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Talk That Naguib Might Be 'Kicked Upstairs' by Nasser Drew Official Warnings

Mohammed Naguib's relinquishing of the two top posts in Egypt followed a series of disturbances and irritants, indicating considerably less harmony for—and inside—Cairo's military regime than its officials have portrayed in public.

Five months ago, reports began coming out of the Egyptian capital that supporters of General Naguib, who was hailed in July, 1952, as the savior of the new Egypt, were preparing to meet a showdown with partisans of Lieut. Col. Gamal Abdel Nasser, the Deputy Premier, who has now replaced General Naguib as the country's leader.

Colonel Nasser, who had been frequently described as the strong man behind General Naguib, was founder and driving spirit of the revolutionary movement against the ousted King Farouk and the monarchy. General Naguib seemed to have owed his selection as replacement for Farouk to Colonel Nasser, who is believed to have rallied support for the general as symbol of the Army's authority.

Rumors of the new dissension became public and General Naguib said his regime would punish gossip-mongers. Colonel Nasser, for his part, described as "sheer nonsense" talk to the effect that General Naguib might be "kicked upstairs" to retain only the Presidency, leaving Colonel Nasser to run the country as Premier.

Hitch on Suez

Troubles have been brewing for General Naguib for some time, perhaps the biggest headache being the failure of the talks with Britain on Egypt's demands that Britain withdraw her troops, now numbering about 80,000, from the Suez Canal zone.

Colonel Nasser has been the chief Cairo negotiator in the negotiations, and he has been something of a sabre-rattler whenever London served notice that no troops would be withdrawn until firm arrangements had been made for the security of the canal.

At one point Colonel Nasser told Britain that his Government did not believe for a moment that talk constituted the only means of gaining Egypt's objectives. It was this kind of belligerency that seemed to indicate that Colonel Nasser was the dominant power in the Cairo Junta.

General Naguib was having major troubles last month with the powerful, fanatical Moslem Brotherhood, which was ordered dissolved on charges that it was plotting to overthrow the Government. The day after he announced the outlawing of the terrorist organization, the President-Premier proclaimed a nation-wide state of emergency.

General Naguib had emphasized that Egypt wanted United States aid, both economically and, in the case of Egypt's fight with Britain on Suez, diplomatically. There have been "hints" from Cairo that unless the United States gave aid—economically and diplomatically—Egypt might recognize Communist China and set up closer links with the Soviet satellites in Europe.

Last month the United States made it clear to Egypt that such "neutralism" and threats would bring no aid from Washington.

Brotherhood's Opposition

The opposition of the Moslem Brotherhood could have had a profound effect on General Naguib's authority. There had been a growing awareness among Egyptians of their strategic position in the Middle East, a position that could make their country the leading power in the Moslem world.

The turn of events is the more vivid in view of the great popularity General Naguib had in his country, to all appearances, and in view of the long series of reforms credited to him.

General Naguib reputedly revitalized the Army from a corrupt, inefficient system, and he had been credited with reducing graft in the Egyptian Government. He abolished all honorary titles, hit the rich with heavy taxes, lowered some consumer-item prices and put through a land-reform program to divide Egypt's big farms.

One of his diplomatic successes was with the British on the important Sudanese question. Britain and Egypt agreed to let the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan choose its own political future, this agreement giving the 8,000,000 people of that territory—held under a condominium since 1899—the right to choose independence or union with Egypt.

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