

EGYPT's diversification policy would entitle it to shop right around the world for its weapons

Restoration of Palestinian statehood—the essential key to peace

EGYPT's former Foreign Minister, Ismail Fahmy, today continues his analysis of the Mid-east, its diplomacies and their implications.

In an outspoken interview with the *Saudi Gazette's* Washington correspondent, Mark Bruzonsky, Fahmy has broken with his long personal tradition of avoiding the press.

This full-length appraisal of Egyptian-Israeli relations — the third and final part appears in Saturday's *Gazette* — is the first in-depth interview that Fahmy, now writing his memoirs from his Nile-view apartment, has given since his resignation.

PART 2: The autonomy issue...

● Bruzonsky: If there should be a new President of Egypt, does Egypt retain the option of returning to a policy where arms and political support could be sought from the Soviet Union?

■ Fahmy: President Sadat or his successor, if he follows the same policy of President Sadat and literally applies a diversification policy, should certainly obtain, if he can, weapons from the Soviet Union.

Diversification does not mean that Egypt gets its own weapons solely from France or from the U.K. or the U.S. Diversification means that you get whatever you need — the top quality, at the proper time and at the best price — from anywhere in the world. You shop for the best aircraft which suits your special purposes and which your enemy doesn't have. You look for

fast delivery as well as the best buys, price-wise.

● The Soviets will never supply Sadat again with weapons. And who would pay for them?

■ We're not talking about personalities. You asked me a simple question — that after President Sadat do you think that Egypt will get weapons from the Soviet Union? And my answer was very clear. That the policy of diversification — which President Sadat himself proclaimed — means, if I understand it correctly, that Egypt looks for the best arms it wants from all over the world. He didn't say that he is making diversification only to buy from the French or from the Americans. He didn't say I'll buy from everybody but not the Russians.

● Do you see any likelihood, any possibility, any reasonable hope, that the autonomy negotiations can lead to any form of solution to the Palestinian problem?

■ Depends on what you mean by solution of the Palestinian problem.

● Solution which will be widely considered...

■ Come to the point — you want to know whether I believe this autonomy



will lead to a Palestinian state. Right?

● If that's the only solution that you see.

■ Yes. I don't see any permanent peace to the Mid-east crisis unless the Palestinian problem is solved on the basis of restoring the full rights of the Palestinian people in the form of a homeland with territorial boundaries.

In other words, to give back the Palestinians their statehood. Without the establishment of a state of Palestine there will be no peace in this area.

■ Now once you have this state of Palestine established and if this new

Palestine state chooses to have some relations with Israel I have no objection. Its up to them — federation, confederation, even if they decide to unite in a secular state — its up to them. I'm not against it. If they choose to have a political link with Jordan, it's up to them.

But let us understand each other very clearly. There will be no peace unless the Palestine problem is solved on the basis of a Palestine state. This is my opinion. I may be wrong.

● But the Israelis are hinting at a somewhat different solution which

many Egyptians I've spoken with don't seem to object too strongly about.

If King Hussein did not rule in Amman, if Jordan were in fact controlled by Palestinians politically, then the Israelis could argue that the 1922 division of Palestine by the British has been validated, that the Palestinians now have three-fourths of Palestine — the East Bank of the Jordan river — and the Jews have one-quarter — everything to the west of the river — and that there is a Palestinian state. Isn't this a possible solution?

■ You and I could write a book about the various solutions and various failures and various interpretations and add it to the very strange and huge encyclopedia of the Mid-east.

Every problem in the Mid-east is material for a volume of theories but it we approach it like this we will never find a solution.

It is easy to say, for instance, why the heck all this fuss. Jordan is there, the majority are Palestinians — have the Palestinian state in Jordan.

● Many people do say that. Especially in Israel.

■ But why? Because this automatically means an aggression on the Jordanian state. Second, that to Israel, the Arabs and the Palestinians would thereby relinquish their own rights in Palestine itself.

And more important: the result of the Palestinianisation of Jordan is the Israelisation of the West Bank and Gaza. This is why the Israelis are promoting this idea, but this is not the solution.

Now just think very seriously about what I've told you about the Palestinianisation of Jordan and the Israelisation of the West Bank and Gaza. This is exactly what Begin is trying to do and what some of the American strategists are trying to do. But they are running from the main problem. This couldn't happen — its impossible.

● Why?

■ Because this attempts to solve the

problem — the rights of the people — at the expense of other people. And only to please the Israelis.

● History is full of examples of such things happening. It might not be "just," but it might be a solution.

■ If this is a mental exercise I can join you and stretch it even further. For example that Begin, himself, and his colleagues, can return to Poland, Germany, France and U.K. Or, they can start all over again shopping for new ground and go to Madagascar or even to Libya or Uganda. If you want to have a mental exercise — a nice one — you can start all over again and try to dismantle the Zionist theory.

● Let me ask you about Zionist theory and Zionist politics. Do you think the treaty has greatly strengthened the Likud-Begin political forces in Zionism? Has the right-wing of Zionism...

■ I don't believe that there is any difference between all those people. They have their Old Testament and they are trying to implement it by stages, by force, or by influence all over the world. They succeeded, succeeded for the first time in their life, in that Egypt, especially, along with the U.S. and the European countries, agree for the first time to have an Israeli state in the area.

● But you don't see a difference between Labour, Mapam, Likud...

■ No difference. All this is semantics. Believe me.

● Then you didn't mind that President Carter went to pray at the grave of Jabotinsky?

■ He didn't ask my permission nor did he ask my opinion.

● Because I know many Jewish people who feel that Carter's praying at the grave of Jabotinsky was an act of ideological idiocy. And I'm rather struck by the fact that almost all Egyptians — and here you and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Butros Ghali have the same opinion — are not sensitive to the serious ideological differences that exist within Jewish-Israeli

'I know many Israelis who think that Carter's praying at the grave of Jabotinsky was an act of idiocy'

politics.

■ Who said so?

● Because you think they're all about the same.

■ Sure, as far as their own state in Palestine and their expansion in the area, they are all the same. All of them are implementing the Zionist dream.

SATURDAY PART 3: The Fahmy solution...