist structures.

**The Single Dominant Political Party.** There have been several variations in Egypt's basic political structure since the 1952 revolution. With Nasser at its head, the RCC held the reins of political power. During this transition period a number of outstanding problems, including the final removal of British forces from Egypt and the canal zone in 1954, were finally resolved. In 1956 Nasser formally inaugurated a new system that consolidated power in his own hands.

On January 16, 1956, a new constitution was proclaimed in which extensive powers were concentrated in the hands of the president. The constitution also established a single political party, the National Union, which replaced the National Liberation Rally. The party, the National Assembly, and the other organs of government and politics remained under the control of Nasser, who was elected president by more than 99 percent of the vote in a plebiscite in 1956. The inauguration of the new constitution, formally approved in a plebiscite, ushered in a number of changes in the political system. Among these were: martial law was terminated, political prisoners were released, the RCC military members became civilians (with the exception of General Abdul Hakim Amer, who was minister of defense) who joined various agencies of the government. This new system was short-lived.

In February 1958 Nasser yielded to the demands of a new government in Syria that the two nations be joined to form the United Arab Republic (UAR). The union of these two dissimilar and geographically noncontiguous political units into a single state called for the

creation of a new political structure with, at least theoretically, Nasser sharing power with the Syrian leadership. The provisional constitution of the new UAR was proclaimed, and Nasser became president. Nasser received nearly all the votes cast in the presidential election on February 21, 1958. Both Egyptians and Syrians were represented in the institutions of government, but most of the actual governing was by decree of Nasser and his chief advisers and aides—especially General Amer, who largely controlled the Syrian region. In September 1961, Syria, disenchanted with Egyptian domination and Nasser’s growing socialism, severed ties with the UAR and reestablished its independence. Egypt continued to be known by the name “United Arab Republic” until it became the Arab Republic of Egypt (ARE) in 1971.

With the termination of the union of Egypt and Syria in 1961, there was an intensification of Nasser’s socialist programs in Egypt. A new governmental system was again devised and implemented soon thereafter, with a clear socialist focus. This process of socialist intensification was also an intensification of corporatism. Socialist measures adopted in the early 1960s included further agrarian reform, progressive tax measures, nationalization of business enterprises, and, in general, increased governmental control over the economy. A new charter and constitution were created, and a new single political party organization, the Arab Socialist Union (ASU), was formed. Elections for parliament took place. A new constitution was adopted in 1964 that provided the framework for the remainder of the Nasser tenure.

Nasser ruled Egypt from 1954 until his death in 1970. He was the first Egyptian since the pharaohs to control Egypt for any long period. During his tenure he captured the attention and imagination not only of the Egyptian people but also of the Arab world, much of the Third World, and other portions of the international community. Egypt ended British control, established a republican form of government, and began extensive political change.

The 1950s were the heyday of Nasser’s rule. He succeeded in nationalizing the Suez Canal. He thwarted the objectives of Israel, Britain, and France in the 1956 Sinai War and was

able to turn military defeat into achievement—if not victory—with the aid of the United States and the Soviet Union, which insisted on the removal of foreign troops from Egypt. He secured arms and aid for the Aswan High Dam from the Soviet Union and Soviet bloc allies after the United States and other lenders decided not to provide the necessary assistance. Nasser became a leader of the Nonaligned Movement, and despite the many difficulties in implementing any form of Arab unity, he mobilized people all over the Arab world to think of themselves as members of a group larger than their own state. Nasser symbolized reascent Arab strength for many of the ordinary citizens of the Arab world.

Nasser's accomplishments in the 1950s were soon followed by difficulties. The United Arab Republic dissolved acrimoniously in 1961, Egypt became involved in the civil war in Yemen in the early 1960s (which turned out to be a quagmire from which it would be difficult to withdraw), and there were feuds with other Arab states and challenges to Nasser's role as Arab world leader. The 1967 Arab-Israeli war proved disastrous and resulted in the loss of the Sinai Peninsula (one-seventh of Egypt's land area), the closure of the Suez Canal, and the loss of a substantial portion of Egypt's military capability.

In 1956 Nasser engaged in a dispute with the United States and the West over funding for the construction of the high dam at Aswan and nationalized the Suez Canal, still owned by British and French capital. Although militarily defeated by a British, French, and Israeli invasion force, Nasser was to emerge as the political "victor" upon the force's evacuation and his ability to remain in power. It was the prestige of these accomplishments that led him to another blow for pan-Arabism when he engineered the union of not only Egypt and Syria but also briefly Yemen in the United Arab Republic(1958-1961).

This union did not last, however, and was followed by Egypt's military intervention in Yemen on the side of revolutionaries, which dragged on until 1967. Earlier in that year, still

within the framework of pan-Arabism, Nasser as the preeminent Arab leader, rhetorically tested Israel, only to have the latter inflict a devastating defeat upon him in the 1967 war.

Despite these reverses, Nasser was still the preeminent Egyptian and Arab, the most influential figure in the Middle East, and a focal point of regional and international attention. Nasser's role extended beyond that designated in the constitution. He exercised unwritten powers by virtue of his unique standing in the system, his accomplishments, and his charismatic appeal to the peasantry that formed the backbone of the Egyptian polity. He controlled all the main instruments of power and coercion, including the army, the secret police and intelligence agencies, and the Arab Socialist Union. He dominated the cabinet and the National Assembly. At the time of his death, Nasser's central role and his charismatic appeal to the overwhelming majority of Egyptians raised doubts about a successor's ability to replace him as the undisputed leader of Egypt and the Arab world. Nasser died of a heart attack on September 29, 1970, following intense negotiations he had brokered between King Hussein of Jordan and PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat, whose forces had been at war for that whole month in Jordan.

**The Egyptian Masses: The Social State.** The social state consists of those regions and local communities where eighty percent or more of Egyptians live relatively untouched by the authority of the state. The regions consist of the area to the south of Cairo called Upper Egypt where the authority of a Cairo distant in terms of hundreds of miles is in fact even more distant in terms of culture. The other major region is that of the delta to the north of Cairo. Cairo rests so lightly as a political capital, that it in fact is referred to in colloquial Arabic as "Misr" or "Egypt" as the Arabic name for the country as a whole. As far as local society is concerned, neither the French inspired modern legal system of the country is employed at the local level, nor is there a system of direct taxation. Instead, customary law is employed to settle local disputes or to attain justice in the case of, for example, murder. Taxation is indirect as for example in government international marketing of agricultural crops. Further evidence of this social state is evident in



the evasions of the well-intentioned agrarian reform of Nasser. The redistribution of land that occurred was supposed to have dismantled the landowning class when in fact research has shown that wide spread evasions occurred and local societies remained landowning class dominated. In other words, even Nasser's policies intended as they were to genuinely benefit the masses of the population left these same masses relatively untouched by the authority of the state. In the later regimes of Sadat and Mubarak this distance between population and state was to become even greater. This paradox of the Egyptian authoritarian state not being able to relate to its population except by police powers was to become even more evident.

Egypt's social and economic structure is closely linked to the Nile River, which has traditionally been an important source of revenue and a central factor in daily life. Even today wealth is still often measured in landownership and control of agricultural production. Despite the increasing urbanization that has made Cairo a city of over 21 million people, of whom perhaps half do not have permanent housing, the majority of the Egyptian population are the fallahin, the peasants. They are the backbone of the Egyptian system, even if they are relatively deprived economically and educationally, as well as in terms of life expectancy, wealth, health, literacy, and most of the other measures of well being. Both Nasser and Sadat traced their roots and publicized their connection to this group. In addition to the fallahin there are the traditional wealthy, upper-class landowners, the middle-class city dwellers, and the growing numbers of urbanized poor. The traditional supporters of the king and members of the court came from the upper class. Since the 1952 revolution, however, young men from the lower and middle classes have moved up the social ladder through the huge and growing bureaucracy and the military officer corps.

At the time of the revolution Egypt was a poor country facing a host of social and economic problems: low per capita income, unequal income distribution, disease, low life expectancy, high infant mortality, and a low literacy rate. Agriculture was the dominant sector of

the economy, and this required the use of Nile water for irrigation. Industry, which was significantly limited by poor natural and mineral resources and by the lack of sufficiently trained workers, was a minor factor.

The Egyptian revolution of 1952 was launched to deal with a political issue, but almost as crucial were the substantial economic and social problems of Egypt, which were among the earliest problems tackled by the regime. There was a two-class system—a very rich upper class and very poor lower class, with the latter vastly larger than the former. The upper class—bankers, businessmen, merchants, and landlords—controlled the wealth of the country and dominated its political institutions. It could and did prevent the adoption of reform measures that would diminish its economic and political control. Much of Egypt's land was concentrated in the hands of relatively few absentee landowners. The poor, mostly landless peasants constituted more than 75 percent of the population. They were illiterate and had little opportunity to improve their situation. Their health standards were deplorable. Education was severely limited. This disparity between the landowning rich and the poor peasantry was further compounded by overpopulation, exacerbated by the high birthrates of the poor. The population growth rate surpassed that of agricultural production increases. Moreover, the possibility of food production's keeping pace with population growth was limited by lack of control of the water resources of the Nile.

One of the goals of the revolution, announced shortly after the takeover by the Free Officers, was the achievement of social and economic justice through elimination of the corrupt system and the monopoly of wealth. Although lacking a specific ideology and well-developed programs for implementing these goals, the new government attempted to raise the standard of living of the average Egyptian, especially of the fallahin of the Nile Valley, and to reduce the poverty and disease that had permeated Egyptian society for so long.

