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THE 1956 SUEZ CRISIS:
A STUDY IN ALLIED CONFLICT

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PREFACE

For many years nations have relied, or attempted to rely, upon collective security to make the world safe for democracy and free from aggression. The search for security brought nations to ally themselves with partners who possessed similar goals, aims, or ideologies. From these alliances came the term "Allies." Britain, France, and the United States fought together during the two world wars and fought for a common goal. In the aftermath of World War II the solidarity of the "Allies" showed signs of tension and strain. The outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 doomed the collective security approach and marked the first major break among the "Allies." This fissure widened into a chasm in the 1956 Suez Crisis.

Doctor Ross Horning provided the inspiration for this thesis with his comments on the anachronism of the term "Allies." Without his helpful suggestions and criticisms and his sacrifice of time, the thesis would still be in the initial stage. I also want to thank Mr. Fred Stenkamp, the members of the Alumni Memorial Library, and Marilyn Schumacher, for their valuable assistance.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE ................................ v

Chapter I. THE MIDDLE EAST CAULDRON ........ 1
De Lessep's Efforts
The 1856 Concession and the
Constantinople Convention (1888)
The Cauldron of Hostilities

Chapter II. PANDORA'S BOX .................... 18
Cancellation of the Aswan Loan
Nationalization of the Suez Canal
Company - July 26, 1956
Tripartite Talks

Chapter III. PROCRASTINATION: THE LONDON CONFERENCES 40
Allied Purposes
First London Conference,
August 16-23, 1956
Menzies' Mission
Suez Canal Users Association (SCUA)
Allied Disagreement
Second London Conference
September 19-21, 1956

Chapter IV. COLLUSION AND DISASTER .......... 60
Britain and France at the Security
Council
The Six Principles
Collusion
The Israeli Attack on Egypt
October 29, 1956
Anglo-French Intervention
Uniting for Peace
The Creation of a United Nations
Emergency Force
Anglo-French Withdrawal
December 3, 1956
V. NO END OF A LESSON .......... 85

Anachronism of "Allies"
Force No Solution
Reorientation of Foreign Policy
The Arab-Israeli Conflict

APPENDIX .................. 101

BIBLIOGRAPHY ............... 124
CHAPTER I

THE MIDDLE EAST CAULDRON

Now that you have cut across the Isthmus . . . you have created a serious embar­rassment. Not merely does the canal connect two inland seas, but it will also serve as a communicating passage to all oceans of the globe. In case of a maritime war it will be of supreme importance, and everyone will be striving at top speed to occupy it. You have marked out a great battle-field for the future.¹

These prophetic words, uttered by Professor Ernest Renan on Ferdinand de Lesseps' admittance into the French Academy in 1885, have been born out over the last quarter of a century. De Lesseps did not visualize that his construction of the Suez Canal would mark a future battlefield. For de Lesseps the Canal was the fulfill­ment of a dream which joined the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea and which sped the raw materials of the Near East and Far East to the manufacturing centers of Western Europe. The Canal and the surrounding area played a strategic role in the policies of the United States and of the Soviet Union for Middle East supremacy.

The Soviet Union coveted the Middle East as a base for the spread of its doctrine of Communism and for the dominance of the Eastern Mediterranean. The United States, Great Britain, and France were interested in the birthplace of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam for varied reasons. The United States wanted to prevent Soviet control and to guarantee the survival of the State of Israel; England and France wanted to keep the Middle East heart pumping lifegiving oil into their economy. Thus, the Middle East was and is the knight which prevents the Western nations from being checkmated by the Soviet Union.

Ferdinand de Lesseps was not the first person to envision a route which would bridge the gap between the present day cities of Port Said and Suez. During the age of the pharoahs canals of a much smaller scale than the Suez Canal had been constructed, but due to the rigors of the desert and the laxity of the pharoahs, the canals gradually filled with sand. The man who made the initial attempt to survey the Isthmus and to formulate ideas of a canal was Napoleon's chief engineer, Jacques Le Pere. Le Pere was commissioned by Napoleon in 1798 to investigate and to report on the possibilities of building a canal. This initial survey was followed by the efforts of a British Captain F.R. Chesney in 1830.
and by a Frenchman Linant de Bellefonds in 1846. Both men had surveyed the canal route, and both reached a conclusion contrary to Le Pere's: the Red Sea was on the same level as the Mediterranean Sea. During the late 1840's and early 1850's Thomas Waghorn facilitated communication between Alexandria and Suez by organizing a pony express route. His efforts were surpassed in 1854 by the British who, taking the lead in their rivalry with the French over the Isthmus, constructed a railroad joining the two cities.

De Lesseps, who had read Le Pere's report, became seriously interested in a canal project and was granted a concession to build a canal by the Khedive of Egypt, Said Pasha, on November 30, 1854. British opposition, led by Lord Palmerston, was staunchly against such a project and exerted pressure on the Sultan of Turkey to disallow the Khedive's concession. After eighteen months of intrigue the basic document for the maintenance of the Suez Canal was drawn up. Its provisions were: (1) a canal would be established between Suez on the Red Sea and the Bay of Pelusium in the Mediterranean Sea, (2) four-fifths of the employed workmen would be Egyptian, (3) the Canal Company would not be taxed, (4) the canal should be forever open to all nations, (5) the Company would receive a 99 year
concession, (6) the Egyptian Government would receive 15% of net profits of each year, and (7) the Sultan would approve the Universal Company of the Maritime Canal of Suez.\(^2\) Due to British pressure, this last provision proved to be exceedingly difficult to obtain but de Lesseps forced the Sultan's hand by establishing his own Company, the Compagnie Universelle du Canal Maritime de Suez, and by selling company shares to the public in November, 1858. British pressure diminished somewhat when the Indian Mutiny of 1857 illustrated the importance of a quick route to India. Canal construction began on April 25, 1859; however, the Sultan did not approve the Canal Concession until March 19, 1866. The Canal Company, an Egyptian Company and subject to Egyptian law, had its central office in Alexandria and its administrative offices in France and was ruled internally by French corporation law. Thus, the stage was set for the official opening of the Suez Canal on November 17, 1869.

Egypt's Khedive Ismail ushered in the Canal's opening with gala pageantry and ceremony. Two portentous

points should be noted about the Canal's inauguration: (1) the United States was not represented, and (2) the Egyptian representative did not sail through the Canal under its own flag but rode in Great Britain's ship which was located near the end of the procession. In 1869 the United States was not aware of the importance of the Suez Canal, and in the 1956 Suez Crisis the United States did not comprehend its vital necessity to Britain and France. The Suez Canal possessed immense strategic value. Navigation through the Canal was crucial to Britain and France, whose economies were dependent upon the oil shipped by the Mediterranean route. However, the United States did not depend upon Middle East Oil. This subtle distinction, which caused a split between the United States and Great Britain and France, was clearly illustrated as the Suez Crisis unfolded.

In the history of the Suez Canal up to 1957, one can see the destiny of Egypt and Great Britain being woven together by the thread of the Suez Canal. England, which at first vehemently opposed its construction, saw the necessity of a quick route to the Middle East when the Indian Mutiny occurred in 1857. The need of more British troops to suppress this mutiny and the Arab revolts of the early 1880's and the late 1890's changed
England's attitude about the Suez Canal. It was not only the key to India, but also the key to the heart of the British and the Western European economy. Bismarck aptly described the Canal's importance to Britain when he compared the Canal to "the spinal column which connects the backbone with the brain."

The British-Egyptian relationship became closer in November, 1875, when Britain bought the Egyptian shares of the Canal Company to alleviate the financial plight of Ismail. With this British purchase of shares, Britain and France possessed a substantial majority of the Canal stock. This partnership, although strained throughout the late 1880's and 1890's and the early 1900's, was to play a major role in the Suez Crisis of 1956.

The British-Egyptian relationship was forged painfully closer in 1882 when, in order to protect the security of the canal, the British suppressed the revolt of Ahmed Urabi and established a de facto protectorate over Egypt. A major landmark in the further development of their joint destinies occurred on October 29, 1888, with the signing of the Constantinople Convention by

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Great Britain, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Spain, France, Italy, The Netherlands, Russia, and Turkey. The 1888 Convention specified in concrete legal terms a definitive and comprehensive system by which the Suez Canal would now be operated. Two articles in this Convention were of particular importance and would precipitate heated controversy between Egypt and Israel, and Egypt and Britain and France in the following years:

1) The Suez Maritime Canal shall always be free and open, in time of war as in time of peace, to every vessel of commerce or of war, without distinction of flag.

2) The High Contracting Parties agree that no right of war, act of hostility or act having for its purpose to interfere with the free navigation of the Canal, shall be committed in the Canal and its ports of access, or within a radius of three nautical miles from those ports, even though the Ottoman Empire should be one of the belligerent Powers.4

Britain did not think that the 1888 Convention was compatible with the "actual and exceptional situation in Egypt...that it shackled her liberty of action."5 As a result, despite French protests, Britain reserved the right to continue her occupation

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4 *Canal Problem*, pp. 16-20.

of Egypt. When France dropped her claim for British withdrawal and was permitted a free hand in Morocco, the British withdrew this reservation. This pact was finalized by the Anglo-French Agreement of April 8, 1904, which gave international recognition of Britain's de facto protectorate of Egypt.

In regard to the Suez Canal Concession and the following 1888 Convention, there were two transactions involved: one of an internal character, the other of an international character. The internal aspect concerned the pact between Egypt and the Canal Company - the 1856 Concession. The international aspect applied to the agreement ratified by Egypt and the international community - the Constantinople Convention. This distinction played a poignant part in the 1956 Suez Crisis. President Nasser of Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal Company, not the Suez Canal. Is there a difference? Yes! The Suez Canal was an international canal which "connected two parts of the open seas, and subject to an international regime whereby freedom of navigation is guaranteed for the vessels of all nations of the world." Nationalization did not prohibit the use of the Canal by all the nations.

Nasser was bound by both the 1856 Concession and the 1888 Convention to keep the Canal forever open to all nations.

The next stage in the joint destinies of Egypt and Great Britain evolved in three phases during the aftermath of World War I. The first phase was the Treaty of Versailles' de jure recognition of the British protectorate over Egypt since 1882. The second phase pertained to Britain's famous Balfour Declaration, which promised the Jews a homeland. The British did not fulfill their promise to the Jews, but this did not dampen the Jewish desire for a native home. This Jewish desire to possess and maintain its own home would be the source of hostilities and reprisals between the Arabs and the Jews in 1948, 1956, and 1967. The third and final phase occurred in February, 1922, when Egypt became a sovereign state, but Great Britain still retained, and vigorously defended, her right to station troops on Egyptian soil. The mark of a sovereign nation is to control everything within its borders. In 1922 Egypt did not control the Suez Canal Zone and thus was not completely sovereign over all her country.

A corollary following from this third phase was the Anglo-Egyptian treaty of August, 1936, which ended
British military occupation of Egypt but provided for the stationing of British troops in the Canal Zone for twenty years. This latter provision was ironed out in October, 1954, when Britain agreed to withdraw her troops from the Canal area but retained the right to reoccupy the Suez base if an attack occurred on a member of the Arab League or on Turkey. This 1954 agreement also recognized that the Canal was an integral part of Egypt and that it possessed international importance because of its economic and strategic value.

