

# The Economic Weekly

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## The Visitor from Cairo

THE warm welcome accorded in this country to the President of the United Arab Republic has its origin in a multiplicity of reasons. It is in a large sense, of course, a tribute to Nasser, the man who visits us with his leadership fully vindicated over the Suez affair and over the financing of the Aswan High Dam. To the Indian people, he symbolises Arab nationalism, in spite of the fact that it is quite well known in this country that Arab nationalism is as yet a divided force with no single individual capable of speaking in its name without risking immediate and loud contradiction.

The reason for this is simple. Regardless of the currents and cross-currents of Arab disunity, the fact remains that it was Nasser who dramatically asserted the power of Arab nationalism successfully against the might of the Western world. This is the secret of Nasser's personal prestige in the East; and it is because of this that he has received in New Delhi and elsewhere a reception the enthusiasm of which correspondents have compared with the welcome given to much bigger world figures like Khrushchev.

A second reason is the identity of approach which the UAR has developed under Nasser's leadership to our own, in the field of international relations, Cairo is today the capital of a strictly non-aligned country, uncommitted to either camp in the Cold War and—after a period of widespread misunderstanding in both Camps—having friends in the East as well as the West. Non-alignment has paid off well, as can be seen from the money which came pouring in from all quarters for the building of the High Dam. The idealistic recruit to the non-aligned camp can now be trusted to become a staunch adherent of it for purely practical reasons,

This bond of non-alignment in world affairs which united us with the Egyptian and the Syrian people is perhaps the greatest single reason for our warm and affectionate welcome to Nasser. The world is accustomed to seeing members of political and military alliances exchanging purposeful and frequent visits, and holding conferences together. The presence of Dr Adenauer in Washington is natural and easily understood, like that of President de Gaulle in London or Mr Khrushchev's in Peking. Although new, it is also easily understandable that leaders of one camp should have started calling on leaders of the others, in search of some sort of a rapprochement.

But the non-aligned leaders meeting one another and forging powerful bonds with one another are less easily understood in the capitals of the aligned world. The bonds between Nehru and Nasser are invisible; but it is a fairly common mistake in the West to regard them, for that reason, as being tenuous. As a correspondent in Delhi has well pointed out, the uncommitted nations are bound together by a common faith—fundamentally a far stronger bond than that of the fear which unites

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