**Anwar Sadat.** The constitution in force at that time did not call for Vice President Anwar Sadat to succeed Nasser in office, nor was there any indication that Nasser favored Sadat, or any particular person, as his ultimate successor. Sadat initially enjoyed the legitimacy of being the formal successor and of his long association with Nasser (he was virtually the only former Free Officer left in office by this time), but it was generally assumed that he would soon be replaced by one of the powerful rivals maneuvering behind the scene. In November 1970 Nasser succumbed to heart failure and was succeeded by his vice president, Anwar Sadat. Sadat was the last of the officers in power who had engineered the revolution of 1952. The manner in which he had survived was due to his near political invisibility. During the time until his ascension to power he was known in Egypt as Nasser's "lap dog" or alternatively as "Said Na'm Na'm" ("Mr. Yes Yes").

Unlike the revolutionary Arab leader Nasser, Sadat had no ideological principle of legitimacy attached to himself. In any case, the 1967 defeat had been the death knell of Arabism. In a remarkable fashion, Sadat quickly sensed that the next ideological stage in Egypt's political development was to be Islam. The 1967 war had triggered the beginning of the Islamic revival. Sadat moved to gain its support by beginning to free from prison the thousands of Islamic radicals placed there by Nasser. In addition, Sadat became a conspicuous practitioner of Islam by ostentatiously acquiring the dark callus on the forehead called a zabiba which results from repeated contact with the prayer rug. This permitted Sadat to not only play the role of father but also of a father-like imam or leader of prayer.

Sadat had to address the humiliation of the Israeli military occupation of the huge expanse of the Sinai peninsula as a consequence of the 1967 war. This occupation was not only humiliating to Egypt also was costing the country hundreds of millions of dollars annually in lost revenues from the closure of the Suez Canal and from seized oil fields.

Sadat began to boldly plot the military expulsion of the Israelis. Nasser had after 1967 invited 15,000 Soviet military advisors into Egypt to reform his military. By July 1972 they were ordered out of the country. They had completed their mission and their arrogance and the fact they restricted the military planning of Egypt meant they had to go. Sadat shrewdly planned the limited war of October 1973. The Egyptian surprise assault caught the Israelis off guard and the first two weeks saw a limited territorial gain in Sinai, which was needed to bring about serious diplomatic negotiations. On the other hand, in the last two weeks of the war, the Israelis had surrounded an Egyptian army and in effect this restored lost dignity to the Israelis.

Sadat initiated the diplomacy that eventually led to the withdrawal of the Israelis in 1982, but his nation was economically impoverished. He therefore began a program of political and economic liberalization (called infitah or the “opening” after the military success in Sinai) designed to appeal to the United States. The combination of this policy plus his willingness to break rank with the Arab states and negotiate with America’s ally Israel resulted in at first small and then later larger economic assistance. The result was to be ultimately, after two preliminary agreements, the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty (1979) in which Israel agreed to evacuate Sinai and Egypt established diplomatic relations with Israel.

Although Sadat was elected president in an October 1970 referendum (receiving only 85 percent of the vote, as opposed to Nasser’s traditional 99 percent), the long-term stability of his regime was not yet assured.

Sadat sought to consolidate his position but did not make a major overt move until May 1971, when he suddenly purged the government of all senior officials who opposed him. This group included Vice President Ali Sabri, a prominent left-leaning figure who had headed the ASU and was regarded as Moscow’s favorite candidate, as well as the minister of war, the head of intelligence, and other senior officials. These officials were later tried for high treason.

Sadat did not enjoy the widespread adulation Nasser had evoked from the masses and had even been derided as Nasser's yes-man. His declaration that 1971 would be a "year of decision" that would result in war or peace in the Arab-Israeli conflict did nothing to improve his popularity, as the year ended with no movement toward achievement of this objective.

By 1972 Sadat had become an object of ridicule and cruel jokes, which raised doubts about his leadership. It was in partial response to domestic criticism and to the concerns and complaints of the military that he decided to terminate the role of the Soviet advisers in Egypt in 1972. Sadat soon began to prepare for the October War (the Arab-Israeli war of 1973) because he saw little progress toward a political settlement of the conflict with Israel. He achieved a formidable success in taking the Israelis by surprise and crossing the heavily fortified Suez Canal at the beginning of the war in October 1973. Although he ultimately lost the war in a military sense, with the Egyptian Third Army surrounded by Israeli troops, his initial success in the field and his mobilization of support from the conservative Arab oil producers (who, at his behest, used oil as a political weapon for the first time) made the war a political success. Sadat was able to place Israel on the defensive internationally, to secure further international support for the Egyptian and Arab positions, and to attract increased aid from the oil-rich Arab states. Of the many honorary titles he received, Sadat was said to have favored above all the phrase that came into use after Egyptian troops took the Suez Canal back from the Israeli forces that had held its eastern shore since 1967: "Hero of the Crossing."

In April 1974 Sadat produced a document called the October Working Paper, which discussed the new era ushered in by the October War. It called for extensive reform and change in Egypt and suggested that the lot of the average Egyptian would improve. It embodied his new approach to politics and economics, especially the liberalization of politics, the economic "opening" to Western aid and investment, and the restructuring of the Egyptian government toward decentralization and away from the centrally planned economy. Sadat's turn to the West,

which actually began with the expulsion of Soviet advisers in 1972, accelerated during the period after the October 1973 war, and culminated with the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty of 1979, may all have been part of a huge economic gamble: By turning to the West, could he attract substantial aid and investment and get rid of the heavy economic burden of the war with Israel (and regain the Sinai Peninsula), while at the same time not totally alienating the oil-rich Arab states that had supported Egypt since 1967 with aid and investment?

Sadat's consolidation of political control in May 1971 was followed by changes in the political structures and processes of politics. On September 11, 1971, the present constitution was approved by general referendum. It is similar to its predecessor in continuing the strong presidential system extant in Egypt since the revolution. According to the constitution, the president of the republic is head of state. He is empowered to declare a state of emergency in the case of national danger, subject to a referendum within sixty days. Legislative power is vested in the National Assembly, composed of 444 directly elected members and two members nominated by the president; members of parliament serve a five-year term. The president may object to laws passed by the National Assembly within thirty days of their passage, but the assembly has the right to override his objection by a two-thirds vote. The president has the power to appoint vice presidents, the prime minister and his cabinet, High Court judges, provincial governors, university presidents, and even some religious leaders. He is the supreme commander of the armed forces. Although the constitution increased the powers of the National Assembly, dominant authority remained with the president, who has the right of temporary rule by decree. Presidential decrees have the power of law. The constitution includes guarantees of freedom of expression, as well as assurance of freedom from arbitrary arrest, seizure of property, and mail censorship. Press censorship is banned except in periods of war or emergency. At first, the Arab Socialist Union was declared the only authorized political party, but this was gradually modified,

beginning in 1976. Islam was declared the state religion, although freedom of religion was guaranteed.

In 1976 Sadat initiated what appeared to be a move toward a multiparty system when he announced that three ideological “platforms” would be organized within the ASU. The centrist group—the Egyptian Arab Socialist Organization—had Sadat’s personal support and won a vast majority of the seats in the 1976 parliamentary election. Sadat still refused to allow independent parties to be formed, and the three organizations never took root as genuine vehicles of political participation. Only after the violent clashes over increased prices of basic commodities in January 1977 did Sadat permit parties to be formed. The opposition from these parties was too much for Sadat to bear, however, and he soon clamped down on such groups as the New Wafd Party and the leftist National Progressive Unionist Party.

In July 1978 Sadat created the National Democratic Party (NDP) and later permitted a leftist party to organize as an official opposition. Both the Egyptian Arab Socialist Organization and the Arab Socialist Union were abolished in April 1980. An Advisory Council was established to serve the functions of the old ASU Central Committee, and in the September 1980 elections for that council, Sadat’s new NDP won all 140 seats, with the seventy remaining posts being appointed directly by the president. Sadat, like Nasser before him, wanted to create a political organization but was unable to tolerate the loss of political control that would occur if these “parties” were to become genuine vehicles for mass participation.

By 1980 domestic tension in Egypt had grown, although Sadat’s grip on power was in no way diminished. Confessional conflict had occurred between the large Coptic Christian minority and the Islamic fundamentalists, and Sadat placed restrictions on both. In the years after 1979 it became clear that there remained serious opposition to Egypt’s move toward the West and its peace with Israel, especially from Islamic fundamentalists. What may have been Sadat’s economic gamble was not paying off as well as he might have hoped: There was some Western

aid and investment, but it was not substantial, and Arab aid and investment dropped sharply. Egypt had been ejected from the Arab League for making peace with Israel and remained isolated in the Arab world. More pressing yet, there had been no significant economic progress, and the standard of living of the average Egyptian was very low and getting worse. Sadat held his course. Increasing political violence, including clashes between Coptic Christians and Islamic fundamentalists marked the years 1980 and 1981. The Sadat government reacted repressively. Sadat initiated severe repression of his opposition in September 1980, beginning with the formerly tolerated leftist party, but the major move was made almost a year later, in September 1981, when more than 1,500 Egyptian political figures of all political persuasions were arrested. Certain religious groups were banned and their newspapers closed. A number of Muslim Brotherhood leaders were arrested, and Sadat dismissed the Coptic leader, Pope Shenuda III. Many fundamentalist mosques were taken over by the government, and the security apparatus began to clamp down on universities. Foreign journalists who had criticized Sadat were expelled, along with the Soviet ambassador and other Soviet diplomats

Sadat's assassination in October 1981 by Islamic fundamentalists opposed to his peacemaking with Israel changed very little about Egyptian domestic politics.