The British position in Egypt was weakened by World War II which was the mid-wife of nationalism in the Middle East. Hitler’s doctrine of a superior race had fallen on fertile ground in the Middle East. This idea combined with the Wilsonian ideal of self-determination of nations and brought Arab nationalism to the fore. This nationalism was fanatical in its opposition to the British mandate of Palestine. The task of keeping the peace between the Arabs and the Israelis was so great a burden for Britain that she relinquished the task to the United Nations in February, 1947. The United Nations grappled with the problem of Palestine to no avail until Palestine forced the issue on May 14, 1948, by proclaiming the State of Israel. The Arab League, formed in 1945 and composed of Egypt, Iraq,
Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, Libya, attacked the nascent Israeli state with the purpose of extinguishing its existence, but Israel thwarted this desire and decisively defeated the Arab League. This ignominious defeat by Israel only intensified the pitch of Arab nationalism.

The Arab nations viewed with hostility and hatred the Israeli state and the British troops garrisoned in the Canal Zone. Both were looked upon as great symbols of Western imperialism. The creation of the Israeli state was mainly due to the efforts of the West, particularly the United States. The Arabs considered Israel's mere existence aggression. The Israelis were foreigners encroaching upon Arab soil. They possessed a different language and their Judaic-Christian heritage clashed with Arabic Islam. What rankled the Egyptians just as much, or even more, was the presence of British troops within the sovereign borders of Egypt. The Arabic passion for preserving dignity was seething at the British for treating the Arabs as a little brother who must be watched and coddled.

At the core of this rabid nationalism was Egypt; its leader was Colonel Nasser who had risen to power in a 1952 coup d'etat. He recalled the glories
of the past to his people and to his neighboring Arab brothers and urged both to throw off the yoke of Western imperialism. To accomplish such a feat Nasser sought the favor of the Soviet Union because it was the only power which was strong enough to combat Western influence.

The United States became alarmed at the threatening Soviet cloud which was looming larger and more ominous over the entire Middle Eastern region. Britain was apprehensive about its quaking Middle Eastern base particularly after Cyprus clamored both vocally and with bullets for independence. With this background of Arab-Israeli hostility and Soviet intrigue one can readily agree with Dwight D. Eisenhower's analysis of the Middle East as a "seething cauldron of political unrest and incessant border warfare."8

The vicious animosities between the Arabs and the Israelis and between the Arabs and the British were not the only pieces of firewood stoking the Middle East cauldron to such an intense heat. The Arab nations fought among themselves over who was to be the leader of Arab unity and over which royal household would

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8 Ibid., p. 21.
rule the dream of a unified Syria, Fertile Crescent, and Iraq. The British-French rivalry over Syria and the French-Egyptian clash over the Algerian revolt in North Africa hastened the eventual overflow of the Middle East cauldron. It is, however, not the purpose of this paper to discuss the hatred and hostility among the Arab nations, but rather, to concentrate on the Allied conflict which would permeate the discussions and the actions in the 1956 Suez Crisis.

The cardinal rule of international relations is that a nation seeks what is best for its own interests. At times specific goals will coincide, and nations will strive for them in a co-operative effort. More often than not, however, this rule will precipitate clashes among nations in which each will seek different goals and will pursue different policies. The 1956 Suez Crisis illustrated this fact in graphic terms.

Egypt sought what was best for her own well-being in her dealings with the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, and France in the Suez Crisis. For following this policy Egypt would be accused of blackmailing the United States, would have the Aswan Loan cancelled because of her desire to obtain a better offer from the Soviet Union, and would be

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attacked by Britain and France for nationalizing an Egyptian Company. What a price to pay for seeking the welfare of her own nation!

Britain was strongly apprehensive about the sun setting upon Egypt without British influence. This sense of apprehension and pride concerning the British Empire was to be a millstone around the neck of the English nation pulling it deeper into the Suez quagmire. This failure to reconcile themselves with the gradual loss of their Empire precipitated the United States-British clash over colonialism. American charges of colonialism were also leveled at French control of Algeria which was rebelling against French rule. The French believed Nasser's Egypt was the supply depot for Algerian arms and, as a result, were aroused over Nasser's intervention.

With Soviet influence on the rise in the Middle East, a furious arms race began with the United States, England, and France supporting Israel and with the Soviet Union aiding the Arab nations. The arms race reached such proportions that in May, 1950, Britain, France, and the United States signed the Tripartite Agreement to maintain a balance of arms and to provide for collective action against force in the Middle East. This agreement, little more than a scrap
of paper, prompted a call for more arms—a call which the United States was reluctant to heed. Terence Robertson, author of Crisis: The Inside Story of the Suez Conspiracy, captured the end result of this agreement:

... Their fears, involvement, obsessions, conflicts of interest, mutual agreement to disagree, and only dimly perceived objectives had brought about a state of tumult and anarchy from which there came but one cry loud enough to be heard—the call for arms and more arms. 10

Dwight D. Eisenhower had been elected in 1952 on a peace platform and was preparing to run again in 1956 on a peace and prosperity program. Eisenhower emphasized the lengths to which the United States would go to prevent violence and aggression and to achieve peace in the Middle East cauldron. This program set the tone for the American policy when the Suez Crisis erupted: a peace based upon justice. This firm desire of the President and his Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, would clash with the expedient proposals of Britain and France to secure their goals. Who would determine the principles of justice?

These two attitudes would characterize the relations of the "Allies," the United States, Britain,

10Robertson, Crisis, p. 10.
and France, during the Suez Crisis. Britain and France advocated the forceful expedient measures as opposed to the gradual and peaceful proposals of the United States. Britain and France did not understand the dilatory action of the United States; the United States did not comprehend the motives behind the Anglo-French response to Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal Company. The core issue was the degree of dependency upon the Suez Canal. Britain and France needed the life-giving oil of the Middle East; the United States did not. All three nations misunderstood the complexities of the Middle East problem, and as a result followed vague and vacillating foreign policies. When the crisis was over, they recognized their mistakes and reoriented their foreign policies.

The 1956 Suez Crisis was "a story of dreams, deviousness, . . . , ingenuity, courage, cowardice, sweat, death, despair, defeat, and triumph." 11 It was a story of the Arab dream of throwing off the yoke of western imperialism, of the deviousness of the British-French-Israeli collusion, of the ingenuity of the United Nations to arrive at a temporary solution, of the courage of the Israeli soldiers, of the death of British, French, Egyptian, and Israeli men, of the

11Longgood, Suez Story, p. xv.
frustration of the British and French hopes, of the
defeat of Egypt and eventually of Britain and France,
and of the triumph of Nasser who was given acclaim
by the Arabs for his great deed.
CHAPTER II
PANDORA'S BOX

On July 26, 1956, for fourth anniversary of the Egyptian revolt, President Nasser brought the Arab dream of rebelling against the chains of Western imperialism to fruition by nationalizing the Suez Canal Company:

The International Company of the Suez Maritime Canal is hereby nationalized. Its assets and liabilities revert to the State and the councils and committees at present responsible for its administration are dissolved.\textsuperscript{12}

As a result of this unilateral Egyptian action, the Middle East cauldron decisively split the "Western Allies."

The initial western reaction to Nasser's act of nationalization was a portent for future events. The United States urged caution and asked that no rash step be taken. Anthony Eden, the British Prime Minister, believed that "on its[Western reaction to nationalization] outcome would depend whose authority would prevail.\textsuperscript{13} Hugh Gaitskell, Labor Party spokesman,

\textsuperscript{12}\textbf{D.G. Watt}, \textit{Documents on the Suez Crisis 26 July to 6 November 1956} (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1957), pp. 34-35 (hereinafter cited as \textit{Suez Documents}).

gave a calmer appraisal of the situation but still objected to Nasser's act. The Canal Company was not an ordinary company, but one controlling an international waterway of immense importance. International confidence had been shaken by the manner in which nationalization was carried out. The final point raised by Gaitskell was that Nasser's act must be considered in the context of the political turmoil of the Middle East.  

M. Pineau, French Foreign Minister, stated on July 28 that the French government would refuse to accept Nasser's unilateral act and that the government would consult with its allies and any decisions would be made together in total solidarity. The French National Assembly passed a resolution on August 2, 1956, expressing its indignation over Nasser's brutal and unilateral action. Nasser, by violating his pledges, by his discrimination in Canal traffic, and by his wish to establish hegemony over the Arab world "constituted a permanent menace to peace."  


15Ibid., pp. 119, 137-38.
What was the Egyptian attitude to the uproar by Britain and France? President Nasser expressed the bewilderment of Egypt in a July 28 speech:

... I wonder what was the basis of this protest by Britain to Egypt? The Suez Canal Company is an Egyptian company, subject to Egyptian sovereignty. ... What right has Britain to interfere in our affairs and our questions? When we nationalized the Suez Canal Company, we only performed an act stemming from the very heart of our sovereignty.\(^\text{16}\)

Herman Phleger, State Department Legal Advisor, prophetically analyzed the crisis as "a choice between political and personal destinies: either Nasser must fall—or Eden must fall."\(^\text{17}\) As time would prove, Nasser would become the Arab idol and Eden would fall.

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\(^\text{16}\)Ibid., p. 120.

from power in Great Britain.

The nationalization of the Suez Canal Company, the immediate cause of the Suez Crisis, had been precipitated by the rejection of the Aswan Loan. In December, 1955, the United States and the United Kingdom had agreed to help finance the Aswan High Dam by contributing $56 million and $14 million respectively. In addition to these loans the International Bank had contributed $200 million for the dam's construction. The Aswan High Dam was to be a jewel in Nasser's crown in his efforts to bolster the economy and the living standard of his people. When the loan was abruptly cancelled, his efforts to improve the Egyptian living standard were doomed. He then lashed out at the nearest symbol of Western influence - the Suez Canal.

Nasser was bitterly angered over the Western rejection, but he had known that the decision was imminent. Nasser had been attempting to obtain offers of higher aid for the Aswan Dam from the United States and the Soviet Union. The United States, weary of this bidding competition with the Soviet Union, withdrew its loan and thus forced the Soviet Union to make good its offer. Nasser realized the pitfalls of his intrigue and had to accept the consequences.

The withdrawal of the Aswan Loan has been a
subject of great controversy. Why was the loan rejected? Was nationalization of the Canal Company premeditated or was it just in retaliation for the loan rejection? Did the United States and Great Britain cooperate on the decision? These questions need answering if one is to understand the Suez Crisis because they illustrate the origin of the first friction between the United States, England and France.

Nasser realized that the United States was uneasy over Egyptian actions, and that the moralist of American policy, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, was seriously irritated by his intrigues. Nasser realized the time had come for repentance and sent the Egyptian Ambassador Hussein to accept the United States loan. On July 19, 1956, Dulles awaited the Ambassador's arrival with a note rejecting the loan. Hussein accepted the note, read it, and calmly retired from Dulles' office. The following day England withdrew its loan, and three days later the International Bank withdrew its offer. The Aswan Loan hinged upon American participation and when the United States pulled out, the loan collapsed.

Robert Murphy in his book Diplomat Among Warriors stated that the possible reasons for cancelling the
Aswan Loan were: the project was unpopular in Congress; Egypt was accepting American aid and returning irritations; Israel, Syria, and Jordan were squabbling over the division of the Nile waters; the project was stimulating other Middle East requests. Murphy also remarked that Dulles' staff was "never told explicitly why he acted so abruptly" and that perhaps the reason was Nasser's scheduled trip to Moscow in early August. The Secretary of State expressed his view in a letter to President Eisenhower on September 15, 1956. Dulles related that the loan rejection was not a shock or a surprise to Egypt and that the Egyptians knew that the reply would be negative. Dulles cited Egypt's flirtations with the Soviet Union and Congressional opposition to money appropriation as the reasons for the cancellation. He then stated that the Egyptian Ambassador had been shown the statement in advance and had made no comment. Nasser just used the rejection as a good occasion to seize the Canal.

