EGYPT NEAR CHAOS; SAUDI ARABIA KING TRIES TO END FEUD
By ROBERT C. DOTY Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.
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Guest Confers With Naguib and Nasser When Latter's Group Ends Collaboration

CIVIL ASSEMBLY IN DOUBT

Moslem Brotherhood Leader Calls for Holy War to Win Control of Canal Zone

By ROBERT C. DOTY
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CAIRO, Sunday, March 28 — There was no effective government in Egypt today. There was power—in the hands of the army, where it has always been—but no means for applying it.

The political crisis was moving rapidly toward a climax as relaxation of the grip of the military regime loosed dangerous forces of xenophobia and social unrest.

Egypt's military rulers last night dropped all pretense of collaboration with their former leader, Maj. Gen. Mohammed Naguib, President and Premier.

The gravity of the crisis was indicated last night when King Saud of Saudi Arabia stepped between Egypt's feuding military leaders in what appeared to be an attempt to play the role of peacemaker.

The 55-year-old monarch, a state guest of Egypt for the past week, brought the leaders of the two factions together shortly before midnight for a conference with him that ended at 2:30 A. M. The leaders were to confer with King Saud again later today.

Army Seen Near to Revolt

There was no official statement on results of the talks but King Saud was reported to have told General Naguib and Lieut. Col. Gamal Abdel Nasser, Deputy Premier, leaders of opposing factions, that it was essential for the well-being of Egypt that they compose their differences.

To this, Colonel Nasser is reported to have replied that he could have accomplished reconciliation as late as Friday but that the matter was now out of his hands and that the army was on the verge of revolt against the Naguib policies.

[According to The United Press, army officers backing the military junta in its showdown struggle with President Naguib staged a "sitdown strike" in their barracks.]

The Naguib partisans had won a surface victory in the decision that the changeover should be complete July 24. The Nasser faction, however, was resisting pressure to oust the military members of the Cabinet immediately and had made a thinly veiled appeal to the people to demonstrate to bring about a modification of the decision to restore political life.

Earlier last night Maj. Amin Shaker, aide to Colonel Nasser, had charged that General Naguib "willingly or unwillingly" had become the tool of elements conspiring to deliver Egypt again to the "dishonest politicians of the old regime."

Speaking for the eleven-man Revolution Command Council, Maj. Shaker, made what most of his hearers interpreted as a thinly veiled appeal to the people to reverse the decision announced Thursday by the Revolution Command Council itself to

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EGYPT NEAR CHAOS IN FACTIONAL FEUD

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permit a resumption of political life and turn over power in July to a freely elected constituent assembly.

"At this stage the Revolution Command Council had to take a decision to leave to the Egyptian people to decide between the general and his associated elements, on the one side, and the council on the other side," Major Shaker said.

"We are confident that the traditional wisdom of the Egyptian people will decide their own future and avoid the trap that is being laid for them in the name of lofty principles," Major Shaker said.

As he reaffirmed the statement that Colonel Nasser and his colleagues would neither stand for election to the Constituent Assembly nor form a new party to represent revolutionary principles, Major Shaker was asked by what means the people would have a chance to express preference on those principles.

He replied vaguely that the voters could choose "independent" candidates instead of those bearing the labels of the Wafd, Saadist and other old parties.

Asked whether he envisaged the possibility of popular action that would lead to a postponement of the elections, Major Shaker said he could not answer.

Naguib declines to Reply

Informed of Major Shaker's statement, which appeared to end even the pretense of collaboration between General Naguib and Colonel Nasser, the former said he refused to "degrade" himself by exchanging charges. He defended his meetings with the civilian politicians, asserting that it was the duty of the head of the state to consult all shades of opinion.

He reiterated his belief that the country could not stand a longer period of military rule and revealed that the joint conference of the Revolution Command Council and the Cabinet had voted, 13 to 8, for the immediate formation of an all-civilian Cabinet.

Meanwhile the General Assembly of Free Officers, the army group that has supported Colonel Nasser since he first organized the revolutionary movement, held a meeting and adopted resolutions of an undisclosed nature. These were reported, however, to be in opposition to the plan to return to civilian rule and openly hostile to General Naguib.

On the other side there were a series of conferences among civilian political leaders to lay plans for the resumption of parliamentary life.

The status of the civilian ministers of the present Cabinet still is not clear. They are known to have submitted their resignations to clear the way for General Naguib to dissolve the present Cabinet of eight civilians and seven members of the Revolution Command Council Cabinet and form an all-civilian Government. Major Shaker said, however, that there would be no Cabinet change and that the civilians had withdrawn their resignations.