**Hosni Mubarak.** On October 6, 1981, Sadat was assassinated by Muslim fundamentalists at a parade celebrating the eighth anniversary of his supreme military achievement: the crossing of the Suez Canal at the opening of the 1973 October War. A state of emergency was declared, and the National Assembly nominated Vice President Hosni Mubarak to succeed Sadat. Although the assassins were quickly arrested, conflict broke out in Asyut between the security forces and Muslim fundamentalists. The anti-Sadat demonstrations were limited in scope and were soon quelled. A presidential referendum was held, and Mubarak was sworn in as president on October 14, 1981.



Although Mubarak cracked down on the religious extremists associated with Sadat's assassination, he released many of the other political figures whom Sadat had had arrested a month before his death. The battle against corruption started from the top, and Sadat's brother and some of his closest associates were taken to court for corrupt practices. Unlike Sadat, Mubarak and his family maintain a low profile and live modestly.

Hosni Mubarak left the basic structure unaltered. He allowed the New Wafd to participate in the 1984 parliamentary elections, but the NDP won handily and some opposition parties failed to get sufficient votes to secure even one seat in the assembly. The NDP, still the party of the president, won 384 seats in the November 1990 election, with the main opposition parties boycotting the polls. Mubarak was elected to a third presidential term in October 1993. Parliamentary elections were scheduled for November 1995 and presidential elections for October 1999.

Despite all the changes, Egypt remained a strong presidential system with a facade of elections and party rule. The judiciary is independent, but the government can, and has, used military courts or the "state of emergency" (in force without interruption since 1981) regulations to ignore judicial decisions it does not favor. There are eleven legal political parties in addition to the NDP, the government party. Neither the other parties nor the NDP has much mass support. The greatest threat to the government is from the various Islamic fundamentalist groups. The largest, oldest, and best organized is the Muslim Brotherhood, founded in 1928 in Egypt. It was banned by Nasser in 1954 and is still technically illegal, but it is officially tolerated because its efforts to Islamize society are made from within the existing political system. This is not the case with the more radical Islamic groups that have resorted to violence to advance their cause. After the assassination of Sadat, there was a lull in these violent activities. They resumed in the 1990s, as the radical groups gained young recruits frustrated at unemployment and poverty. In October 1990 the speaker of the People's Assembly was killed. An anti-fundamentalist journalist was

assassinated in June 1992, part of a dramatic upsurge in fundamentalist violence, often directed against Coptic Christians, government officials, and, starting in October 1992, against foreign tourists. Although the attacks on tourists have abated somewhat, it has only been at the cost of brutal government suppression.

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Despite the release of many political detainees, Mubarak kept a tight rein on Egyptian politics. The state of emergency remains in force, even though the emergency following Sadat’s death has long passed. Mubarak made substantial economic progress and managed to put Egypt

back into the center of the Arab world without reneging on the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty of 1979. He faced down serious challenges to his rule, such as the February 1986 uprising by 20,000 conscripts of the Security Force, and the challenges that the Islamic fundamentalists have continued to pose, all of which were brutally suppressed. As long as Mubarak continues to retain the all-important confidence of the Egyptian military, his regime is stable.

**The Parliamentary Elections of October and November 2000.** The parliamentary elections in October and November 2000 were illustrative of his present strengths and weaknesses and the themes of the strong and the weak state. The elections were evidence of the relative strength of the state in that in the final analysis the results showed the ability of the state to continue to manufacture a desired political outcome. The government's National Democratic Party (NDP) was finally able to cobble together a majority of 388(87%) seats out of a total of 444 contested seats (10 can be appointed by the president). This percentage compared with 97% in 1995. But these figures do not show the degree of the government's declining ability to authoritatively dictate the desired outcome by the forced mobilization of the voting population. In fact, in actual voting success the NDP won only about 175 seats outright and had to pressure/bargain with 213 "independents" to persuade them to switch to the government party.

The genuine electoral contest was not with the official opposition parties but rather with further "independent" candidates who in fact were identified as the illegal, politically moderate Muslim Brotherhood (MB). They ended up with a remarkable 17 seats but these were gained despite beatings, intimidation and occasional killings. What is further remarkable about this is that the perpetrators of the violence were not the usual state security forces but rather male and female toughs hired by NDP candidate's intent upon gaining their due. In other words, even the classic exercise of coercion had slipped from the hands of the state into the hands of the state's underlings. The relative success of the MB also was further evidence of the degree of the Islamization of the Egyptian State.

**Changes in the Ruling Class.** The ruling class provides the patrimonial leader with the support necessary to make him authoritative politically. The relationship is one of political support on the one hand and economic benefits on the other. The existence of such a class in Egypt over the last 200 years of modernization has been intensely investigated by scholars in the three different time periods from the period of the great modernizer of Egypt, Muhammad Ali(1805-1849) onwards, the Revolution of 1919 against the British and in the time of Nasser. This phenomenon has been the basis of political strength over this long period and at the same time it is the basis of the strategic weakness of the state in performance terms. The developmental potential of the state is traded off for enduring political loyalty and stability. The definition of the ruling class (ayyan or khassa) is that it consists of the top 20 percent of the population that receive 48 percent of the income of the country. Accompanying this concentration of wealth is also the ruling class's ability through government and, increasingly, private-sector leadership to dominate the corporatist group structures of the society. This symbiotic relationship accounts for how in the pre-1991 period of stronger geopolitical Egyptian regional hegemonic leadership, domestic stability strengthened the leaders' foreign policy hand. On the other hand, in the post-1991 geoeconomic period, this relationship became one of a dysfunctional inability to develop and produce, thus weakening Egypt's ability to compete economically.

The idiom of expression of contemporary Egyptian politics has combined several political ideas such as a state nationalism of a Western type overlaying older ideas of pan-Arabism and pan-Islamism. Over the past fifty years, political expression by both those in power and by the organized politically disaffected has used various combinations of these ideas over the years, beginning with Nasser's Arab socialism and, now, increasingly, by contemporary militant political Islamism. The Egyptian political structure, on the other hand, has remained relatively

constant. The principal elements of the Egyptian political structure are patrimonial leadership, a powerful ruling class, and influential corporatist groups.

**Informal Corporatist Groups.** The corporatist group structure reflects the division of labor necessary for the maintenance of society. These groups consist of two categories. There are first, the informal family, peer group, and “old boy” networks, which provide the basic procreation and support functions of society. Second, there are the formal groups that carry out the labor of society, such as trade unions and bar associations. The Egyptian family (a‘ila) is classically Middle Eastern sedentary in character. It is patriarchal, extended, endogamous, and patrilocal. It is both the model of political authority as reflected in the concept of “patrimonialism” and the basic unit of allegiance in Egyptian society. Family loyalties and the authority of the father are primary. The extension of loyalty to a network of grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and so on makes the range of the family extensive. The practice of arranged marriages and first cousin marriages increases family solidarity. So does the tendency of families to live concentrated in a single geographical area. At the age of puberty, the boy leaves the house of his closely-knit family and forms a play and membership peer group called a shilla. The shilla is a lifetime membership group that has responsibilities for the security of the neighborhood. On occasion, such as the 1977 riots in Cairo over the raising bread prices the shilla can become politically activated.

Those who graduate from high school, university, or military academy have alumni status as a dufaa known by the year of graduation. For example, it was the dufaa of 1938 from the Royal Military Academy that carried out the revolution of 1952. The class of 1938 served together and was promoted together on the principle of solidarity. It was they who went to fight in Palestine against the Zionist Jews in 1948. There they suffered the humiliating defeat that they attributed to the corruption of their leaders. In the words of Nasser, “The Enemy was in Egypt!”. This solidarity grouping provides a further potentially political membership group.

**Formal Corporatist Groups.** Corporatist groups are formal for at least two major reasons. The first is that they can not exist at all except with the permission of the state and by law. It is the need to formally apply for such approval that makes them corporatist groups and not civil society groups. The second reason is that in fact, once given approval to operate, they then have a familiar identity as trade unions, medical associations, engineering societies, and so on. An informal compact (mithaq) is entered into whereby the organization agrees that it will not engage in political activities and will support the state in exchange for a grant of a monopoly of its sector.

Illustrative of this point about licensing is the role of the army and that of the Islamic groups. The army is the keystone institution of Egyptian society. It is the arbiter of Egyptian politics and the guarantor of the “strong” state. Its “license,” therefore, follows from the respect the state accords it. It does not, however, seek a political role for itself. Under Nasser it possessed this role and the result was the ignominious defeat of Egypt in 1967. Thus in the “bread” riots of 1977 in protest against the threatened end of food subsidies, the army intervened, restored order, and withdrew. It was to do this again in 1986 when paramilitary troops rebelled. The segment of the army prepared to carry out this support of the regime and the defense of the constitution has been the army of combat. There is also the army of production, which significantly makes Egypt self-reliant in arms production but also produces consumer goods. The army is free from budgetary accountability and the “production” army is especially free from scrutiny is monopolistic in its activities and probably prone to corruption.