Were Dulles' reasons sufficient cause to cancel the Aswan Loan? Would it have been better to continue

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completing with the Soviet Union for Middle East supremacy rather than simply withdraw and give the Soviet Union a free rein in the Middle East? The United States has attempted more adventurous policies which have reaped lesser benefits. Dulles should have seen the commensurate rewards which might have accrued from the Aswan Loan, but his strong moral principle clouded his vision.

Many factors precipitated the cancellation of the Aswan Loan, but one which was not immediately evident and which was of great importance was the moral fiber of John Foster Dulles. Dulles would not allow Nasser's schemes to involve the United States in a bidding competition for the Aswan Dam. He did not welcome the Egyptian manner of repaying American aid with constant insults. The Aswan Loan was the last straw. Dulles would accept no more Egyptian vacillation and intrigue and vigorously endorsed the loan rejection.

The United States now washed its hands of the whole affair and let Britain and France suffer the consequences. The Soviet Union immediately filled the vacuum and promised to uphold its offer to finance the Aswan Dam. The previous efforts of the United States and Britain to stabilize the Middle East against
Soviet intrusion were thus carelessly disregarded. The Soviet Union now possessed control of a vital artery of the Egyptian economy.

What was British reaction? Sir Anthony Eden stated in his memoirs that "we were informed but not consulted" and that "we were sorry that the matter was carried through so abruptly."20 The London Times, contradicting Eden, commented in reference to the abrupt withdrawal that "close consultation has been maintained with the British Government."21 Robert Murphy, Under-Secretary of State, agreed with Eden and mentioned that there was "a regrettable lack of adequate notice to the partners in the consortium, especially Britain which was chiefly affected."22

The conflict had begun. The United States had acted without consulting Great Britain. England would repay this snub tenfold by its later intervention in Egypt. The French were pleased by the refusal to finance the Aswan Dam because they hoped that a firm constructive policy toward Egypt would enhance their efforts in North Africa.

20 Eden, Full Circle, p. 470.
21 The Times, July 21, 1956, p. 5.
22 Murphy, Diplomat Among Warriors, p. 377.
What was Egyptian reaction to the cancellation of the Aswan Loan? In early July, Nasser is reported to have said that "I do not believe...that the West intends to proceed with their offers of loans for the Aswan Dam. They will reject us, and when they do, I shall nationalize the Suez Canal Company."23 This statement seemed to come from a man who was aware of the existing situation and who had made plans if specific events would occur. His statement was corroborated by Dulles, who thought that Nasser had planned nationalization for over two years, but it was contradicted by a later Nasser remark that "on the 23rd [July] we [Nasser and Nehru] decided to nationalize the Suez Canal Company."24 Nasser was distressed because the loan was rejected, but he was more angered over the manner in which the United States, rejecting the loan, disregarded the principles on which international relations should be based. It seemed then that Nasser possessed a better grasp of the nationalization issue than did Dulles. Dulles did not realize the Pandora's box he had opened by refusing the Aswan Loan.

23Robertson, Crisis, p. 65.
24Peter Calvocoressi, Suez: Ten Years After (New York: Pantheon, 1967), pp. 43-44.
Anthony Nutting, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs under Anthony Eden, stated in No End Of A Lesson that the Suez disaster began on March 1, 1956. On this day King Hussein of Jordan dismissed the British General Glubb from his post as head of the Arab Legion, Jordan's army. This act was a sharp blow to Britain's waning vestiges of empire and had to be answered immediately and decisively. Gone were the illusions of a prior Anglo-Egyptian friendship. Nasser must be removed; he must be destroyed:

Driven by the impulses of pride and prestige and nagged by mounting sickness, he [Eden] began to behave like an enraged elephant charging senselessly at invisible and imaginary enemies in the international jungle. 26

England now reacted vigorously to any apparent minor affront to British prestige and power. The first step in Eden's toughened Middle East policy was the deportation of Archbishop Makarios from Cyprus on March 9, 1956. Three months later Eden rejected a possible settlement with Saudi Arabia over the Buraimi Oasis dispute. England had given up too much in the Middle East and "the only thing the Arabs understood was


26ibid., p. 32.
Eden finally achieved an opportunity to use the mailed fist when Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal Company.

Nasser's act of nationalization not only posed a problem to Britain and France but also raised the very important question of whether Nasser had the right to nationalize the Canal Company. Was the Suez Canal an integral part of Egypt? Yes! In January, 1955, the Egyptian representative stated in the Security Council that the Suez Canal lies in Egyptian territory: "The Suez Canal is an integral part of Egypt and is subject to Egyptian sovereignty." That Nasser had the right to nationalize the Canal Company seemed inescapable. The right accrued from the 1856 Concession between Turkey and the Canal Company. This concession was a pact between two individual parties, not between Turkey and the international community.

Did Nasser break the Constantinople Convention? Did he have the right to paralyze the majority of maritime nations because geography gave him control of an international waterway? The answer lay in the 1856 Concession between Turkey and the Canal Company.

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27 Ibid., p. 42.

28 Obieta, Canal Status, p. 95.
Concession and the 1888 Convention. Egypt was not an independent state when these agreements were drawn up, but the obligations of these pacts fell upon her in 1922 because she was the successor of Turkey and because she was the territorial sovereign of the Suez Canal. Egypt was bound by Article fourteen of the 1856 Concession to uphold free and open passage through the Canal. This private contract between the Egyptian government under Turkey and the Canal Company took on an international nature in 1888. By Article one of the Constantinople Convention the Sultan promised to keep the Canal open and free to any nation without distinction.

The 1888 Convention thus bound Egypt and Turkey to maintain free navigation of the Canal and granted the international community the right to utilize the Canal under any circumstances. This provision of free navigation was publicly acclaimed three times: 1) April 16, 1938, Britain and Egypt agreed to abide by the 1888 provisions, 2) 1947 Egypt stated in the Security Council that the Canal was an international artery navigable by all nations at any time, and 3) October 19, 1954, Egypt and Britain pledged to uphold freedom of navigation in an Anglo-Egyptian
Egypt's pledge was not altered by Nasser's nationalization of the Canal Company. The crux of the issue revolved around whether the international community believed Nasser would keep his obligation. Under the previous arrangement of joint Anglo-French control, the maritime nations felt that their freedom of navigation was secure, but this security was shaken by nationalization. What was the basis for this apprehension? Joseph Obieta, S.J., brought out in his book, *The International Status of the Suez Canal*, the vagueness of the 1888 Convention as a binding international settlement. He based his theory on three observations. The practice of the non-signatory states of the 1888 Convention illustrated the disbelief in the authenticity of the convention as a binding international agreement. Turkey, the territorial sovereign of the Suez Canal and the principal signatory of the 1888 Convention, violated the 1888 Convention in the Italo-Turkish War and in World War I by belligerent acts. The acquiescence of the international community to the violations of two world wars and the 1948 Palestinian War showed conclusively the international

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Thus, the apprehension after nationalization of the Suez Canal was justified. The negligence of the international community, who had condoned violations of the 1888 Convention, did not grant Egypt the right to act without consulting the world body on their right of navigation in the Suez Canal. "In other words, the nationalization of the Company was legal but the way in which it was carried out was illegal; which of course, made the whole act, also internationally illegal."  

The nationalization act brought to the fore another spark of conflict between the Allies. Britain and France, in a belligerent mood, wanted immediate action to squelch the upstart dictator. The United States followed a more methodical route to return the black sheep to the fold. Britain, hoping that the United States would at least be neutral, prepared to back her warnings with military action and cabled the United States of its intentions.

In a telegram to President Eisenhower on July 27, 1956, Eden remarked that Nasser must not be allowed to defy international agreements. A firm stand must be

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30 Ibid., pp. 86-87.

31 Ibid., p. 106.
taken because the Canal was vital to the free world. "My colleagues and I are convinced that we must be ready, in the last resort, to use force for bring Nasser to his senses. For our part we are prepared to do so." Eisenhower replied to Eden's cable in a July 31 letter and expressed his misgiving over Britain's desire to employ force. Eisenhower emphasized the need for alternative solution and prophetically grasped the eventual outcome of the Suez Crisis:

"...If unfortunately the situation can finally be resolved only by drastic means, there should be no grounds for belief anywhere that corrective measures were undertaken merely to protect national or individual investors, or the legal rights of a sovereign nation were ruthlessly flouted. ... Moreover, initial military successes might be easy, but the eventual price might become far too heavy." Eisenhower dispatched Under Secretary of State Robert Murphy to London to discover Eden's exact plans and to hold the fort. Dulles, who at the time was attending the inauguration of President Prado of Peru, arrived for the Tripartite Conference on August 1 with instructions to prevent military intervention. On his arrival Dulles met with Eden and the Foreign

Secretaries of Britain and France, Selwyn Lloyd and Christian Pineau, and made his famous statement that "a way had to be found to make Nasser disgorge what he was attempting to swallow."\textsuperscript{34}

Dulles, basing discussion on the 1888 Convention, hoped to mobilize world opinion in favor of international operation of the Canal. He would use force only as a last resort. Dulles proposed that the view of the Tripartite Conference of August 1 through 3 be accepted by a two-thirds majority of a future conference of maritime nations. Eden referred to the importance of Middle East oil and stated that anyone who thinks lightly of a Nasser victory "should confine himself to tiddleywinks or blind man's bluff."\textsuperscript{35}

In 1955, 14,666 ships passed through the Suez Canal artery. Tankers accounted for nearly 76 million tons of shipping and life-giving petroleum accounted for two-thirds of the total merchandise carried through the Canal.\textsuperscript{36}

The \textit{London Times} captured the bitter and incisive British reaction of the United States position:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{34} Eden, \textit{Full Circle}, p. 487.
  \item \textsuperscript{35} Ibid., p. 492.
  \item \textsuperscript{36} The \textit{Times}, July 28, 1956, p. 5.
\end{itemize}
... the consensus of official opinion is against any precipitate action by the Government; what really matters, in other words, is the election and the persuasions of "peace, prosperity and progress."  

This quote was a particularly poignant statement. No precipitate action and election were the watch words of the Republicans. Eden remarked that "the course of the Suez Canal crisis was decided by the American attitude which was dilatory, improvising, and not in the spirit of an ally." The French agreed with the British and believed that the conciliatory and precautionary measures of the United States hampered effective action.

Sherman Adams, author of Firsthand Report, related that the peaceful compromise solution of Dulles and Eisenhower was in direct opposition to the British desire for immediate and effective action. As a result, Britain thought "that the United States were exhibiting a fruitless, if not dangerous lack of sure-footedness." United States foreign policy under the helm of Dulles and Eisenhower was not as unsure as Britain and France believed. Eisenhower thought that the loss of the world's foremost public utility was

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37 The Times, July 30, 1956, p. 7.

38 Eden, Full Circle, p. 512.

unthinkable, but he also realized the symbolic value of the Suez Canal to Britain and France. The United States was not to be drawn into a rash move by her "Allies" over an issue of prestige and power in the Middle East.

This issue coupled with the diversity of views over Nasser's nationalization seriously hampered any effective joint effort by the United States, Britain and France. The British and French case, as Eisenhower saw it, was based on three premises: 1) Egypt had unilaterally flouted a solemn treaty, 2) British and French interests would be seriously damaged by the inefficient Egyptian operation of the Suez Canal due to a lack of qualified personnel and to insurmountable technical difficulties, and 3) Britain and France feared an increase in Nasser's prestige.

