

1951-1953, Egypt: Nasser, the "Moslem Billy Graham"

By Athar Jamil, Political Correspondent, *Kcom Journal*.

America wanted British influence over Egypt to end. But an openly pro-American client government would be met with antipathy and anti-imperialist feelings that were dominant at the time.

The CIA-supported *coup d'etat* that ousted the British puppet King Farouk and brought the Free Officers to power is particularly important because from 1952 to 1970 Gamal Abdel Nasser dominated Arab politics.

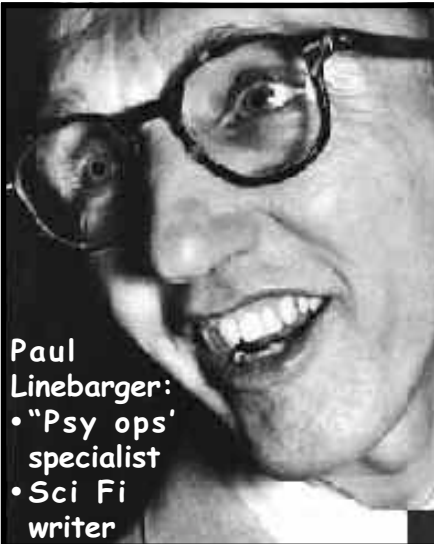
Miles Copeland, a former CIA operative specialising in the Middle East, wrote in his autobiography (*The Game Player*), that in 1951 and 1952 the CIA worked on a project known in the secret annals of the CIA as "The Search for a Moslem Billy Graham."

According to Copeland, who activated the project in 1953, the CIA needed a charismatic leader who would be able to divert the growing anti-American hostility that was building up in the area. The CIA task was to create 'something' more menacing than Israel, to be a substitute for the U.S. and the Jewish state.

Copeland describes the first secret meeting he had with three army officers, including Major Abdel Monem Ra'ouf (a member of Gamal Abdel Nasser's inner circle). In March 1952, four months before the *coup d'etat* that ousted King Farouk, Kim Roosevelt (head of CIA Near East Operations) and Nasser began a series of meetings that led to the coup. After much discussion it was agreed support from the Islamic groups was not required, and that the army would take control and gain the support of the urban populace.

It was also agreed that future relations between the U.S. and Egypt would publicly eschew phrases such as "re-establishing democratic processes," but privately there would be an understanding that the pre-conditions for democratic government did exist.

The CIA and Nasser agreed on Israel. For Nasser, talk of war with Israel was irrelevant. Nasser's priority was British occupation of the Suez Canal. Nasser's enemy was Britain.



Paul Linebarger:
• "Psy ops" specialist
• Sci Fi writer

As a specialist in CIA "psychological operations" (psy ops), Linebarger helped create anti-U.S. propaganda in Cairo. He advised Egyptian leader Gamal Nasser, and his Minister of Information, on how the Egyptian media could issue stories and editorials that, although appearing to be pro-Soviet, actually did more harm than good for the USSR and communism.

After his death, it became known that Linebarger was also a science fiction writer who published stories under the pseudonym, Cordwainer Smith.

The U.S. could assist Nasser by not opposing the coup. Right up to the day of the coup (July 23, 1952), CIA station operatives stayed in very close contact with members of Nasser's "Free Officers." Copeland says the coup took place without a hitch, with General Mohammed Naguib nominally at its head. For the next six months, the only U.S. contacts with Nasser and the Revolutionary Command Council were maintained by the embassy, not the CIA.

After the coup, the CIA assisted in the reorganization of the *Mukharabat* (Egypt's intelligence service). Key courses were set up to acquaint members of Egypt's Revolutionary Command Council with what they could reasonably expect from the U.S. Nasser agreed to all of this. In addition,

the head of the Mukharabat sent an English-speaking officer, Captain Hassan Touhami, to Washington where he was shown the whole range of services that the CIA, FBI and police agencies could offer Egypt's government.

The CIA's relationship with the Egyptian government was kept secret. To assist this, Copeland's employers, Booz-Allen & Hamilton, and the CIA, joined forces to give advice on organizing Egypt's Interior Ministry. This entailed making improvements in the immigration and customs services, and tackling the system of identity cards and vehicle registrations. All this was a cover for the CIA's real agenda.

The CIA helped Nasser with his anti-American propaganda by sending a U.S. agent, Paul Linebarger, to Egypt, to coach the Egyptian-American team that turned out the anti-American propaganda that poured out of Radio Cairo. Linebarger advised both the Minister of Information and Nasser on how the Egyptian press and Radio Cairo could issue stories and editorials which were seemingly pro-Soviet but did the Soviets and Communism more harm than good.

Despite differences, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and the CIA fundamentally agreed that Nasser must be kept in power. Nasser's response to the withdrawal of the loan to finance the Aswan Dam was to nationalise the Suez Canal Company. This brought the Anglo-French-Israeli attack on Egypt, resulting in the U.S. government under Eisenhower to support Nasser and forcing the coalition forces to cease hostilities. Perhaps this incident was one of the more explicit examples of the true relationship between the U.S. and Egypt.

Through agents such as Nasser, the U.S. was successfully challenging and undermining Britain's position in the region. At the same time, the U.S. was duping the Muslims and Arabs into thinking that its puppet – Arab nationalism – was their saviour.

Source: Excerpt, "CIA: tool of American colonialism, past and present," *KCom Journal*, June 30, 2001. <www.khilafah.com/home/category.php?DocumentID=1764&TagID=1>