Whereas the army has found its accommodation within the system, the Islamic groups have not. The mainstream of Islam would like to be licensed and included in the system but the regime refuses to do this. Instead it lumps such moderate groups together with the extreme and violent minority.

These groups have the primary responsibility for their internal affairs, including the ability to benefit themselves economically. The internal affairs of such groups, with the exception of the professional army, are characterized by the presence of informal corporatist groups such as family, peer groups and old boy networks in elections to the presidencies and executive committees of the trade unions, bar associations, and other groups. The informal groups have acted as political parties or factions. More recently, Islamic groups, notably the moderate Muslim Brotherhood, have supplanted informal groups. This has prompted government interference in these elections and even their cancellation.

Sadat's successor, Hosni Mubarak, left the basic structure unaltered. He allowed the New Wafd to participate in the 1984 parliamentary elections, but the NDP won handily and some opposition parties failed to get sufficient votes to secure even one seat in the assembly. The NDP, still the party of the president, won 384 seats in the November 1990 election, with the main opposition parties boycotting the polls. Mubarak was elected to a third presidential term in October 1993.

**The Dualism of Egyptian Society: The Failure of Development.** The existence of a political class of great wealth and privilege suggests the possibility that Egyptian society might be interpreted in terms of class structure: for example, bourgeoisie, proletarian, and peasant classes. It is a further dimension of the politically strong and capability weak state that this is not the case. The ability of a strong executive and a cooperative political class to maintain themselves in power does not mean that they can organize the society for productive purposes or coerce or mobilize the masses of the population for greater levels of production. In other words, the quietism of the politically strong state distances itself from the masses and the weakness of the economic state creates a gap and space and not the conditions of alienation and class-consciousness.

It has been suggested that the informal sector is also Islamic. As a result, political and economic distance exists between the political and economic capabilities of the state on the one hand and the masses on the other. It is estimated that 80 percent of small businesses are in the informal sector and free from the payment of taxes but only 30 percent of the GDP is located there. This gap is reinforced by the 54 percent illiteracy rate that creates dialectical and regional differences. As noted, a further gap is in law enforcement, where sometimes the most serious of criminal acts are dealt with informally by means of customary law.

The parliamentary elections in October and November 2000, already noted above, were illustrative of these themes of the strong and the weak state. The elections were evidence of the relative strength of the state in that the state was able to manufacture a desired political outcome. But these figures do not show the government's declining ability to dictate the outcome by the forced mobilization of the voting population. In fact, in actual voting success the NDP won only about 175 seats outright and had to pressure/bargain with 213 "independents" to persuade them to switch to the government party.

### **STUDY QUESTIONS: III**

1. Was the revolution of 1952 a revolution or a military coup d'etat? Did it spring from the base of society or did it originate at the top? Did it result in profound political and social change?
2. Is the Egyptian ruling class understood best in terms of its closeness to the Egyptian political state or as an expression of the social forces of the Egyptian social state?
3. A major emphasis in American foreign policy is the promotion of democracy. The informal and formal groups of a society are said to constitute a "civil society" that constrains and puts limitations upon the state. To what extent and in what way might this be the case in Egypt?



4. The government of Egypt is incapable of delivering essential social services to the masses of the population. Islamic organizations have been able to do this. What are the political consequences of this?

5. The succession of Nasser (1952), Sadat (1970) and Mubarak (1981) has coincided with a changes in society and policies. These changes have been sweeping and dramatic. What are they?

#### **IV. Islam and Politics**

Frequent references have been made to the expression of Islamism i.e. Islam as a political ideology, in the analysis of Egypt as a dual state. The subject is so central to the understanding of Egyptian politics from the 1970's onwards, however, that it is useful to pause and comment on the sweep of Islamism over the last two decades. The first thing to appreciate is that Islamism or the political ideology of Islam is the successor to the ideology of Arabism. Arabism began to develop out of the Revolution of 1952 as the ideology of Gamal Abd al Nasser, first as an expression of Arab nationalism and anti-colonialism and then from 1961 onwards as Arab socialism. But while Nasser was able to successfully defeat British and French colonialism, he was to fall victim to the success of Israel as a colonial power in the 1967 War. This spelled the death knell of Arabism and the birth of the Islamic revival and its political ideological version as Islamism (and what might be called "Christianism" among Egypt's 7% Coptic Christian population). A cultural customary reaction to a "disaster" on the scale of Egypt's and the Arab worlds defeat of 1967 was to attribute it not to the superiority of Israeli arms but to attribute it to God's judgment on a wayward people. Both Muslim and Christian over the next decade turned spiritually inwards and the Egyptian religious revival began. When Muslim and Christian alike were to see angels over the Israeli defensive positions in the 1973 War, the religious revival was validated and reinforced.

As already noted, when Sadat succeeded to the presidency he sought to capitalize on this sentiment by relenting on that had been Nasser's crack down on religious organizations. From 1971 onwards, he was to release thousand's of them from jail while at the same time never permitting them to organize legally. Those released from jail were broadly members of the Muslim Brotherhood. This had been a major opposition group prior to the 1952 Revolution and they were to continue as such against Nasser. Sadat succeeded in gaining their acceptance of him by the majority of the group. In a speech to their leadership he once said that while their organizations remained illegal, he did permit the publication of their illegal newspaper! This was to prove the difficulty for him and for his successor, Mubarak. Both leaders recognized the power and popularity of the religious opposition, but both were and are so beholden to the ruling class that remains Nasserist, Arab nationalist and secular that neither was able to create a political space for the religious opposition. The majority of the Brotherhood now wanted to participate in politics but neither Sadat nor Mubarak was prepared to grant this. The moderate majority began to turn to the provision of social and emergency services the government was too inefficient or corrupt to deliver. These services were routine medical services , day care services etc. In the 1992 earth quake it was they who provided relief and not the government. Islam gained luster from these benefits.

An Egyptian joke made the point at the time regarding the earthquake:

President Mubarak held a cabinet meeting immediately after the calamity in which 500 people died. He asked for each minister to report what he was doing to meet the needs of the Egyptian people. As usual, it was the minister of interior who was eager to report first. "Your Excellency", he said, "My officers are busy rounding up suspects and I am confident that very soon, I will be able to report the name of the person responsible!"

There was, however, a younger generation of the Brotherhood that was to become far more militant . The result has been a long history of religiously inspired violence directed at

both presidents, that was to see Sadat killed in October 1981 and an assassination attempt against Mubarak in 1995.

How Islamism has actually progressed is quite complex and this is especially the case when attempts to answer the question of its present state. From the beginning, there was a numerically small but organizationally vicious and violent strain. This began with an armed attack upon the Cairo Military College in 1974 and was to continue as the *gema al Islamiyya* or Islamic Group. This organization began in the university science faculties but also found “water within which to swim” in the culturally distinct area of upper Egypt to the south of Cairo and among peoples from that area in certain neighborhoods of Cairo. In fact one such neighborhood in 1992 was occupied by 14000 Egyptian troops who fought against the local population for days. The purpose was to arrest local Islamic leaders and to end their influence. When a Western journalist visited the area three years later, Islam was still strong and vibrant.

In 1997, there occurred what was to become the last violent act of militant Islamism. Fifty-four Italian tourists were killed in Upper Egypt. Two things followed from this attack. The first was a wave of populist revulsion against the tactic. The second was a very severe crackdown by the government. In addition, the government began to penetrate the internal politics of Egyptian corporatist groups. The result was that democratically elected members of the brotherhood were excluded from internal positions of authority. The combination of these two factors has ushered in a period of Islamic quietism that continues to the present time. But this quietism has not meant that the government is any less relenting against the moderate main stream Islamism of the Muslim Brotherhood. In July 2002, a runoff election for the parliament was held in Alexandria. The outcome in 2000 which saw a female member of the Brotherhood elected had been challenged by the government. In the new elections, observers noted hardly anyone actually entering a polling booth. Despite this, the Brotherhood candidate who had earlier

received thousands of votes now received hundreds and the national Democratic Party candidate of the government who had earlier received hundreds, now received thousands. Once again, an Egyptian political joke captures the essentials of democratic practices in Egypt:

President Mubarak was concerned about the ability of President Bush to be elected. He therefore sent his trusted electoral advisor to Washington to assist the American president. When he returned to Egypt he was expecting to be praised for his accomplishment. Instead, President Mubarak was very angry, saying “ I sent you to see that President Bush was elected the American president and instead you got me elected the president of the United States!”

Even the subtleties of the preceding analysis does not complete the account of Islamism in Egypt. Even while the state has been cracking down on the Islamism of the social state, it is also the case that the very political state that has been draconian in its policy has itself become more Islamized. The reason for this is that the official head of Islam in Egypt , the Shaykh al-Azhar(the leader of the great university by that name) has himself been extending his own religious authority. When asked by the government to, for example, to give a religious decree against terrorism he has exacted concessions to the expansion of his authority e.g. the right to censor books, a right formally belonging to the government. One author has termed this “Islamization by stealth”. It is apparent, that the so-called secular state of Egypt is in fact significantly Islamized, a fact not lost upon a believing population!

#### **Study Questions: IV**

1. When and in what way did Islamism come to supplant Arabism in Egypt?
2. What has been the source of militant Islam in Egypt and why has it been important?
3. What are the features of main stream Islam in Egypt and why is it important?