The United States doubted the validity of the Anglo-French position because if Nasser adequately compensated the Canal Company owners, he would have the support of world opinion behind his nationalization of the Canal Company. The main issue centered around Nasser's competency to keep the Canal open to international traffic in accordance with the 1888 Convention. This could only be answered by a test of
These diverse positions illustrated how the "Western Allies" approached the nationalization problem, and how they would view future events. First, there was no mention of American interests at the Tripartite talks. This fact brought out the American attitude toward the value of the Suez Canal. The United States did not deem the Suez Canal of strategic importance to its vital interests:

... As is often the case among allies, the material interest of the United States was not identical with that of either France or the United Kingdom. France and Britain had very substantial holdings in the Canal Company. American holdings were insignificant. France and Britain were directly dependent on the flow of Middle East oil. The United States was not nearly so dependent. 41

Britain and France thought otherwise and thus reacted more violently than did the United States.

Second, the United States isolated the Suez Canal problem from the explosive issue of Nasser's position in the Arab world. The issue at stake was not to damage Nasser's prestige, but to arrive at a solution of the Canal problem which was acceptable to both the international community and to Egypt. Britain

41 Murphy, Diplomat Among Warriors, p. 383.
and France regarded Nasser's action of nationalization as an opportunity to establish solid international control of the canal and to cripple Nasser's position in Egypt and in the Arab nations. The temporizing negotiations of the United States conflicted with the vigorous proposals of Britain and France. The latter realized that if force was to be used, action must be taken immediately.

The first American attempt to mitigate the Anglo-French view of force occurred during the Tripartite talks. Dulles had arrived in London on August 1 with three expressed purposes: 1) to prevent military intervention and the use of force, 2) to mobilize world opinion against Nasser, and 3) to base discussions on the 1888 Convention. The effect of Dulles' negotiations with the British and the French can be seen by the gist of the Tripartite Statement of August 2, 1956: 1) The Universal Suez Canal Company has always had an international character, 2) Nasser's act was an arbitrary and unilateral seizure of an international agency, and 3) a conference of maritime nations should be convened to establish and to implement the international control of the Suez
Canal.42

This statement concealed the diverse attitudes of the participants. The United States muted the Anglo-French desire for immediate action by proposing to hold the London Conference of maritime nations in two weeks. Dulles had originally desired a later date but compromised on August 16. Britain and France wanted to apply economic pressure against Nasser by having all shipowners pay their tolls in Britain or France and squeeze off any foreign currency paid to Nasser. Dulles could not guarantee how American shipowners would react to this proposal and could not force American vessels under Panamanian registry to accede to this demand.

The Tripartite discussions gave the semblance of unity between the "Western Allies" but in reality illustrated the divergent views. The Tripartite Statement was a Dulles victory. He had curtailed Anglo-French belligerency by their acquiescence to mobilizing world opinion at the upcoming conference. The First London Conference was the next stage in which Britain and France would attempt to coerce Egypt to surrender control of the Canal only to have Dulles

42Watt, Suez Documents, pp. 50-51.
frustrate their efforts.
CHAPTER III

PROCRASTINATION: THE LONDON CONFERENCES

The First London Conference convened on Thursday, August 16, 1956, at Lancaster House in Great Britain. Eighteen of the twenty-two nations who were invited to participate attended this conference. One month later the Second London Conference was held. These two conferences produced the most crucial stage in the Suez Crisis. Within brief period of five weeks the "Allies," particularly the United States, had an excellent opportunity to halt the dangerous course which they were pursuing. Nasser could have been "forcefully" persuaded to agree to an international operating board, and Britain and France would not have been driven to intervention in Egypt. Dulles, by his juggling act of trying on the one hand to appease Britain and France, and on the other of attempting not to alienate Arab opinion, precipitated the chaos which resulted.

The positions of the respective Allies at the first London Conference were the same as those maintained during the Tripartite Talks. Dulles on his return from the three power talks stated that "we do
not want to meet violence with violence" and that we hope to find a solution which is acceptable to all nations.

On August 3 in the French National Assembly M. Pineau discussed Franco-Egyptian relations and the Tripartite talks on the Suez Canal. He related that the Egyptian government gave at least moral support to the Algerian rebels and that further evidence pointed to Nasser's training of Algerian cadres in Egypt. Nasser had said that there were not any rebels in Egypt. He had broken his word of honor. Pineau commented upon the Tripartite talks and then brought out a slight difference among the "Allies" over transit through the Canal. Britain and France would pay only the original Canal Company. The United States could not guarantee that its ship owners would conform with Britain and France.

43 Department of State Bulletin, August 13, 1956, p. 262.

44 Noble Frankland (ed.), Documents on International Affairs 1956 (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 140-150. (Dès le début des événements d'Algérie, il est apparu que le Gouvernement égyptien apportait un soutien au moins moral à l'activité des rebelles... 

... une surveillance particulièrement attentive des camps
On August 8 Eden in a television and radio
speech remarked that "our quarrel is not with Egypt,
still less with the Arab world. It is with Colonel
Nasser." On the same day President Eisenhower
stressed in a press conference the peaceful solution
of the crisis and refused to comment upon the pre­
cautionary military measures of Britain and France in
the Mediterranean. Thomas Barman, Diplomatic Cor­
respondent of the B.B.C., struck the core issue in
his analysis of the motives behind the Western Allies
at the First London Conference:

... the British and French governments were
concerned to re-establish the ownership to
the Canal, their ownership; the other powers,
and principally the United States, were con­
cerned to maintain freedom of navigation
through the Canal, which was a totally
different idea.

Il nous est donc apparu sur ce point que le
colonel Nasser avait manqué à sa parole d'honneur.

En ce qui concerne le premier point, les positions
des trois gouvernements sont encore quelque peu
nuancées. Le Gouvernement français a, en effet, décidé
que les bateaux des compagnies françaises n'accepteraient
de payer qu'à l'ancienne société . . .
Le Gouvernement britannique continue à payer à
l'ancienne société . . .

45 Ibid., p. 159.
46 Calvocoressi, Suez: Ten Years After, p. 11.
These respective positions are verified by men who had intimate knowledge of what was occurring — Dwight Eisenhower and Anthony Nutting. President Eisenhower emphasized that the United States would participate in the conference with the "objective of safeguarding the interests of those dependent on the Canal as well as recognizing the legitimate interests of Egypt." Secretary Nutting commented that Eden's purpose was directly opposed to Dulles' and "in his heart Eden hoped that the conference would produce a solution unacceptable to Nasser."  

The heart of the First London Conference centered upon the statement of Dulles to the maritime nations on August 16, 1956, in which he outlined a plan for Canal operation. Dulles began his speech with remarks on the supreme importance of the international Canal and stated that "in the Suez Canal the interdependence of nations achieves perhaps its highest point." Nasser's act of July 26, 1956 shattered international confidence in free transit of the Suez

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48Nutting, No End Of A Lesson, p. 53.

49Canal Problem, p. 75.
Canal. The trading nations of the world were at Egypt's mercy. "Thus Egypt seized hold of a sword with which it could cut into the economic vitals of many nations." Dulles went on to say that a concrete solution was needed to restore confidence to the international world.

The solution must involve an international system controlling the Canal's operation:

Confidence is what we seek; and for this it is indispensable that there should be an administration of the Canal which is non-political in its operation. That, I think, is the key to the problem, an operation which is non-political in character. The Canal should not be allowed to become an instrument of the policy of any nation or any group of nations.

Dulles then proposed four principles upon which the operation of the Canal should be based. First, the Canal as an international waterway should be operated according to the 1888 Convention. Second, national politics should be divorced from the Canal's operation. Third, Egypt's legitimate rights and interests should be recognized in the Canal and in its operation. Fourth, the Universal Suez Canal Company should be fairly compensated.

To implement these principles

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50 Ibid.
51 Ibid., p. 76.
52 Ibid., pp. 77-78.
Dulles suggested a plan in which an international board, associated with the United Nations and possessing Egyptian membership, would operate the Canal according to the Convention of 1888. Egypt would receive an equitable return and the Universal Suez Canal Company would be adequately compensated. If a dispute arose over the latter two points, it would be settled by arbitration through the International Court of Justice. Dulles concluded his speech by stating that the plan did not infringe upon Egyptian sovereignty and that "Egyptian sovereignty is, and always has been, and always will be under the 1888 Treaty, qualified by that treaty which makes the Canal an international and not an Egyptian waterway."^53

This forceful statement would have thoroughly pleased the British and the French if they had only been interested in establishing international control of the Suez Canal. Britain and France wanted to destroy Nasser's position in the Arab world. Dulles' speech did not go as far as they desired in this respect, but they viewed it as a bulwark to lean upon for more forceful measures. This bulwark would crumble into dust as the weeks progressed leaving

^53 Ibid., p. 78.
Britain and France isolated in their hostile attitude.

The Anglo-French position at the London Conference was similar to the American view but was stronger in its opinion of international control because of Nasser's past record. On August 17 M. Pineau, the French representative, suggested reasons for apprehension over Nasser's promise of free navigation. Pineau referred to the dictatorial viewpoint of Nasser's book, *Philosophy of Revolution*; to his banning of Israeli ships; and to the fictitious reason behind his nationalization - the financing of the Aswan Dam. E. V. Lawrence has pointed out in his book *Egypt and the West* that it would be approximately "fifteen years before the full value of the Dam would accrue to the country." How could Egypt expect to finance the Aswan Dam and at the same time repay the Soviet Union for the arms deal of September, 1955; maintain a high defense budget; and usher in new development projects?

On August 22 Selwyn Lloyd summarized the content of the meetings by reaffirming the idea that an

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international board possessing Egyptian membership should manage the Canal and that the Canal should be insulated from politics. This board should not be an advisory body of users as India had suggested but an organization responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Canal.

The final statement of the First London Conference incorporated the basic text of Dulles' August 16 speech. The Eighteen Power Proposal expressed the need for a definite system guaranteeing at all times the free use of the Suez Canal. This system should assure: 1) the operation of the Canal according to the 1888 Convention, 2) the insulation of the Canal from politics, 3) a fair and equitable return to Egypt, 4) low canal tolls consistent with the above stipulations. A convention should be negotiated with Egypt providing for an international board with Egypt as a member, an arbitral commission to settle disputes in the operation of the canal, and effective sanction for violations of the proposed Convention.\(^5\) A Committee of Five, United States, Australia, Iran, Sweden, Ethiopia, was chosen to convey this proposal to Egypt.

\(^5\)Frankland, *Documents on International Affairs 1956*, pp. 75-77.
An important point must be emphasized: the London Conference had no authority to impose its will upon Nasser. The eighteen members of the London Conference voluntarily assembled to discuss the Canal Crisis and to suggest a solution. Nasser had every right to reject the proposed solution and, if he had so desired, to refuse to accept the Committee of Five.

The logical choice to lead the Committee of Five was the United States. The Eighteen Power Proposal was mainly the work of the United States, and Secretary of State Dulles had been the dominant figure in the Conference. Dulles, with the power and prestige of the United States supporting him, could have lead the Committee to Cairo. Instead, he rejected the leadership of the Committee and offered as the only reason for his refusal that he would be away from Washington too long. This was a petty reason in view of the serious situation. If the United States was willing to do its utmost to achieve peace, the question of time would not have mattered. A few days of discussion might have averted the Anglo-French intervention and the repercussions which followed. Robert Menzies, the Prime Minister of Australia, substituted for Dulles, but he was not as respected as Dulles would
have been. This was the turning point in the Suez Crisis. From this point on the situation deteriorated quickly.

