

cerned about the changes in Scottish politics and Scottish society, to the point that they've appointed special advisers to look at the Scottish situation and see if they can somehow increase their relevance in this country. There is nothing that they could do that would make the British royal family more relevant or more appealing to the people in this country. There will always be a small, aging minority of people, that generation which lived through the Second World War, who fondly view the Queen, her husband, and the rest of the family. But, that's changing. If you look to the younger voters, the population below age 25, they do not have those old attachments and fond memories. They see them for what they are, and what the current generations of royals have proved themselves to be: a parasitical family, who have no real role to play in a modern, European, forward-looking society. They're an historical anachronism.

I can't say that there would be a majority of Scots who tomorrow would vote for a republic, but I believe those who would man the barricades to defend the royal family are very much in the minority. Perhaps that's another area that the SNP needs to lead on. We don't have a conclusive policy on that. The current policy of the Scottish National Party is that the issue of the monarchy would be put to the people in a referendum. Meanwhile, we would not support or oppose them. Perhaps that is something that needs to be reassessed.

EIR: We've run into another paradox again. Tony Blair, with all his chest beating on the issue of making the world safe for "democracy," nominally presides over one house of Parliament, the House of Lords, which no one in the U.K. cast a ballot to elect. Additionally, I don't believe anyone voted for the royal family.

Kearney: Given the opportunity, they never would, either. My personal view here is that the monarchy and the unelected heads of state are utterly unjustifiable. They are anti-democratic in every respect, and can never be legitimate for any country. People make the point that the Queen is nothing more than a figurehead. But that really belies the reality. Just looking at the pomp and circumstance and pageantry you could say, "Yes, she's a figurehead." But, beneath the surface is a person who has real constitutional powers. They are real executive powers that can be used. We should not forget that the head of the British state is an unelected monarch, and that person does control an enormous amount of patronage and power, which gives them huge influence.

In conclusion, permit me to say that it's an exciting time for Scotland and an exciting time for the Scottish National Party. The leadership and deputy leadership election has got to be something that we use as an opportunity to re-focus our energies. If we focus on the big picture, which is to end the Union of 1707 and set Scotland up to take its place in the world among the community of nations, then we will have made the right decision and we will have served the people of Scotland. That's the challenge that we face.

Egyptian-U.S. Relations 'in the Hand of a Goblin'

by Hussein Al-Nadeem

As the Egyptian saying goes, Egyptian-American relations have recently been "in the palm of the hand of an *Afrit* (goblin)," due to provocations against Egypt and its leadership by the Anglo-American and Wall Street media and elites. Egypt, which many consecutive U.S. administrations have considered an ally, looks upon the United States, in turn, as a friend and ally, and not a regional asset.

First of all, Egypt was heavily attacked when the Camp David peace negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians collapsed in late July. The government was blamed for not backing the Israeli-American pressure on Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to make concessions on Jerusalem. A July 31 *New York Times* article by Thomas Friedman hurled insults over Egypt's "ingratitude" for American aid, which provoked a storm of condemnation from all strata of Egyptian society. (Friedman wrote this article after his visit to Egypt some weeks earlier, to advocate "globalization," had failed.)

The conflict was further aggravated when Egypt arrested the American-Egyptian head of the Ibn Khaldoun Center for Development Studies, Saad Eddin Ibrahim, for "spying on Egypt and undermining its national security and unity," on behalf of the United States and specifically of the Central Intelligence Agency and Pentagon-linked institutions, as the Egyptian Prosecutor General put it.

EgyptAir Flight 900

For the Egyptians, the drop that filled the bucket was the release on Aug. 11 of a "factual report" by the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), on the crash of EgyptAir's Flight 900 in the Atlantic on Oct. 31, 1999. What enraged the Egyptian public, as well as the official institutions, was the hyped-up false theory that the co-pilot, Gameel Al-Battouti, had committed suicide, taking all 217 passengers and crew to their doom. This "suicide" story was first leaked to the U.S. press through the FBI in the days following the crash, in order to shape the whole investigation around this preposterous theory. Coming when Egypt's relations with both Israel and the United States were already tense, the NTSB report was extreme psychological, cultural warfare against Egyptians. Furthermore, Flight 900 carried more than 30 high-ranking Egyptian military officers, a fact

that raised more than one question on all possible scenarios. This latest report from the NTSB added more insult to injury, by including a report from the FBI on the alleged “psychological” state of Al-Battouti, which characterized him this time, as an “exhibitionist” womanizer rather than a “Muslim fanatic.”