## V. The Egyptian Economy: Wealth and Poverty

Egypt, the “gift of the Nile,” has been dependent on that single main source of fresh water for the thousands of years of its recorded existence. There is a narrow strip of poor land along the Mediterranean coast where some crops can be grown when there is minimal rainfall. Except for this area and a few small oases, all agriculture is dependent on irrigation from the Nile. The land made inhabitable and cultivable by the river constitutes a small portion of Egypt’s overall land area (about 4 percent); therefore, agricultural production, despite the rich soil of the Nile Valley and the favorable climate, has been limited. Nevertheless, it is the main occupation of, and provides the livelihood for, most Egyptians.

The limited agricultural production does not provide sufficient food for Egypt’s increasingly large population. Egypt’s population growth rate has hovered at about 2.6 percent per year. This is one of the lowest rates in the Middle East. Even at this lower rate of growth, Egypt’s population is now moving towards 70 million in 2002, a number that is beyond Egypt’s projected capacity to feed, clothe, house, and employ.

Agrarian reform became the first and most significant domestic effort of the new regime, as demonstrated by the Agrarian Reform Law of September 1952. It limited individual landholdings to less than two hundred faddans (approximately two hundred acres), reduced the rents paid for lands, and increased agricultural wages. In an effort to redistribute existing agricultural land and to divide the wealth of the country more equitably, some lands were expropriated (with compensation) and redistributed.

Related to the Agrarian Reform Law were other measures of considerable importance, of which the construction of the Aswan High Dam was among the most significant. The purpose of the dam was to improve Egypt’s economic system by increasing the already high productivity levels of the Nile Valley lands through an improved irrigation system. The dam was designed to

increase water storage capacity, to prevent devastating floods, to add cultivable land, and to create substantial additional hydroelectric capacity. The dam also had symbolic value as an achievement of the revolution.

The Aswan High Dam has had mixed effects. Many of the anticipated benefits have been realized. There has been a significant increase in the cultivated area of Egypt and in net agricultural output; flood control has also fostered productivity gains; additional electrical power, primarily for industrial use, has been made available; navigation along the Nile, which is utilized as a major transportation artery in Egypt, has been improved; and a fishing industry has been developed in Lake Nasser. However, there are some problems. For example, the silt that fertilized the lands of the Nile Valley with the annual flood has been trapped behind the dam in Lake Nasser. This makes it necessary to use larger amounts of chemical fertilizer, which is imported and expensive. Salinity has increased in the northern portion of the river and in some of the land that was formerly drained by floods.

The 1952 revolution was of little immediate consequence to the Egyptian economy. The land reforms resulted in some redistribution of land and wealth, but the economy continued to be based on private enterprise. Although some restrictions were placed on the economy, they were directed mainly toward foreign trade and payments. By the end of the 1950s government attitudes had shifted to favor public participation in, and direct regulation of, the economy; in 1961 a series of decrees nationalized all large-scale industry, business, finance, and virtually all foreign trade. Private enterprise and free trade were replaced by Arab socialism, which was proclaimed the basis of the economic system. In practice, this meant establishing a mixed economy with a large public sector (including all foreign trade) and with the remaining private economic activities subject to various kinds of direct controls. Prices were regulated, and administrative action and decision determined resource allocation.

The system derived its socialist character mainly from the fact that the government controlled all big business. Modern manufacturing, mining, electricity and other public utilities, construction, transport and communication, finance, and wholesale trade were primarily owned by the government, whereas most retail trade, handicrafts and repair, housing, professional services, and agriculture were privately owned. The government imposed some controls on agricultural production through its control of the irrigation system and through compulsory participation in government-sponsored agricultural cooperatives. Control was also exercised over the distribution of capital goods, raw materials, and semi-manufactures as well as over prices and wages.

By 1962 the Egyptian economy and the context in which it functioned had changed considerably. Ownership of the main branches of the economy had been transferred to the government. The wealth remaining in private hands was essentially real estate and that, too, was carefully controlled. Government budgets accounted for about 60 percent of the gross national product. Inequality of wealth and income had been greatly reduced, largely through a process of agrarian reform, higher taxation, the extension of social services, and a series of nationalizations and sequestrations. The role of foreigners in the economy had been substantially reduced and, in some sectors, eliminated. Industry had made substantial progress—accounting for more than 20 percent of the GNP—and continued to increase its proportion.

Efforts to improve the economic system were severely hampered by the losses suffered in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. As a consequence of that conflict, Egypt lost substantial revenues from the closure of the Suez Canal, the loss of some oil fields in the occupied Sinai Peninsula, and the loss of tourism. All three elements had been important to Egypt's earning of foreign exchange for its development and for the purchase of needed imports.

After the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war, partly intended to create new economic opportunities, President Sadat inaugurated the economic infitah, or open-door policy, to

encourage foreign and domestic private investment. The Suez Canal was reopened in 1975, and the Sinai oil fields were later returned to Egyptian control. Fueled less by these economic policies and more by external factors such as oil revenues, Suez Canal tolls, tourism revenues, and remittances from Egyptians working abroad, economic performance began to improve and the gross national product increased by an annual average of over 9 percent between 1974 and 1981. Major aid from Arab oil-producing states, which had been contributing huge amounts of money every year since 1967, ceased after Egypt signed the peace treaty with Israel in 1979, although U.S. aid increased greatly.

Although there had been some improvements during the Sadat era, Hosni Mubarak encountered chronic economic difficulties upon taking office in 1981: an expensive government welfare system, rising inflation, foreign exchange shortages, balance-of-payments problems, and a foreign debt estimated at about \$21 billion. Five years later the foreign debt had grown to more than \$46 billion, making Egypt the region's greatest debtor nation. The debt had risen to about \$51 billion by 1989.

Three factors have combined to make Egypt's economic picture brighter. First, by 1987, thanks to Mubarak's low-key diplomacy, ties had been restored with the Arab world; aid and investment from the wealthy Arab states had begun to return. Second, Egypt's support of the Saudi-U.S. coalition in the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis brought huge infusions of cash and debt cancellation from the Arab oil producers (\$2 billion in cash and \$7 billion in debt cancellation in 1990-1991), reducing Egypt's external debt to \$40 billion in 1990. New grants were made by the European nations, and U.S. aid rose significantly. The third factor improving Egypt's economic situation was the decision by Mubarak in 1991 to begin a massive structural adjustment program in cooperation with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. The program was designed to move Egypt toward a market economy; it included a wide range of monetary



reforms, ending most subsidies on basic commodities (except bread). Progress has been made on this major program, though privatization (a sensitive political issue) is proceeding slowly.

By early 1994 Egypt's economy had shown distinct improvement. The country had a strong balance-of-payments position and was proceeding with debt reduction more or less according to its rescheduling agreements. Major government efforts at birth control had succeeded in lowering the rate of population increase from about 3 percent in 1985 to about 2.3 percent in 1993. Although cotton exports had declined, agricultural output rose by about 5 percent in 1992, with record harvests of wheat, rice, corn, and citrus fruits. Suez Canal revenues had risen. Egypt has sizable gas reserves as well as oil and is hoping to turn to gas for much of its energy requirements, given problems with hydroelectric power generation resulting from droughts upstream on the Nile. An estimated 2.5 million Egyptians working abroad continue to send remittances home, but this source of foreign exchange is vulnerable to a variety of changes in other nations and the international economy.

In late 1992 fundamentalist attacks on tourists resulted in a sharp drop in revenues from this important source of foreign exchange. Although the violence had subsided somewhat by early 1994, tourism levels were still below the years leading up to 1992. Population growth, though advancing at a lower rate, is still high; the population reached about 60 million in 1994. The same densely populated land must support increasing numbers of people every year. Furthermore, migration to the cities has created nightmarish housing shortages, especially in Cairo, where the population grew from about 7 million in 1976 to about 9 million in 1980 and to over 16 million in 1993. Life expectancy at birth has risen to about sixty, but this is still far below the figure for the developed countries. The most important single economic problem remains one that is itself a product of a host of complex economic factors: A large portion of the Egyptian people live at no more than the subsistence level.

### **Study Questions: V**

1. Egypt is frequently cited by the World Bank and the IMF along with Turkey and Tunisia as examples of success at structural adjustment, privatization and the creation of a market economy.

What is the evidence of this?

2. It is also the case, however, that perhaps this success is limited in effect to the Egyptian political state. Have these successes benefited the overwhelming majority of the population located in the social state?

### **VI. Egyptian Foreign Policy**

Napoleon once labeled Egypt “the most important country” because of its central location, between Africa and the Middle East and the routes to Asia. In the post-World War II period Egypt has become even more significant. The Suez Canal, although it cannot accommodate the largest supertankers, is a prime artery for oil. Egypt is a leader among African, Islamic, Arab, and other developing nations. It is also the primary state for the establishment of peace or the waging of war in the Arab-Israeli conflict. It has been courted by both the United States and the Soviet Union, each in pursuit of its own interests in the region and in the broader international community.

Egypt is the leader of the Arab world in a number of other respects. Its population and military forces are the largest. It has led the Arab world in communications (publishing, arts, literature, films) and other spheres. In the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century, Egypt spearheaded Arab contact with the Western world and helped to develop the intellectual bases for Arab, as well as Egyptian, nationalism. It was a leader in the establishment of the Arab League. Furthermore, its Suez Canal was an important strategic and economic asset.