The first sign of the deteriorating conditions occurred during Dulles' press conference five days after the conclusion of the First London Conference on August 28 when he avoided a direct answer to a question on internationalization. He preferred not to deal with such great terms as internationalization and sovereignty but rather desired to concentrate on the concrete practical realities of operating the Suez Canal. He compared Egypt and the Suez Canal to New York and the United Nations and stated that New York was not internationalized because of the presence of the United Nations. To compare the sovereignty of the United States and the action of the United Nations with Egyptian sovereignty and the Suez Canal was absurd. The United Nations did not affect the domestic affairs of the United States in the same manner as the Suez Canal affected Egypt. Dulles injured the "Allied" cause even further when he remarked that:

"... The United States is not dependent to any appreciable degree at all upon the Suez Canal. Its ships use the Canal but the United States economy is not dependent upon the canal... As I say, that restored confidence is not a matter which is primarily of United States concern but primarily of concern to the many countries..."
about 20 - whose economies are vitally dependent upon the Canal.\textsuperscript{56}

On August 31, 1956, President Eisenhower attempted to clarify Dulles' definition of internationalization by saying that the 1888 Treaty gave many nations perpetual rights in and to the Canal and that Egypt bound by the Treaty cannot jeopardize the other nations. The Canal is internationalized in the sense of usage. In reply to a question about any orders being given to American forces Eisenhower said: "We are committed to a peaceful settlement of this dispute, nothing else."\textsuperscript{57}

Two days later in a letter to Eden, Eisenhower further clarified the American position. After emphasizing the importance of the upcoming Menzies' mission, he discussed the threat of force. The United States differed with Britain over the issue of force and "flatly rejected the thought of using force, particularly when it does not seem that every possible means of protecting our vital interests has been exhausted without result."\textsuperscript{58} Were the American vital interests directly involved? Had not Dulles just said the

\textsuperscript{56}Canal Problem, p. 296.


\textsuperscript{58}Eisenhower, \textit{Waging Peace}, p. 667.
United States was not dependent upon the Suez Canal?

These statements were made just prior to the Menzies' mission, which would attempt to persuade Nasser to agree upon an international operating board, and doomed any chance of approval for the Eighteen Power Proposal. Nasser now realized that the United States was absolutely against force and that this position would seriously curtail any Anglo-French desire for force. With this foreknowledge Nasser exerted a hard line in his discussions with the Menzies' mission from September 3 to 10. Nasser accepted the basic principles of the Eighteen Power Proposal but rejected the ways and means proposed for securing the principles. He said that the system would embroil the Canal in politics and that British domination of the Canal would be replaced with collective domination. Thus, the Menzies' mission failed due to two factors: 1) the American betrayal of its allies, and 2) Nasser's maintenance of Egyptian sovereignty.

Britain and France, seeing the failure of the Menzies' mission, now advocated going to the Security Council to secure their aims. Dulles opposed it because of the quicksand nature of the Security Council. Dulles relented to this move if it was a sincere and
honest attempt to obtain a solution. On September 6, 1956, the British cabinet decided to appeal to the United Nations and to explore Dulles' plan for a Suez Canal Users Association (SCUA). Over the previous weekend he had devised this plan at his Duck Island Retreat. This Association, composed of the major Canal users, would band together and sail ships through the Canal according to their individual needs. The Association would employ its own pilots, would receive dues for passages, and would pay Nasser a just share from the collected dues. If Egypt cooperated, so much the better. The crux of the Association centered upon whether free passage would be enforced and whether dues would be paid to the Association. As time would prove, the Association was just another stop-gap measure by the United States and, without American support, would crumble into ashes. Eden made this comment about the American attitude:

Rather did they try to gain time, coast along over difficulties as they arose and improvise policies, each following on the failure of its immediate predecessor. None of these was geared to the long term purpose of serving a joint cause.\textsuperscript{59}

Eden realized the key to the Association was the American payment of Canal tolls to the SCUA

\textsuperscript{59}Eden, \textit{Full Circle}, p. 512.
treasury. Even though the Eighteen Power Proposal had been sabotaged by the United States, Eden believed that the United States would completely support the SCUA because it was an American project. Eden in a letter to President Eisenhower on September 6 brought out that the divergence between Britain and the United States sprang from the different views of Nasser’s plan. This difference was evident by the various tactics of each government. The short-term attitude of the United States was seen by Dulles’ rejection of the British-French proposal to the Security Council. Dulles did not accept the British-French conditions of a solution based on no less than the Eighteen Power Proposal and of a joint resistance against limiting future freedom of Allied action. Dulles proposed a letter to the Security Council informing it of the situation but refused to co-sign the letter. Just as Dulles had refused to lead the Committee of Five, so also did he refuse to sign the Security Council letter. Britain and France felt a deep sense of desperation and frustration which would lead to their bold move of intervention into Egypt.

In a letter to Eden on September 8, 1956, Eisenhower attempted to calm the British by saying that the United States did not differ with Britain about
Nasser's intentions. The difference lay in the probable effects of Western action in the Arab world. Capitulation to Nasser was out of the question, but peaceful measures must be exhausted. "I assure you we are not blind to the fact that eventually there may be no escape from the use of force."60 This statement was a sudden reversal of Eisenhower's remark on August 31. What exactly was the American position toward force? In a September 10 conference Eisenhower remarked that the United States would not go to war while he was President unless Congress declared war. To arouse Congressional opinion to such a peak as to declare war over the Suez Crisis, when American interests were not directly involved, was demanding a herculean task.

The next day, however, Eisenhower left the door open for Anglo-French recourse to force:

Now, if, after all peaceful means are exhausted, there is some kind of aggression on the part of Egypt against a peaceful use of the canal, you might say that we would recognize that Britain and France had no other recourse than to continue to use it [Suez Canal] even if they had to be more forceful than merely sailing through it.61

The American position was still not clear. Dulles

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61 U.S., President Eisenhower, Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, p. 757.
further complicated the issue by his remarks on September 13. In addition to giving a vague answer on what a boycott of the Canal entailed, he made two revealing statements:

1) We do not intend to shoot our way through. It may be we have the right to do it, but we don't intend to do it as far as the United States is concerned.

2) Well, I think that each nation has to decide for itself what action it will take to defend, and if possible, realize its rights which it believes it has as a matter of treaty.62

Britain and France now were in a quandry over what exactly was American opinion toward its own proposal for the SCUA.

The September 13 press conference was noteworthy for another important reason. Dulles mentioned that politics had not influenced his decisions whatsoever:

I can say this with all sincerity and honesty: I am not conscious that the slightest political motivation has entered into our thinking on this matter whatsoever. And, as far as I can judge, we would have taken precisely the same action that we have taken if this issue had arisen a year ago, two years ago, or three years ago.63

This statement was difficult to believe. Dulles was fully aware that the November Presidential Election was


63Ibid., p. 482.
rapidly approaching. Why else did Eisenhower instruct him to prevent military intervention at the Tripartite talks in August? Military intervention did not fit into Eisenhower's peace and prosperity program. Force must be avoided at all costs:

The noises of the Middle East crisis, ever since Egypt's seizure of the Suez Canal in July, had carried, like the soft and rhythmic ticking of a time bomb, into every serious conclave where Republican or Democratic politicians met in these months to weigh their chances and set their courses. An explosion could shatter most Republican pretensions in foreign policy, as well as validate much Democratic criticism of the strategy and behavior of Dulles.64

The French also realized the impact military intervention would have on American politics. France was particularly bitter at "United States prevarications and the reluctance of the State Department to sully the peaceful achievements of the Eisenhower Administration in election year."65 United States prevarications and improvements reached a peak in the SCUA proposal.

The purpose of the SCUA and its position in regard to Canal transportation was the subject of discussion of the Second London Conference held September 19-21, 1956. Selwyn Lloyd emphasized the necessity of international control of the Canal at the opening of the

64 Hughes, *The Ordeal of Power*, p. 177.

conference. No one man should control the Canal. The conference should look past short-term solutions and technical answers and should attempt to achieve a permanent solution. Dulles brought out the position of SCUA very clearly: "It is not our purpose to coerce Egypt. It is merely that the necessities of the situation make continuing association useful for ourselves and for all who depend upon the canal."66 For nations who depend upon the canal to join together because of the necessity of the situation and not be able to implement their decision is ridiculous. The next Dulles statement made Britain and France wonder what was the purpose of the SCUA. Dulles said:

... membership in the association would not ... involve the assumption by any member of any obligation. It would however be hoped that members of the Association would voluntarily take such action with respect to their ships and the payment of Canal dues as would facilitate the work of the Association and build up its prestige and authority, and consequently its ability to serve. This action, I emphasize, would be entirely a voluntary action by each of the member governments if it saw fit to take it.67

Dulles had begun the conference by emphasizing the continuance of the Association and concluded the conference with the remark about the voluntary action of each government. The final declaration did not alleviate the

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66 Canal Problem, p. 355.
67 Ibid., p. 356.
problem. The basic provisions of the declaration were: 1) the SCUA would facilitate any steps which might lead to a final or provisional solution of the Suez Canal problem, 2) the SCUA would seek cooperation with Egypt over the safe and efficient use of the Canal, and 3) the SCUA would receive and hold revenues accruing from dues paid by any user until a final settlement was reached.\(^6^8\)

The SCUA did not solve the Suez Canal problem. It very possibly might have raised some new difficulties. The Second London Conference definitely had not registered any solid gains as Dulles said the conference did when he returned to the United States. Eden's tart criticism of the SCUA was that "the American conception of the Association was now evolving so fast that it would end as an agency for collecting dues for Nasser,"\(^6^9\)

Herbert Feis, author of the "Suez Scenario: A Lamentable Tale," also criticized the SCUA as being "more vague and shadowy than a Whistler nocturne" and that "it avowed fixed purposes while discount-enhancing the measures needed to effect them."\(^7^0\) The American sabotage of both London Conferences not only injured

\(^{68}\)Watt, *Suez Documents*, pp. 50-51.

\(^{69}\)Eden, *Full Circle*, p. 548.

the Anglo-French position but also gave Nasser the precious time he needed to solidify his control over the Suez Canal. In a Meet the Press interview on September 23 Dulles unknowingly prophesied the eventual effect of the failure to obtain a workable solution:

... unless we can work it out, some system here which is just, which recognizes the real rights of the users, then I don't think you can expect to go on forever asking people not to resort to force.71

Before Britain and France resorted to force, they utilized the United Nations in an attempt to redress their grievances.

71 Finer, *Dulles Over Suez*, p. 263.
CHAPTER IV

COLLUSION AND DISASTER

The United Nations was now the scene of the last legal attempt by Britain and France to settle the Suez Canal Problem. The United States, up to that time, had frustrated their every attempt to achieve redress. Nasser was still in control of the Suez Canal, and the longer Britain and France waited, the more time Nasser had to stabilize his control.

This final Anglo-French attempt was the first part of the three act climax of the Suez Crisis. The second act would involve the Anglo-French intervention in Egypt to safeguard the Canal. The third act returned to the United Nations and centered upon its efforts to establish a peace-keeping force and to end the hostilities between Egypt and Israel. It is easy to overlook the main theme of Allied conflict in these climatic events - the Arab-Israeli war, the efforts of Lester Pearson and Dag Hammarskjold, and the Hungarian Revolt. The final stage of the Suez Crisis had many nuances and to understand them one must concentrate on the Allied conflict.
The Anglo-French maneuver at the Security Council was opposed by Dulles and the best he could achieve was to defer action until October 1, the date of the formal establishment of the SCUA. This action was then postponed until October 5 in order to give the various United Nations' representatives time to reach New York. On October 2 Lloyd and Pineau advocated that the Canal should be managed according to six principles they had devised and that an international system, based on the Eighteen Power Proposal, should carry them out. On the same day Dulles, after conferring with his Allies on the United Nations' proposal, remarked in a press conference about the fundamental difference in approaches to the Suez Canal Problem and brought out the problem of colonialism. The Anglo-French cause for retribution received a crippling blow when Dulles stated in regard to the SCUA that "there is talk that the teeth were pulled out of it. There were no teeth in it." This last statement made it emphatically clear that Britain and France would not achieve their desired goal and further illustrated Dulles' duplicity in his dealings with them.