Egyptian investigators considered the report to be a falsification of facts, and they insisted on a thorough technical investigation of the Boeing 767 aircraft.

As part of a counterattack, Egyptian investigators included in the final NTSB report a document issued by the chairman of the Egyptian Civil Aviation Authority, Abdelfattah Kato, calling on the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration to release radar data which he says indicate that three high-speed objects were tracking Flight 900’s path in the minutes before its plunge into the ocean. These data have been described by the NTSB as “classified and restricted Air Force data and cannot be provided by the NTSB.” These plus eyewitness accounts, have led Egyptian officials and the public to suspect that an “attack,” or some other external factor, caused the tragic crash.

Meanwhile, the Egyptian Civil Pilots’ Association issued a statement, saying that the American authorities are “attempting, through the powerful American mass media, to prepare public opinion to accept the suicide theory.” The statement said: “The existence of strange objects beside the airplane has been proven through the radar data. So, why has an investigation into a missile attack not been opened, or into the airplane’s possible downing by a bomb placed at the rear of the airplane, especially as the whole tail group has not been found after the crash?” They also demanded a technical investigation into possible mechanical failure of the Boeing 767 “elevator control system,” which determines the direction of the airplane’s nose, upward or downward.

The point here, is not to single out the credibility of one investigative lead over another. The main issue is that, from the beginning, U.S. investigators, under the influence of the FBI and media, made up their minds that the suicide theory, and no other scenario, would be the one followed.

Egypt and the Middle East Peace Process

Ironically, had the recent Camp David summit succeeded in imposing the terms that the Zionist lobby-influenced Al Gore and Clinton Administration, and the Israelis, wanted to impose on Arafat, especially regarding Jerusalem and the refugees, the Middle East would have plunged into an unending spiral of violence. As Arafat later disclosed, he told President Bill Clinton, “I would rather be killed by a Jewish fanatic than an Arab Muslim.” Jerusalem cannot be conceded, in part or as a whole, by any individual leader or government in the Middle East. It is a complicated issue which has united all Arab and Muslim nations and governments. Egypt, indeed, supported Arafat in his resistance to the Camp David temptations.

As Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak stated in an interview with the Egyptian weekly *Ros al Youssef*, a “Jerusalem compromise would lead to uncontrollable violence.” He considered such a compromise as “political suicide,” due to the complexity of the issue. Throughout the interview, Mubarak explained his government’s position on the Camp David summit. “Since the launch of the peace talks and until this very date, Egypt has never told Arafat to accept or cede anything.” However, Mubarak said that he was keen to tell Arafat “to accept what he sees as congruent with the Palestinian goals and interests and to reject whatever he sees as unfair. . . . What happened in Camp David was not accepted by Arafat, and it could not be agreed to by any person in the Arab and Islamic world, since nobody can spare Jerusalem.” Mubarak added, “The Jerusalem issue is highly sensitive to the extent that some Western and American circles cannot understand the roots and dimensions of, and the relevant public opinion, whether in Egypt or any Arab, Muslim, or Christian country.”

Reflecting on the seriousness of the situation, Mubarak said: “I even told Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak that the issue is the most serious and difficult stage of talks; it touches all religions, and any concession therein will cause an explosion in the situation that nobody can control. Terrorism will pop up once again under such strong justification.”

Regarding the anti-Egypt campaign, which the interview characterized as “waged by circles in the American Administration,” Mubarak said: “It is an artificial one, spurred by people who do not have the needed knowledge, and anyone can figure out who stands behind it.” He elaborated that this campaign will not come out with any useful results for any party. “On the contrary, it will be a minus for the goals of the peace march and will block it.”

Egypt is a nation of more than 60 million proud citizens, with a significant strategic and political role in the region as well as the world, especially as it has planned and become a bridge between Africa, Asia, and Europe in the framework of the global strategy of building the Eurasian Land-Bridge, or New Silk Road. It expects, and deserves, to be respected as such. Egypt has had financial and monetary problems which made it ask for help from the United States, thus making it, at times, vulnerable to political pressure. However, this will change, as the U.S. and Western financial institutions, and the paper values attached to them, become worthless with the onrushing financial meltdown.

The Egyptian people, its leadership and political elite, who fought the British Empire and its puppets for more than 70 years, have long regarded the United States as a close friend and ally. However, when this ally, or a faction of its political and propaganda machine, tries to dictate Egypt’s internal and foreign policy with the type of arrogance characteristic of the “Brits,” Egyptians will resist. If you want to make friends with the Egyptians, don’t behave like a “British imperial master.”