After the 1952 revolution Egypt emerged as an important Third World neutralist and nonaligned power, and Egypt and Nasser were increasingly relied upon for leadership in the Arab world and beyond. Egypt's foreign policy was virtually nonexistent prior to the 1952 revolution, since non-Egyptians largely controlled Egypt. Major and assertive foreign policy positions developed only after the revolution and seemed to be reactive, responding to events as they developed. Nasser's foreign policy focused, in the first instance, on the need to eliminate the British colonial presence in the Canal Zone and in the Sudan. In the second instance, there was the problem of Israel. It is in these contexts that relations with the United States and the Soviet Union emerged.

Initial successes included the agreement on the withdrawal of the British from their positions in Egypt and the resolution of the Sudan problem (although Sudan eventually chose independence rather than union with Egypt). On February 12, 1953, Britain and Egypt signed the Agreement on self-government and self-determination for the Sudan, which provided for the latter's transition to self-government and its choice between linkage with Egypt or full independence. The Suez question was settled in an agreement of October 19, 1954. That agreement declared the 1936 treaty to be terminated and provided for the withdrawal of British forces from Egyptian territory within twenty months.

Relations with the superpowers were different. Although the United States was initially helpful to the new regime and provided technical and economic aid, as well as some assistance in the negotiations with the British, there were difficulties concerning Nasser's requests for arms. Moreover, U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles viewed Egypt's increasingly close ties with Communist China and the Soviet Union with suspicion. The Baghdad Pact, a Western-oriented defense alliance, conceived and sponsored by the United States, was not viewed positively by Nasser, who saw it as a threat to Arab independence and autonomy. Raids on Israel by fedayyin and counter-raids by Israel into Gaza sparked, in Nasser's view, a need for arms for defense, and his quest led him to closer links with the Soviet bloc, thus further straining ties with the United

States. The Dulles decision that the United States would not fund the Aswan High Dam was a major blow to the plans of the new regime, which decided to continue building and to secure the necessary funding and assistance from alternative sources. The Soviet Union was prepared to assist in the construction and to provide some financial aid. But in Nasser's view a more demonstrable act was needed. Thus, in July 1956, he nationalized the Suez Canal and stated that the canal revenues would go to the construction of the dam.

The crucial exchanges between Nasser and the United States set the tone for the less-than-cordial relationship that followed. While the U.S.-Egyptian relationship was deteriorating, the Soviet role in Egypt (and elsewhere in the Arab world) was improving. Soviet assistance for the Aswan Dam project and the supply of arms essential to the continued stature and satisfaction of the Egyptian military and, ostensibly, to the defense of Egypt against Israel were elements that helped to ensure the positive Soviet-Egyptian relationship.

Then came the Sinai-Suez war of 1956, when Israel, France, and Britain joined in an effort to unseat Nasser and restore the canal to Western control while destroying Egypt's military capability (especially its ability to use the newly acquired arms). The United States opposed the invasion and exerted considerable pressure on its three friends to withdraw from Egyptian territory. In assisting the Nasser regime, the United States won much goodwill in the Arab world, especially in Egypt. But this goodwill was soon dissipated when the United States became involved in the 1958 Lebanese crisis and opposed the Egyptian position.

The chill between the United States and Egypt thawed slightly during the Kennedy administration, but with the death of John Kennedy and the establishment of President Lyndon Johnson's position on foreign policy, the relationship began to deteriorate once again. By the time of the Six-Day War of June 1967, relations between the two states were poor, and the war itself precipitated the break of diplomatic relations. The relationship between the United States and Egypt remained antagonistic until the end of the October War, when President Richard

Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger established the policy that led to a rapprochement between the two states. A cordial relationship grew in the mid-1970s in virtually all the bilateral spheres, demonstrated by state visits by Sadat to the United States in 1975 and 1977 and a 1974 state visit by Nixon to Egypt.

Relations with the Soviet Union were somewhat different. Beginning in the mid-1950s, Soviet economic and technical assistance were important elements in the Aswan Dam project and in Egypt's economic development. Military assistance was another element in the developing relations of the two states. Because Nasser felt that Egypt required arms to maintain the regime and to deal with Israel, the Soviet Union became a major factor inasmuch as it was prepared to provide arms under cost and payment terms acceptable to the Egyptians. The Egyptian military soon had a Soviet arsenal. Soviet equipment provided the arms essential for the Egyptian armies in the 1956, 1967, 1969–1970, and 1973 wars. But despite the consummation of a treaty of friendship between the two countries in 1971, the Soviets were never popular with senior members of Egyptian military.

The rift between Egypt and the Soviet Union began when the Soviet Union attempted to influence the choice of Nasser's replacement after his sudden death in 1970. After Sadat's consolidation of his position following the arrest of his major opponents, Egypt's relationship with the Soviet Union deteriorated further, as the Soviet Union and its Egyptian clients began to differ on the type of equipment the Soviets were willing to provide and on Soviet attempts to constrain Egyptian military plans. This culminated in the expulsion of Soviet advisers in July 1972. Although Egyptian-Soviet relations improved somewhat during the months that followed, the relationship never returned to its former levels. After the October War, Egypt complained that the Soviets were lax in re-supplying the Egyptian military forces. Egypt increasingly turned to the West, especially the United States, and Sadat articulated the view that the United States held the crucial cards for peace in the region and could also become the source of essential

economic and technical assistance for Egypt. The relationship seemed to be a zero-sum game: Better relations with the United States spelled poor relations with the Soviet Union.

Arab nationalism has always been a key concept in Egyptian foreign policy, although its passionate espousal during the Nasser period diminished to lip service under Sadat and Mubarak. In his Philosophy of the Revolution, Nasser argued that Arab unity had to be established, for it would provide strength for the Arab nation to deal with its other problems. Arab unity was a consistent theme during the period of his tenure. Sadat retained that general theme but focused much of his foreign policy on the Arab-Israeli conflict and the future of the Palestinians. His signing of the Camp David Accords and the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty of 1979 left him open to charges that he had forgotten the Palestinians and the rest of the Arab world in his pursuit of Egyptian interests alone. The brotherhood of the Arab people has not disappeared from the political lexicon of the Egyptian leadership. Even during the early 1980s, when Egypt remained isolated from the Arab world, Mubarak did not disown the concept. The heyday of Arab nationalism, however, had clearly passed, for a number of reasons, including perhaps Sadat's willingness to go it alone with Israel and Mubarak's ability to survive the isolation from the Arab world that followed.

Another important theme of Egyptian policy has been its leadership role in the Arab world. Developed as a part of the pan-Arab or Arab nationalist approach, this theme acquired added dimensions with Nasser's increasing interests in the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf region in the 1960s. Increasingly, Egypt became the Arab leader in the conflict with Israel. The Arab-Israeli conflict and the wars of 1956, 1967, and 1970 (the War of Attrition along the Suez Canal) consumed Nasser's attention in foreign policy, and Egypt played the leading role in most aspects of the Arab side of the conflict. After 1967 the radical/conservative split in the Arab world was more or less healed at the Khartoum Summit, and Egypt's leadership began to encompass even the more conservative Arab states.

Following the October War, Sadat initiated a dramatic transformation of Egyptian foreign policy. He began with the assumption that the key to both his domestic and his foreign policy problems lay in closer ties with the United States, for he felt that only the United States could push Israel to relinquish territories occupied in the 1967 war (most critical for Egypt, the Sinai) and provide the technical and economic assistance the Egyptian economy desperately needed. The U.S. option thus seemed logical for both political and economic reasons.

The postwar approach began in the months following the war. In January 1974, Kissinger achieved a first-stage disengagement agreement separating Israeli and Egyptian forces along the Suez Canal and in Sinai. Relations between Egypt and the United States began to improve dramatically, and relations with the Soviet Union continued to deteriorate. After further and substantial effort, a second-stage disengagement between Israel and Egypt, known as Sinai II, was signed in September 1975. It provided for further Israeli withdrawals and the return to Egypt of important oil fields in Sinai. Nixon visited Egypt in June 1974, with the Watergate scandal at its height, and Sadat later visited the United States (October-November 1975).

In the wake of the Sinai II agreement, Egyptian policy took on a new cast. Sadat seemed to be interested in maintaining the role of the United States as the power that would help attain peace by pressuring Israel to change its policies. Movement was slowed, however, by regional developments—especially the civil war in Lebanon and by the U.S. presidential elections. The conclusion of the elections in November 1976 and the temporary winding down of the Lebanon conflict set a new process in motion. During the initial months of President Jimmy Carter's administration there was substantial movement toward the establishment of a process to lead toward peace or at least toward a Geneva conference designed to maintain the momentum toward a settlement. But the movement seemed to have slowed substantially by October 1977, thus leading to Sadat's decision to "go to Jerusalem" and to present his case and the Arab position directly to the Israeli parliament and people. In so doing he set in motion a new approach to the

Arab-Israeli conflict in which direct Egyptian-Israeli negotiations became, for the first time, the means to peace in the Middle East.