72 Department of State Bulletin, October 15, 1956, p. 577.
On October 5 Selwyn Lloyd introduced the British and French resolution in the Security Council by stressing the need for a genuine peace maintaining justice and international law. Christian Pineau expressed the Anglo-French determination to accept "no solution which would enshrine the accomplished fact and recognize a chief of state's right to free his country from international undertakings to which it had freely subscribed." On October 9 Dulles continued in the same vein by referring to a statement made by the Egyptian representative in August, 1947, that the status of the Suez Canal was fixed by international agreement in 1888. The Egyptian representative had also commented upon the international nature of the Canal Company on October 14, 1954:

The Canal Company which controls the passage, is an international company controlled by authorities who are neither Egyptian nor necessarily of any particular nationality. It is a universal company, and things will continue to be managed that way in the future.

Dulles then reviewed the four basic principles of the


Eighteen Power Proposal and concluded his speech by emphasizing peace and security based on international law and justice. Dulles, by his presentation of the situation, thus gave his Allies the impression of the legality of their claims.

On October 11 England and France acknowledged a major concession at a private meeting of the eighteen power nations. Egypt would be allowed to manage the Canal provided that there was an advisory committee to supervise maintenance of the Canal and that this committee could act immediately if violations occurred. On the same day Secretary-General Hammarskjöld had induced the Egyptian Foreign Minister to agree to the operation of the Canal according to the six principles devised by the British and the French. The issue was now implementation of these principles and this was where the SCUA had failed. Would Egypt agree to a body that had the power to discipline violators of the principles? The Egyptian answer was a resounding NO! This would be an intrusion of her sovereignty.

On October 13 a vote was taken on the two part Anglo-French proposal. The first half consisted of the six principles. The second part requested: 1) free passage of all shipping, 2) the SCUA to continue to receive member's dues, and 3) the SCUA and Egypt to
cooperate in the management of the canal. The six principles passed unanimously:

1) There should be free and open transit through the canal without discrimination, overt or covert.
2) The sovereignty of Egypt should be respected.
3) The operation of the canal should be insulated from the politics of any country.
4) The manner of fixing tolls and charges should be decided by agreement between Egypt and the users.
5) A fair proportion of the dues should be allotted to development.
6) In case of disputes, unresolved affairs between the Suez Canal Company and the Egyptian Government should be settled by arbitration.75

The crux of the proposal, according to Britain and France, was the latter part of the resolution which implemented the first half. The Soviet Union vetoed the operative part and thus killed any Anglo-French desires of achieving justice based upon the principles of international law. Egypt was now given another respite. Eden after the October 13 debate described the situation as it had progressed so far:

Now all this [London Conferences and SCUA] was dead. It was of no use to fool ourselves on that account. We had been strung along over many months of negotiation from

pretext to pretext, from device to device, and from contrivance to contrivance. At each stage in this weary pilgrimage we had seen our position weakened.76

Rebuffed at the United Nations, Britain and France sought to redress their grievances by the alternative they had advocated from the beginning of the Suez Crisis - force.

The second phase of the three act climax centered upon the collusion of Britain, France, and Israel, and the Anglo-French intervention in Egypt. The charge of collusion revolved around two meetings, October 16 and 23. The French have admitted the role they played but the British, particularly Anthony Eden, were very reticent to do so. Eden mentioned that the first meeting involved the discussion of three principles: 1) the future of the Canal, 2) the progress of the SCUA, and 3) developments in the Middle East.77 Eden failed to mention the Anglo-French plans for intervention. Eden also neglected to relate the October 23 meeting except in a casual manner: "Ministers had already considered at several meetings the ways in which the situation might develop. These had also been canvassed with the French."78

The only supporting notes and documents of these

76 Eden, Full Circle, p. 564.
77 ibid., p. 569.
78 ibid., p. 584.
meetings were the statements of some of the participants after the Suez Crisis had died down. Sir Anthony Nutting's *No End Of a Lesson*, Peter Calvocoressi's *Suez: Ten Years After*, and Terence Robertson's *Crisis: The Inside Story of The Suez Conspiracy* were extremely helpful in piecing together the collusion that occurred at these meetings. Despite the vehement British protests in the House of Commons and in the United Nations, Britain knowingly and freely plotted with France on intervention into Egypt which would coincide with the Israeli attack on Egypt.

The initiative for collusion sprang from the French who had already been talking with Israel. The September, 1955, arms deal involving the Soviet Union and Egypt had put Israel in a precarious position. Israel had been the target of Egyptian fevadeen raids and with the heavy influx of arms to Egypt, Israel was now put under the gun. Israel asked for military aid from Western capitals under the Tripartite Agreement which had been established to maintain a balance of arms. However, with the exception of France, Israel did not receive any substantial assistance. Terence Robertson, author of *Crisis: The Inside Story of the Suez Conspiracy*,
cited the common dislike of the Baghdad Pact, the common conflict with the Arabs, and the socialist sympathies of both governments as the adhesive factors in the Franco-Israeli friendship. Andre Fontaine, foreign editor of Le Monde, and Michel Bar-Zohar, author of Suez Ultra-Secret, emphasized the importance of the Algerian war and socialist solidarity in drawing the two nations together. M. Maurice Bourges-Maunoury, Defense Minister in M. Mollet's government, stated that the origin of this close friendship began in the autumn of 1955, developed seriously in January, 1956, and reached complete understanding during March and April. Britain entered the picture after the nationalization of the Suez Canal and M. Pineau suggested the idea of Israeli collaboration with Britain at a September 23, 1956, meeting with Eden and Lloyd. Pineau remarked that their relation was subtle, vacillating between enthusiasm and reticence. "Nevertheless, I was able to persuade them to give me a kind of carte blanche to undertake further negotiations with the Israelis and

79 Robertson, Crisis, p. 22.
80 Ibid., p. 148.
81 Ibid., p. 135.
keep them up to date on developments.”

The October 16 meeting between Eden, Lloyd, Mollet, and Pineau ironed out any difficulties which had occurred during the October 14 meeting in which the plan for the intervention into Egypt was outlined. Anthony Eden, Anthony Nutting, Eden's private secretary, M. Albert Gazier, acting Foreign Minister in Pineau's absence, and General Maurice Challe, Deputy Chief of Staff for the French Air Force, discussed how Britain and France would occupy the Canal. The core of the plan was that Israel would attack Egypt, England and France would issue an ultimatum to cease hostilities, and then an Anglo-French force would intervene and occupy the Canal under the guise of protecting the Canal. After this meeting Nutting described Britain's proposed role:

... our whole peace-keeping role in the Middle East was to be changed and we were to take part in a cynical act of aggression, dressing ourselves for the part as firemen or policemen, while making sure that our fire-hoses spouted petrol and not water and that we belaboured with our truncheons the assaulted and not the assaulter.

Nutting attempted to persuade Eden and Lloyd from this

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82 Ibid.
83 Nutting, No End of a Lesson, p. 94.
disastrous course which England was pursuing. His efforts were of no avail. On October 16 Eden wholeheartedly endorsed the French plan.

The final arrangements for intervention were discussed on October 23 in the French suburb of Sevres. At this meeting the three conspirators, Israel, France, and Britain, signed the fateful Treaty of Sevres. On October 22 Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion and Israeli Chief of Staff Moshe Dayan arrived and on the following day began talks with Pineau and Mollet about the situation. At this time France promised Israel air and naval cover for its attack on Egypt. Later that day Selwyn Lloyd arrived and committed the British air force to attack the Egyptian air force and to bomb Egyptian bases during the operation. The British air force was the primary reason for British participation. Ben-Gurion was worried about Egypt bombing Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Haifa. The French, because they did not possess long-range bombers, could only supply fighter cover and could not attack the Egyptian planes at their bases. Thus, British participation was crucial.

The Anglo-French operation would protect the Canal against both Israeli and Egyptian forces and
Israel would attack up to ten miles of the Canal and no closer. Eden approved of the treaty's final draft and on October 25 the Treaty of Sevres was signed by the three parties. The terms were:

1) Israel would attack Egypt on October 29, 1956.

2) Anglo-French action would begin on November 6, 1956, [American election].

3) By November 12, 1956, occupation would be complete.

4) France would support Israel in the United Nations, Britain would not.

5) The Treaty of Sevres would never be published.84

By signing this treaty Britain and France thought they would have the opportunity to use force, to secure the Canal as an international waterway, and to discredit Nasser. According to Christian Pineau, "In deflating the prestige of a false hero who is trying to lead the Muslim world into dire adventures, we will be doing all Muslims a service that one day they will all appreciate."85

The piecemeal evidence that was available definitely points to collusion. Lord Roben, Labor Party spokesman on foreign affairs believed that Eden and

84Robertson, Crisis, pp. 155-163.

85The Times, August 4, 1956, p. 6.
Lloyd were duped by the French. This was difficult to believe. England entered into these negotiations fully aware of what was involved. Eden, as Anthony Nutting related, was anxious to overthrow Nasser. The preparations for intervention, although grossly insufficient, also indicated Britain's knowledge of the situation and her participation in the future fiasco. Selwyn Lloyd specifically stated what was to occur on October 25 to Anthony Nutting:

October 29; next Monday, ... Israel will attack through Sinai that evening and the following morning we and the French will issue our ultimatum to her and Egypt to clear the Canal Zone for us to move our troops in. Egypt will, presumably, refuse, and directly she does so we shall start bombing Egyptian airfields.86

On October 29 Israel attacked Egyptian positions in the Sinai desert and began the final phase of the collusion episode. The following day England and France delivered their ultimatum. It demanded: 1) the withdrawal of forces ten miles from the Canal, 2) the cessation of hostilities, and 3) the occupation of Port Said, Ismailia, and Suez by an Anglo-French force. Egypt, as presumed, rejected the ultimatum, and Israel, who was not within ten miles of the Canal, accepted it

86Nutting, No End Of A Lesson, p. 94.
conditionally. Moshe Dayan commented upon the Israeli view of the ultimatum:

This ultimatum does not worry Israel. We are not within ten miles of the Canal and we have neither interest nor plan to come closer to it. It is clear that the whole purpose of the ultimatum is to give the British and French Governments a pretext to capture the Canal Zone by military force.89

Walter Robertson, Assistant Secretary of State, stated that the ultimatum marked a breach of the greatest magnitude in Anglo-American relations. "This is one of the gravest situations in my experience. . . . That ultimatum is so worded that no one in his right mind can imagine Nasser accepting it."88 Nasser had nothing to lose by rejecting the ultimatum. It stated "that the British and French intended to go in and occupy Port Said, Ismailia and Suez whether or not the Egyptians and Israelis complied with the demand that they withdraw their forces from the vicinity of the Canal."89

Eden in his memoirs remarked about the dangers of this policy but was convinced that Britain chose the lesser evil. "The choice for us was stark and inescapable, either act at once to bring about the result we sought."