The two opposing forces appeared to be headed for a showdown in a meeting of the Cabinet today, to be followed by a meeting of the Revolution Command Council

The Federation of Cairo Transport workers began a hunger and a sitdown strike on the premises of the companies at noon yesterday. The strike resolution condemned the restoration of political parties, called for a boycott of the elections in June and for the organization of a national assembly to support and ratify the decisions of the Revolution Command Council.

Most of Cairo's buses had stopped running and street car service was curtailed.

Nahas Not Yet Released

Although the military leaders announced that all political internees would be released, two of the most prominent ones remained under house arrest last evening. They are 76-year-old Mustafa Nahas, eight times Premier of Egypt and leader of the once powerful Wafd party, who earlier was reported to have been freed, and Col. Mohammed Rashad Mohannah, former member of the Revolution Command Council and a Regent after the deposition of former King Farouk. Colonel Mohannah was tried for plotting against the military regime and given a life sentence last March.

From 300 to 500 other prisoners were released, most of them members of the Moslem Brotherhood, rounded up in January when the organization was dissolved for alleged political intrigues against the regime.

In successive press conferences for the foreign and domestic correspondents, Major Shaker traced again the history of the dispute between General Naguib and the Revolution Command Council that led to the present confused situation.

The council accepted General Naguib's resignation, Feb. 25 rather than bow to his demands for supreme power. He returned to the Presidency of the "parliamentary republic" three days later, in full agreement that he would accept the limitations of power of such a post.

"But twenty-four hours later," Major Shaker continued, "he discovered, or certain circles discovered for him, that he should have full powers and full control over the state."

Suez Canal Zone Issue

Major Shaker referred here to the extremist views on the British-Egyptian dispute over control of the Suez Canal zone. The Wafd party, the Moslem Brotherhood and other political groups have in the past won popularity with the masses by posing impossibly belligerent conditions for settlement with the result, Major Shaker implied, that the British have refused to consider evacuation and continued in possession of the canal zone. The military regime, on the other hand, has made some progress toward a negotiated settlement.

The elements that had captured General Naguib, Major Shaker continued, posed as defenders of the national aspirations and exploited class differences in an effort to produce a state of chaos and anarchy in which to prepare the country for extreme solutions.

Pressed to identify these groups, Major Shaker declined to volunteer information but when it was suggested that he referred to the "Wafdists, Communists and Socialists," he nodded assent.

Meanwhile the forces of chaos that have been effectively kept at bay, the same forces that produced the bloody Cairo riots on Jan. 26, 1952, are stirring again.

Newly released from internment, Hassan el Hodeiby, supreme guide of the fanatical Moslem Brotherhood, gave the press an interview in which he called for a jihad—holy war—as the only means of realizing Egypt's aspirations for control of the Suez Canal zone, now held by Britain.

Cairo hummed with reports—insufficiently firm to be reported, too persistent to be ignored—of plots and counter-plots in military and civilian circles.

An Explosive Situation

All this has created an explosive situation and it was difficult to foresee how it could be resolved without violence. If disorders should occur, there was every likelihood that the regime would seek to reassert its authority by force, with the blessing of those elements here, both Egyptian and foreign, that have most to fear and to lose in a political and social upheaval.

The ability of the Revolution Command Council to reassert its authority depends on the extent to which the army remains loyal to Colonel Nasser. There was unquestionably a split in the ranks at the time of the Naguib ouster and even though at that time a majority of the officer corps still supported Colonel Nasser the latter was unwilling to put the issue to the test and risk civil war by resisting the reinstatement of President Naguib.

If Colonel Nasser succeeds in bringing about a situation that would justify the reimposition of authoritarian measures the conditions under which a constituent assembly is to be called would probably undergo drastic modification.

Instead of all its members being elected, a substantial proportion probably would be appointed to insure the presence of elements likely to support the officers' objectives in domestic and foreign policy.

The fate of President Naguib himself in such an event would be difficult to predict.

The purpose of King Saud's visit, in the opinion of some diplomatic observers, was to enlist Egypt as an ally in an effort to counter the increasing influence of Iraq, ruled by King Faisal of the Hashemite dynasty, traditional rivals of the Saudi royal house, in Arab affairs. King Saud opposes Iraqi ambitions to form a federation of Iraq, Jordan and Syria and to lead this grouping toward closer military and economic ties with Pakistan and Turkey, and through them, with the West.

He found a sympathetic hearing in Egypt, which always has been opposed to the latter objective. His attempt at mediation was apparently made in the hope of averting a crisis that would weaken Egypt as a factor in Middle East politics.

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