The direct negotiations were continued at the Cairo Conference and Ismailia Summit of December 1977 and in lower-level contacts over the ensuing months. Then, in September 1978, Sadat met with President Carter and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin at the Camp David summit, which provided a framework for peace between Egypt and Israel and, ultimately, for a broader arrangement between Israel and the other Arab states. On March 26, 1979, Sadat signed the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty in Washington. Implementation of the treaty, which normalized relations between the two states, proceeded as scheduled, and diplomatic relations were established. At the same time, various contacts were made, including tourist and communications links. These actions led to Egypt's expulsion from the Arab League and its isolation in the Arab world, which refused to accept Sadat's argument that the treaty and peace with Israel were in the best interests of the Palestinians and the other Arabs. Failure to achieve substantial progress toward implementation of the other Camp David framework, which provided for arrangements for the West Bank and Gaza, further complicated Egypt's and Sadat's position. Despite U.S. effort, the talks were suspended.

Sadat's assassination in October 1981 raised questions about Egypt's foreign policy direction, particularly its arrangements with Israel. President Mubarak reaffirmed and built upon the policies he inherited from Sadat, emphasizing negotiated solutions to the Arab-Israeli conflict, maintenance of the peace with Israel, and close and positive relations with the United States. The peace treaty's provisions were implemented on or ahead of schedule. Although Mubarak insisted on maintenance of the peace with Israel, he also has been critical of Israel at times. He sharply criticized Israel's June 1982 invasion of Lebanon and withdrew his ambassador from Israel following the Sabra and Shatilla refugee camp massacres in September 1982. Egypt's embassy remained in Tel Aviv, however, just as Israel's embassy remained in



Egypt, the Egyptian ambassador later returned.) Nevertheless, Mubarak worked to reduce Egypt's Arab world isolation by gradually restoring and improving relations with the Arab states. He succeeded in improving ties with the moderate Arab states, and Egypt was readmitted to the Islamic Conference in early 1984. Mubarak also shrewdly utilized the opportunity presented by the Iran-Iraq war to improve his ties with several Arab moderate states, in part through offers of assistance to Iraq. By 1987 he had succeeded in returning Egypt to the mainstream of the Arab world without making a single concession, and in May 1989 Egypt rejoined the Arab League.

Another inter-Arab conflict gave Mubarak the chance to improve Egypt's situation. Egypt played a key role in pulling together the Arab states opposed to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. With Saudi Arabia and Syria, Egypt provided the major Arab element of the coalition that joined with U.S. and European forces in the offensive against Iraq in January 1991. Egypt sent the second-largest foreign force in the Gulf after the United States: 27,000 men to Saudi Arabia and some 5,000 to the UAE.

After the Gulf war, Egypt's relations with several of the Arab states—Syria and Libya in particular—improved sharply. Libya invited Egypt to mediate in its conflict with the United States and the United Kingdom over the bombing of the Pan Am jetliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988. Conversely, Egypt's relations with the Arab supporters of Iraq—Jordan, Yemen, and Sudan—have remained poor. Relations with Sudan deteriorated not only because of a border quarrel but also because of Mubarak's fears that the Islamic fundamentalist government in Khartoum was sponsoring the training and infiltration of fundamentalist insurgents into Egypt and other moderate Arab states (such as Algeria).

Relations with Israel under Mubarak have been correct, if not warm, but Mubarak has played a strong role in supporting and sponsoring Israeli negotiations with other key players in the Arab-Israeli conflict, principally the PLO and Syria. In Cairo in February 1994 Israeli Foreign Minister Peres and PLO Chairman Arafat signed an agreement that recorded some

progress in implementing the breakthrough agreement signed by the PLO and Israel in Washington in September 1993.

Relations with the United States have remained positive since their restoration in 1974. The personal chemistry between Sadat and Carter was an important factor in this development. Mubarak has been able to broaden and strengthen the relationship since his accession to office. Numerous exchanges of visits between U.S. and Egyptian officials (including regular trips by Mubarak to Washington) have allowed the dialogue on Middle Eastern and other issues to continue. U.S. economic and military assistance to Egypt rose to several billion dollars a year in the 1980s and to about \$2.5 billion a year in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Mubarak obtained an unwritten agreement to have U.S. aid to Egypt tied to the level of aid to Israel, although at a slightly lower level.

**The al-Aqsa Intifada and Egyptian Foreign Policy.** The road to the al-Aqsa Intifada was the result of the shortcomings of the American foreign policy of the Clinton administration. This policy began in a hapless fashion by the exclusion of the Americans from the Oslo Accords. These secret meetings also excluded the internal Palestinian leadership whose leadership of the first intifada had created the political pressure to make the diplomacy of the Oslo Accords possible. Thus the signatories to the accords had narrower concerns than the achievement of peace. Arafat was desperate to abandon the Diaspora and gain the appearance of sovereignty in Palestine, while Israel wanted to do the American bidding and give the Arabs a reward for having stood as allies against Saddam Hussein in the second Gulf War. The major issues of Jerusalem, the settlements, the right of return for the Palestinians and even the final boundaries of Israel and the new Palestinian state were to be put off until last and secondary procedural largely confidence building issues were discussed over the next seven years. At the same time in contradiction to the alleged goal of land for peace, the Israeli settlers who were eventually slated

to be theoretically removed from the occupied area or at least reduced in numbers, were in fact increased by one third.

In July 2000 at Camp David things came to a boiling point. There was the appearance of concessions by the Israelis e.g. a vaguely worded formula for a Palestinian presence in Jerusalem but there were no maps. In the absence of the maps, it became clear to the Palestinians that what appeared to be additional territorial concessions to themselves were in fact crisscrossing corridors of continued Israeli control of a non-territorially contiguous Palestine. Even an Arafat who was inclined to go along with most compromises could not accept this without risking his own overthrow. Palestine was now seething with resentment when General Sharon proved that he could visit the Temple Mount as any Israeli could and was entitled to do so. The 1000 police who accompanied him in this exercise saved his life from the violent protest that erupted.

The al-Aksa Intifada has put Mubarak and Egypt into a reactive and defensive stance. The first intifada from 1987-1992 occurred in a regional context in which Islamism had not as yet politically firmly established itself in Egypt or elsewhere with the important exception of Iran. The trend was evident but the political arrival had not yet been achieved. Mubarak had been fighting a secularist war to contain Islamism domestically. In a very complicated way his very effort to achieve the limitation of Islam actually fostered its growth. In an important study of this process, an author has termed this "Islamization by stealth". Mubarak has successfully repressed a violent minority Islamic opposition group but in the process he now has to carefully pay attention to nearly universal Islamic sympathy for the Palestinians. Partly for this reason and partly in order to carve out a negotiator role for itself, Egypt withdrew its ambassador from Israel.

The domestic pressures building upon Mubarak necessitated the withdrawal of its ambassador. From the beginning of the al-Aksa Intifada, Egypt has also attempted to accommodate to American pressure by acting as an intermediary between Arafat and the

Palestinians and the Israelis. U.S. policy under Clinton committed the Central Intelligence Agency in efforts to bring about security cooperation between the two sides. This also involved feverish peace efforts in the remaining weeks of the Clinton administration. With the election of President Bush, an American policy of hands off was initiated.

In the face of this, Egypt, in company with Jordan, proposed a peace program which called for a cessation of settlement activity in return for a reduction in violence. Evidence of further policy activism by Egypt was the support they generated at the Arab summit meeting on May 19, 2001. The former Foreign Minister of Egypt, Amr Mousa who was now Secretary General of the Arab League played an important leadership role in rallying support for the Palestinians. This was facilitated by the fact that Amr Mousa had become Secretary General of the Arab League. In that position, he was able to get the Arab states to take a position of recommending cutting off contacts with Israel. At the time there was some question whether or not this would result in any concrete action. There is increasing evidence that this action plus a similar one at the subsequent conference of the Organization of the Conference of Islamic States has resulted in increasing pressure upon the Israelis. For example, Egyptian joint energy ventures of great strategic importance to the Israelis are now beginning to come apart.

In sum, the al-Aksa Intifada has presented Egyptian foreign policy with a major challenge. This challenge goes even deeper than the political “strong state” and the economic/capability “weak state” distinctions developed in this chapter. The “strong state” after all has had important foreign policy advantages for Egypt. Now what is beginning to happen, as observed in the weakening of the capabilities of the National Democratic Party in the recent parliamentary elections, is that the popular and Islamic support for the Palestinians is so great that it threatens the very stability of the regime itself. Even the narrowness of Egypt’s political strength is under stress.

**Conclusion: Foreign Policy, Economic Rents and the “Weak “ State.** A major strength, at least from the viewpoint of the foreign policy decision-makers, is the centralization of authority in a patrimonial executive supported by an acquiescent political class. On the other hand, Egypt’s lack of economic resources severely limits its ability to influence other countries to adopt policies in furtherance of its national interests, either through diplomacy or, indirectly, through force of arms. As a result, Egypt has had to pursue a foreign policy of seeking infusions of foreign financial and military assistance to maintain internal stability and external security and to create economic growth.

During the cold war, Egypt’s ability to play one superpower against the other facilitated this effort, and with tensions running in the Middle East, it was successful in building up its military, first with Soviet and then, in the 1970s, with American arms. When President Sadat negotiated a peace treaty with Israel in 1979, Egypt exchanged peace for economic assistance, and since that time, Egypt has received the second largest amount economic assistance given by the U.S. worldwide, next to Israel itself.

Beginning in the 1970’s, Sadat began a policy of cultivating what has become a policy of long duration of very large American economic and military assistance. Essentially, he pursued a policy of force and diplomacy with Israel that began with a surprise attack upon the Israeli defensive positions along the Suez Canal in 1973 and ended with a bilateral peace treaty with Israel in 1978.