88 Robertson, Crisis, p. 170.

the localization of the conflict, or involve ourselves in consultations. . . . We chose to act."90 Britain and France chose to act, but did so under false pretenses. They supported their intervention on the grounds that it: 1) halted local hostilities and prevented a general war, 2) exposed Russian designs, and 3) interposed a force between the warring parties to maintain peace. Mollet stated that Israel would have been crushed if we had waited for American approval. "We do not want any more waiting periods such as those of 1914 to 1917, or of 1937 to 1942."91 Mollet's reasoning was faulty in his appraisal of Israel's ability. Israel had defeated the Arabs in 1948 against tremendous odds and did so in 1956 and in 1967. By November 2, three days before Anglo-French forces intervened, Israel had routed Egyptian forces in the Sinai desert.

The United States reacted bitterly to this outright disregard of American wishes, particularly so near the election. In a letter to Eden on October 30, 1956, Eisenhower, commenting on the disturbing Middle East affair, made an ironic remark regarding the 1950 Tripartite Statement. "I feel very seriously that

91The Times, December 21, 1956, p. 4.
whenever any agreement or pact of this kind is in spirit renounced by one of its signatories, it is only fair that the other signatories should be notified."92 Eden could have made the same statement after the United States abruptly cancelled the Aswan Loan without consulting Britain. Emmet John Hughes, author of The Ordeal of Power, described the White House on October 31:

The air at the 7:30 breakfast conference . . . seems thick and heavy with the righteous wrath against Britain that is beginning to suffocate the White House. And the righteousness even seems petty - as if the real crime of London has been to contrive so thoughtlessly to complicate President's re-election or at least whittle down his majority.93

Dulles was particularly angry over British-French intervention because his Allies had withheld information since October 15 and because they had not consulted the United States. Referring to the Israeli invasion and to the Anglo-French intervention Dulles stated that "in all probability, . . . these moves were concerted; the French did the planning, the British acquiesced, and the French, in violation of the 1950 agreement, covertly supplied the Israelis with arms."94

93Hughes, The Ordeal of Power, p. 218.
94Eisenhower, Waging Peace, p. 82.
While Dulles was castigating his Allies, Britain and France fulfilled their part of the Treaty of Sevres by bombing Egyptian airfields. By November 2 Israel had for all practical purposes destroyed any effective Egyptian opposition in the Sinai Desert.

On October 31 the third act of the Suez climax began. The Security Council met in immediate response to the Israeli invasion and attempted to achieve a cease-fire and withdrawal of Israeli forces. For the first time Britain and France, exercising their right of veto, vetoed both the United States and Soviet resolutions. The latter resolution called for a cease-fire and an Israeli withdrawal. The American proposal was similar except that it called for the United Nations members to refrain from using force in the area. Since efforts to secure a cease-fire and withdrawal were blocked by Britain and France, the Yugoslav delegate invoked the United for Peace clause which, in times of grave crisis, allowed discussion of an issue to be moved from the Security Council to the General Assembly. The problem of the Middle East war now moved to the General Assembly.

In the General Assembly meeting held on Thursday, November 1, 1956, Mr. Loutfi, the Egyptian
representative, denounced British-French action, the reasons for their actions, and cited a statement made by the British Commander-in-Chief:

Aerial bombing will continue until Egypt sees reason. Length of the operation depends on how quickly Egypt accepts our terms. The sooner Egypt sees reason, the less damage will occur. We have considerable strength to deal severe blows. 95

The British representative, Sir Pierson Dixon, referred to the history of United Nations disregard, said the United Nations possessed no effective remedy, and that the American proposal did not achieve the twin objectives of separating the belligerents and of safeguarding the Canal. "Our intervention was swift because the emergency brooked no delay. It has been drastic because drastic action was evidently required." 96

Dulles' position in the General Assembly was similar to that in the Security Council. He proposed a resolution calling for a cease-fire, the withdrawal of the parties behind the armistice lines, no shipment of military material to the area, and for the reopening of the Suez Canal after the cease-fire. This American

The proposal was passed 64 to 5 with 6 abstentions at the 562 Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on November 2. Lester Pearson of Canada cited the omissions of the American resolution as: 1) no positive steps were taken by the United Nations for peace, and 2) the resolution asked for a return to the status quo. Pearson then raised the idea of the establishment of a United Nations' force to keep the peace while a settlement was worked out.97

On November 3 Britain replied to the resolution passed by the General Assembly on November 2 by maintaining that police action was urgently needed to stop hostilities and to pave the way for a permanent settlement of the Middle East crisis. Britain and France would willingly stop their military intervention if certain conditions were fulfilled:

1) Both the Egyptian and the Israeli Governments agree to accept a United Nations' force to keep the peace.

2) The United Nations decides to constitute and maintain such a force until an Arab-Israeli peace settlement is reached and

November 1956, Plenary Meeting 561, 1 November 1956, p. 3.

96Ibid., p. 6.

until satisfactory arrangements have been agreed in regard to the Suez Canal, both arrangements to be guaranteed by the United Nations.

3) In the meantime, until the United Nations' force is constituted, both combatants agree to accept forthwith limited detachments of Anglo-French troops to be stationed between combatants.\footnote{Eden, \textit{Full Circle}, pp. 606-607.}

In a November 4 telegram to Eisenhower Eden commented on the chaos which would result if Britain and France withdrew and that is why they must maintain their present position until effective United Nations' measures are taken. Lester Pearson introduced an effective measure on November 4 when he requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly within forty-eight hours "a plan for the setting up, with the consent of the nations concerned, of an emergency international United Nations' force to secure and supervise the cessation of hostilities."\footnote{United Nations, "Agenda Item 5," \textit{Official Records of the General Assembly First Emergency Special Session 1-10 November 1956}, Annexes, p. 8.} This proposal passed by a vote of 57 to 0 with 19 abstentions and was drawn up in concrete terms on November 5 in a resolution by Canada, Colombia, and Norway. This resolution:

\begin{enumerate}
\item established a United Nations Command for an emergency
\end{enumerate}
international force to supervise the cessation of hostilities, 2) appointed Major General E.L.M. Burns as Chief in Command, 3) authorized the Chief of Command to recruit men for the emergency force, and 4) invited the Secretary-General to take the necessary measures for the prompt execution of the resolution.\(^{100}\)

While a United Nations' emergency force was being organized, Israel accepted the cease-fire on November 3 and Egypt did likewise on November 4. On November 5 British and French paratroops landed at Port Said and Port Faud. The following day the sea-borne Anglo-French force, which had left Malta six days earlier, attacked Port Said. As the Anglo-French intervention reached its peak, Britain and France notified the Secretary-General that their military action would cease as soon as Egypt accepted an international force which would replace British-French troops. The British, hesitant over pursuing the intervention any further because of financial hardship and the furor of world opinion, declared a cease-fire effective at midnight November 6. On November 7 the General Assembly agreed to establish a United Nations' emergency force to supervise the cessation of hostilities, 2) appointed Major General E.L.M. Burns as Chief in Command, 3) authorized the Chief of Command to recruit men for the emergency force, and 4) invited the Secretary-General to take the necessary measures for the prompt execution of the resolution.\(^{100}\)

\(^{100}\)Ibid., Document No. A/3290, Canada, Colombia, and Norway draft resolution, p. 15.
police force from non-permanent members of the Security Council and called for immediate withdrawal of Anglo-French and Israeli forces. Eden wanted British and French troops to be part of the United Nations' force but the United Nations and the United States would not stand for this because it would give an appearance of legality to Anglo-French intervention. Egypt was particularly vehement about the exclusion of British and French troops.

Since Britain and France could not be part of the United Nations' force, Eden, in an attempt to save a remnant of prestige, announced on November 7 that Britain and France would not withdraw until there was an effective United Nations' force in being to assume responsibility in the Middle East. After five days of talks with Egypt, the United Nations acknowledged that Egypt had accepted a United Nations' force with the provision that it was a temporary force with no military objectives and that the force did not infringe upon Egyptian sovereignty. What further irritated Britain was that Egypt had the right to decide whether it would allow certain countries to be part of the United Nations' force. Britain and France had occupied part of Egyptian territory and now had to submit to
Egyptian consent over the exclusion of British and French forces. On November 15 the first contingents of the United Nations Emergency Force arrived in Egypt and eight days later Britain, France, and Israel began a phased withdrawal. One British battalion, one-third of the French force, and two Israeli battalions withdrew.

The next American rebuff to Britain and France centered upon the controversy in the General Assembly over the November 7 resolution calling for immediate withdrawal of Anglo-French and Israeli troops. Krishna Menon, the Indian delegate, interpreted immediate to mean instantaneous and proposed a resolution on November 23 to change the word immediately to forthwith. Lester Pearson and the British understood the word to mean as quickly as possible but in relation to the arrival of the United Nations Emergency Force. Paul-Henri Spaak of Belgium had amended the Menon resolution by eliminating forthwith and had persuaded Henry Cabot Lodge Jr., American delegate, to vote for the Spaak amendment.

Winthrop W. Aldrich, American Ambassador to Britain said that Lodge had informed him, Lord Salisbury, and Harold Macmillan that the United States
would support the Belgian amendment. Lodge conferred with the State Department and received instructions contrary to what he had told the British. The United States abstained on the Spaak amendment and voted for the Menon resolution. Ambassador Aldrich described the effect of American action as "nothing during my term as Ambassador in London injured the relations between the United States and Great Britain so much as Lodge's reversal of the instructions."

Terence Robertson was more tart in his analysis of the American action:

It was, for Britain in particular, tantamount to being openly accused by the United States of bad faith and of deliberate deception of the Assembly. In the opinion of an Australian representative, "the United States administration has now told the world that it no longer trusts Britain and France."

On December 3 Britain and France reluctantly announced to the United Nations that their forces would withdraw without delay from Egypt. The reason given in the announcement for the withdrawal was that an effective United Nations' force was now arriving in Egypt. The was not the full reasoning behind the Anglo-French

102 Robertson, Crisis, p. 309.
withdrawal. The English had suffered a run on the pound and both countries were feeling the financial effects of maintaining occupation troops. The United States added to the hardship of her Allies by withholding oil from them. Egypt blocked the Canal on November 4. This action prevented oil shipments through the Canal, and forced Britain and France to rely on their oil reserves. The United States only authorized oil shipments when it learned that Britain and France would withdraw. Anthony Eden commented on this American position of making its "Allies" pay for their attempt to achieve what was best for their interests:

The attitude was rather that the President had been slighted because the allies had acted without permission. The allies must pay for it, and pay they did.103

Sherman Adams, stated that President Eisenhower could not help the British because of their aggressive attitude in Egypt, the United Nations' position would be weakened, and because the Arab nations would have fallen into Soviet hands if he had aided Britain before it agreed to withdraw. Winthrop Aldrich, in opposition to this position, stated that the United States "did

103Eden, Full Circle, p. 634.
everything in its power to bring about an increase of shipments of crude oil and gasoline from the Western Hemisphere to Great Britain and Europe.  

The United States did do everything in its power to aid the British, but only after they had agreed to withdraw. On February 20, 1957, President Eisenhower, in discussing sanctions to secure Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, emphatically stated the American position during the oil crisis:

... The United States had applied sanctions only three months ago against the United Kingdom and France for exactly the same purpose when oil from the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean was withheld until these powers agreed to withdraw from Egypt.

Thus, Britain and France, their national pride and honor destroyed, confronted with grave financial difficulties and mounting American pressure, began removing their troops. By December 22 Britain and France had completed their withdrawal, and on March 4, 1957, Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip and Sharm el Sheikh. The fiasco of military intervention had ended.