Since that time, in exchange for that peace, Egypt has been receiving the second largest economic assistance given by the U.S. worldwide, next to Israel itself. This assistance has strengthened the weak infrastructure of Egypt without, however, requiring Egypt to achieve developmental capability and economic independence.

It has been development assistance, which has increased the potential for such development without, however, achieving development. The effect is to allow the strong and

weak characteristics of the Egyptian State to coexist and continue. The non-productive Egyptian State has taken on the coloration of market economics and reform. But the show case quality of this has weakened the state in foreign policy terms, so much so that it cannot even attract foreign investment never mind exert foreign policy influence. In addition, the collection of “rents” in addition to foreign assistance also reinforced this weakness. These rents have consisted of worker remittances from Egyptian workers in the oil rich states, Egypt’s own oil revenues and Suez Canal revenues. Rents operate to keep the state afloat and to maintain the political status quo.

In the era of globalization and the appearance of the peaceful settlement of disputes in the 1990’s Egypt was a weakened player. The Oslo accords of 1993 created seven years of a peace process on the Palestinian issue while Iraq was contained by U.S. policy. In the absence of foreign policy crises, which might be useful to exert its influence and exercise regional hegemony, Egypt was the foreign policy wallflower of the region. During this period of presumed movement towards peace in the 1990’s, economic globalization became the theme of regional conferences in the Gulf and in Morocco at which Israel was a prominent attendee. The “rent” seeking Egypt of weak economic capabilities was not a meaningful player in the search for foreign investment and technology. This does not mean that Egypt was not useful to American policy when from time to time it was able to play an intermediary role in Palestinian – Israeli negotiations. It does mean, however, that it was Israel itself that emerged as a potential economic power and it was Turkey and Iran that exercised hegemonial influence.

The apex of Egyptian regional influence in the Arab world occurred in the 1960s under the charismatic Gamal Abd al-Nasser. Sadat became a pariah in the Arab world following his peace treaty with Israel, and though his successor, Hosni Mubarak, engineered Egypt’s return to the Arab fold, his priorities have centered more on domestic problems than foreign policy.

### **Study Questions: VI**

1. Egypt has always been skillful in its ability to manipulate the international system to its own benefit. This was dramatically the case during the Cold War when Egypt attempted to play America off against the Soviets. How do the wars of 1956, 1967 and 1973 illustrate this ability?
2. How has Egypt been able to collect “foreign policy rents”?
3. How and in what way has Egypt been useful to American interests?

### **VII. Conclusions**

1. Egypt as a politically strong authoritarian state is able to use political repression to maintain political stability, including the suppression of militant and moderate Islamic opposition groups.
2. It has also been able to divert wealth to the political class, including a new grouping of young businessmen. It has accomplished this through undertaking structural economic reform and directing the benefits of privatization of a segment of state enterprises to the same class. As a result, the macro figures of the economy appear positive whereas in fact, the economic capabilities of the economy have improved only slightly.
3. As a result, Egypt is in other respects a weak state. It is a state that does not develop and consequently fails to benefit the masses of the population.
4. In the era of globalization, Egypt is not a player. It can neither attract significant foreign investment nor can it play a dynamic role in seeking foreign markets. It is a state that sits on the international economic sidelines.

5. Even as a politically strong state with an important military capability, it can not assert itself in foreign affairs. The reason is that as a rentier state it must cater to the interests of the sources of its rent including its neighbors and foreign allies.
6. When it does exercise leadership in regional affairs as with its support of the Palestinians this is due significantly to reasons of regime survival in the face of an aroused Islamic opposition.
7. For the economic, political and cultural reasons indicated in this analysis, until fundamental political change occurs, Egypt is a country that is moribund between its past and its future. It can survive and it can exert marginal political pressure.
8. In foreign policy terms Egypt's survival is intimately tied to American economic and military support. For its part, America gains from this the usefulness of Egypt as an intermediary for American policy in the Middle East. In a certain respect both Egypt and America complement each other in policies of treading water. Egypt treads water in order to assure regime survival and America treads water because it lacks the resolve to compel a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Both countries have a vested interest in the political status quo.

### **Further Reading**

A review of the background of modern Egypt and the nature of its people is essential to an understanding of its political culture as well as more contemporary works. One important book based on personal observations and steel engravings describing Egypt in the 1840's is



William Lane's Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians (New York: Dutton, 1923). The historical background of modern Egypt is considered in Peter Mansfield, The British in Egypt (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971); and Nadav Safran, Egypt in Search of Political Community: An Analysis of the Intellectual and Political Evolution of Egypt, 1804–1952 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961). Jamal Mohammed Ahmed, in The Intellectual Origins of Egyptian Nationalism (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), provides an introduction to the intellectual foundations of Egyptian nationalism.

Among the many good studies of Egypt since the revolution are Anouar Abdel-Malek, Egypt: Military Society—The Army Regime, the Left, and Social Change Under Nasser (New York: Random House, 1968) (translated by Charles Lamb Markmann); R. Hrair Dekmejian, Egypt Under Nasir: A Study in Political Dynamics (London: University of London Press; Albany: State University of New York Press, 1972); John Waterbury, The Egypt of Nasser and Sadat (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); P.J. Vatikiotis, Nasser and His Generation (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978); Mohamed Heikal, Autumn of Fury: The Assassination of Sadat (New York: Random House, 1983); Raymond Baker, Egypt's Uncertain Revolution Under Nasser and Sadat (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978). There are three books by Egyptian presidents: Mohammad Naguib's Egypt's Destiny: A Personal Statement (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1955); Gamal Abdul Nasser's Egypt's Liberation: The Philosophy of the Revolution (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1955); Anwar el-Sadat's Revolt on the Nile (New York: John Day, 1957); and Anwar el-Sadat's In Search of Identity: An Autobiography (New York: Harper & Row, 1978).

Studies of the local politics of Egypt include Iliya Harik, The Political Mobilization of Peasants: A Study of an Egyptian Community (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1974); James B. Mayfield, Rural Politics in Nasser's Egypt: A Quest for Legitimacy (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971); Amitav Ghosh, In an Antique Land (New York: Vintage, 1992)

Other aspects of Egyptian politics: P.J. Vatikiotis, The Egyptian Army in Politics: Pattern for New Nations? (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1961); and Malcolm Kerr and El Sayed Yassin, eds., Rich and Poor States in the Middle East: Egypt and the New Arab Order (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982).

Egyptian foreign policy has not engendered many full-length studies. Nevertheless, several works provide a useful beginning. They include A. I. Dawisha, Egypt in the Arab World: The Elements of Foreign Policy (New York: John Wiley, 1976). More specific themes are considered in Karen Dawisha's Soviet Foreign Policy Towards Egypt (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979); and Ismail Fahmy's Negotiating for Peace in the Middle East (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983). See also, Gregory Aftandilian, Egypt's Bid for Arab Leadership: Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1993).

Valuable studies of Egypt's economy are provided in Charles Issawi, Egypt in Revolution: An Economic Analysis (London: Oxford University Press, for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1963); Robert Mabro, The Egyptian Economy, 1952–1972 (London: Oxford University Press, 1974); Patrick O'Brien, The Revolution in Egypt's Economic System: From Private Enterprise to Socialism, 1952–1965 (London: Oxford University Press, 1966, issued under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs); Khalid Ikram, ed., Egypt: Economic Management in a Period of Transition (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, for the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 1980); Louis J. Cantori and Iliya Harik, eds., Local Politics and Development in the Middle East (Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1984), and Alan Richards, Egypt's Agricultural Development, 1800–1980: Technical and Social Change (Boulder: Westview Press, 1983).

Some more recent studies include Robert Springborg's Mubarak's Egypt: Fragmentation of the Political Order (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989); Raymond Baker's Sadat and After: Struggles for Egypt's Soul (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990); Phebe Marr, ed. Egypt at the Crossroads (Washington DC: National Defense University Press, 1999), including chapters on foreign policy, national security and the military. On Islam in present day Egypt, see Denis J. Sullivan and Sana Abed-Kotob, Islam in Contemporary Egypt (Boulder, Colo.: Rienner, 1999) and especially, Genieve Abdo, No God But God: Egypt and the Triumph of Islam (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). There is also the chapter by Louis J. Cantori, "Egypt: Moribund Between Past and Future" in Robert O. Freedman, ed. The Middle East Enters the 21st Century (Gainesville, Florida: University Presses of Florida, forthcoming, 2002) and also, Louis J. Cantori and Sally , Chapter 13, "Arab Republic of Egypt" in David E. Long and Bernard Reich, Government and Politics of The Middle East and North Africa, New Edition (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, forthcoming 2002).

**For web resources on Egypt see:**

- Egyptian Army: [www.washingtoninstitute.org](http://www.washingtoninstitute.org)
- Egyptian Government and Political Guide:  
<http://www.arabii.com/egypt/govt.htm>
- Egyptian Political Resources: <http://www.politicalresources.net/egypt.htm>
- Library of Congress: [www.locweb2loc.gov](http://www.locweb2loc.gov)
- The "New York Times" of Egypt in English, al-Ahram Weekly:  
[www.ahram.org.eg](http://www.ahram.org.eg)
- Official Egyptian Site: [www.sis.gov.eg](http://www.sis.gov.eg)

- The Politics and Economy of Egypt: [www.inform.umd.edu](http://www.inform.umd.edu)
- English Language Reporting , Middle East Times, [www.metimes.com](http://www.metimes.com)