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105 Finer, Dulles Over Suez, p. 462.
CHAPTER V

NO END OF A LESSON

Let us admit it fairly as a business people should. We have had no end of a lesson, it will do us no end of good.¹⁰⁶

Anthony Nutting began his book with Rudyard Kipling's lines on the Boer War and stated that they would equally apply to the 1956 Suez Crisis. Not only did they particularly apply to Britain, but each nation involved in the Suez Crisis learned a lesson. For two nations, Israel and Egypt, the lesson of living together peacefully is still being learned by the cruel experience of men dying.

What were the effects of the Suez Crisis and what knowledge did the "Allies" gain as a result? The first lesson was that the term "Allies" was anachronistic. It no longer applied to the partnership of Britain, France, and the United States. In World War II the three nations were Allies fighting against Hitler, but even then there was dissension over what policies to

¹⁰⁶Nutting, No End Of A Lesson, p. 7.
follow. The 1956 Suez Crisis clearly illustrated the incongruity of the word "Allies."

The nationalization of the Suez Canal Company affected Britain and France more than the United States. Britain and France were the nations who were dependent upon the shipment of oil through the Canal, not the United States. Dulles did not fully comprehend this significance of nationalization and urged prolonged negotiations to achieve a solution. Discussions and impotent proposals did not achieve the Anglo-French goals and thus Britain and France advocated force and ultimately utilized force. Dulles had, however, understood what the effect of military intervention would be in the Middle East and how it would affect the American Presidential Election.

Finer's caustic estimate of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles' policy as being "confused by an unmanageable number of nebulous notions and fancies of a too distant world, bedeviled by his own hyper-intense religious passions, and stultified by a want of courage"107 was a slight distortion of the situation. Dulles, a man of high moral principles, and

107Finer, Dulles Over Suez, p. 512.
deeply religious, may have attempted to juggle too many policy aspects during the Suez Crisis, but he did not lack courage. He sought to follow a policy which was best for the United States. His error was the manner in which he executed his policy.

Herbert Feis and Winthrop Aldrich both commented upon Dulles' misleading his "Allies" during the crucial first stage of the Suez Crisis. The United States vacillated in its position on the use of force. Aldrich stated that "there is no doubt in my mind that Dulles at this time [immediately after nationalization] gave the impression to Eden that the United States would also be prepared to use force if all else failed."108 This vague and wavering attitude allowed Nasser to solidify his control of the Suez Canal:

Eden may fairly reproach the American Government -- particularly Dulles -- with having misled him in the crucial first period of this conflict, and by its wavering and leniency, with lessening the chance of obtaining Nasser's consent to international supervision or direction of the canal.109

Dulles abruptly cancelled the Aswan Loan without even consulting his "Allies." The repercussions of the cancellation would directly affect Britain and France.108


not the United States. Dulles was the instigator of the Eighteen Power Proposal. However, he refused to lead the Committee of Five when his power and prestige might have been the determining factor in persuading Nasser to agree to an international board operating the Canal according to the 1888 Convention. The SCUA was his idea, but he stated that the Association was voluntary and no member had any obligation. Nor would Dulles guarantee the prohibition of dues paid by the American shipowners to Egypt. At the Security Council and at the General Assembly he did not accomplish anything of substantial benefit to Britain and France. On the contrary, he did much to injure their position. By his contradictory statements at press conferences, he thoroughly bewildered his Allies. He caused them extreme frustration and despair, and eventually pushed them into the use of force.

A corollary following from the "Allies" search for what was best for their respective countries was the apparent violation of various international promises. The 1950 Tripartite Pact promised to maintain a balance of arms in the Middle East. The United States refused to grant Israel substantial military aid after the Soviet-Egyptian arms deal of September, 1955. France
aided Israel and was accused of violating the Tripartite Pact. The United States and Great Britain had agreed to finance the Aswan Loan. The United States cancelled the loan because the Egyptian economy was unsound and because Egypt was flirting with the Soviet Union. Egypt broke the Constantinople Convention by unilaterally nationalizing the Suez Canal Company. Of all the nations involved in the Suez Crisis Egypt had the best reason for its action. The Canal Company was an Egyptian company. Egypt possessed the right to nationalize it. As a result of this act, England and France would attack Egypt in order to restore international control of the Suez Canal.

The United States has always loved to sermonize other countries about what they should do to solve their problems. The United States possesses all the answers, except those which pertain to its own problems. When the time comes for America to shoulder the responsibilities, extenuating circumstances "force" the United States to follow a policy which it has disavowed of other countries. What would have been the American reaction to nationalization if its economy had depended upon the oil shipped through the Suez Canal? No one will
ever know. Lord Hailsham, First Lord of the Admiralty, graphically expressed British condemnation of American action:

We will not be sermonized. We do not propose to be sent to Coventry. We do not wish to hear any moral lectures from those whose moral weakness and incapacity to see the facts was the precipitating factor in the present crisis.\(^{110}\)

Britain and France were not exactly blameless in their participation in the Suez Crisis. Their preoccupation with force blinded them to the opportunities which might possibly have solved the Suez Canal Problem. What injured the Anglo-French cause most seriously was that their strong desire for force contradicted their attempts to placate the United States. Anthony Eden admitted that Britain chose a perilous course, but that the course should have been adhered to from the beginning, despite American pressure, and thus Britain "would at least have been spared a disastrous chapter of disillusion."\(^{111}\)

Britain and France were within their rights to demand an international operating board for the Canal and sanctions for the resolutions submitted by the

\(^{110}\)The Times, December 1, 1956, p. 6.

\(^{111}\)Eden, Full Circle, p. 537.
London Conferences, particularly the SCUA. There was no purpose at all for these resolutions, if no means of implementation were also agreed upon. The Anglo-French use of these Conferences to force Nasser to accept their proposals when the Canal Company was Egyptian property was uncalled for and unjust. If Britain and France had put as much energy into striving for a just and fair settlement as they did in inventing a reason for force, their military fiasco and humiliation would have never resulted.

Their pretext to intervene, to separate Egypt and Israel and to safeguard the Canal, was absurd. General Andre Beaufre, Commander of the French troops, remarked that "the military objective of the operation was termed secure the Canal Zone but the real one was to put out Nasser."112 Israel had destroyed effective Egyptian opposition and Egypt had blocked the Canal by the time the Anglo-French forces arrived. The statement of the British Commander-in-Chief and the wording of the Anglo-French ultimatum clearly confirmed their purpose. The French were more forward in their explanation of French action. The purposes for intervention were:

112 Calvocoressi, Suez: Ten Years After, p. 3.
1) to secure the internationalization of the canal, 
2) to discredit Nasser, and 3) to frighten the Arab world. The result was a failure on all points. 
Nasser's star skyrocketed to success, French influence was injured in the Middle East, and the Soviet Union and the Arabs became closer associates.

What was ironic about the intervention was that Dulles asked his Allies why they had not dealt Nasser a solid blow. This statement rubbed salt in the open wounds. Anthony Eden commented upon this attitude:

... I have never seen sufficient reason to accept this comfortable conviction and I do not believe that, if events had reached that point, they [U.S.] would in fact have done so [changed their attitude]. The United States Government had engaged their authority in the lead against us and would not have been appeased had Anglo-French forces occupied more of the canal or even the whole of it. In all probability they would only have been more indignant. 113

The French and the British learned that force was not the answer to their problems and that, in fact, it backfired and resulted in Nasser's being proclaimed a hero in the Arab world.

Britain, the United States, Egypt, and Russia discovered the third lesson through the toil of

113 Eden, Full Circle, pp. 625-626.
experience. Britain's act of folly at Suez clearly illustrated that the sun would now set upon Egypt without British presence. England had been gradually losing her grip on her colonies. The Suez intervention was a desperate stop-gap measure to maintain British prestige as a colonial power. This rash attempt graphically brought out the foolhardiness of applying the nineteenth century policy of imperialism in the twentieth century.

Since Britain could no longer act as trustee for the Middle East, who would fill the vacuum left by England? To the surprise of many people, Egypt began to play a major role in Middle Eastern affairs. Nasser had shown the world that he could operate and maintain the Canal as well as the Suez Canal Company had. What was of greater importance was that he had defied two major world powers and had defeated them in the struggle for control of the Suez Canal. His Arab neighbors looked upon him as their new leader and the Egyptian people rallied around him. As a result of this new role by Egypt, the United States and the Soviet Union had to rethink their whole Middle Eastern policy.
The United States began thinking a little more in terms of economic assistance rather than military aid. The Tripartite Agreement to maintain a balance of arms did little to solve the economic and social problems of the Middle East, but did much to heat the cauldron of hostilities. The United States had to realize that the Middle East was a viable entity in itself. How many more Suez Crises would it take before the United States became aware of the revolution that had taken place in the Middle East? The United States must accept the Arabs as equals and not treat them as backward ignorant people.

In a letter to President Eisenhower on June 11, 1954, Jacob Blaustein informed him that the United States was mistaking Arab psychology. The more the United States played up to the Arabs, the more intrinsigent they became. Mr. Blaustein said that the American approach operated in two diverse directions: "1) it stiffened the determination of the Arabs to resist peace and 2) it frustrated the Israeli people to a point where we may be weakening Prime Minister Sharett's hands in holding them in restraint."114

114Jacob Blaustein to Dwight D. Eisenhower, June 11, 1954, Eisenhower Paper, OF 116-R, Eisenhower Library, p. 2 (Jacob Blaustein was chairman of the American Jewish
He pointed out that Israel would be the best ally for the United States for three reasons:

1) Israel and the United States possessed common aims, ideas and democratic societies.

2) The Arabs had not been faithful allies in the past.

3) The Arab nations have unstable governments. Eisenhower should have profited from this advice by a private citizen. Instead, the United States chose a policy of vacillation which alienated both the Arabs and the Israelis.

The Suez Crisis also brought the United States to a sudden awareness of the depth of Soviet penetration in the Middle East. The vast military aid to the Arab countries, particularly Egypt and Syria, was a definite indication of the measures the Soviet Union would take to bring the Middle East under its influence. As a result of this twofold awareness, the United States passed the Eisenhower Doctrine to promote peace and stability in the Middle East. The doctrine warned the Soviet Union that aggression in the Middle East would be

Committee delegation at Paris Peace Conference 1946 and vice-president of the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization.)

115Ibid., p. 3.
a serious threat to the vital interests of the United States and provided the President with $200 million for either military or economic assistance in the area.

The Soviet Union, with their military aid, threats of missiles, and sending volunteers to Egypt, were strong supporters of the Arab cause and thus gained a major inroad into Middle Eastern affairs. The Anglo-French collusion with Israel confirmed Arab suspicions about Israel being the stooge of western imperialism and also enhanced the Soviet position. Nasser, although very appreciative of Soviet aid, did not want to become a Soviet satellite. The Western nations had treated Nasser and the Egyptian people as inferiors. He had no desire to replace this attitude with a subservient satellite status. Nasser did not want to be a pawn of either the United States or the Soviet Union but sought what was best for Egypt. Thus, the third lesson was a thorough reorientation of Middle East policy by the major powers.

An important point which was bypassed and from which a lesson should have been learned was the solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This conflict which smouldered in the 1920's, broke out in 1948, erupted
again in 1956, and exploded for a third time in 1967. When will it cease? One cannot even hazard a guess. The Arabs view Israel as a nation carved from its native land by the West. Three aspects prevented this conflict from even reaching a minimum solution: 1) the refugee problem, 2) the Israeli demand for direct negotiations, and 3) Arab pride.

The refugee problem referred to the 750,000 Arabs who had been turned into refugees by the fighting in 1948 and 1949 and who presently number over 1,000,000. Neither the Arabs nor the Israelis were willing to incorporate them into their respective nations. The financial burden of such a decision would have had disastrous effects on the economy of a nation. For Israel to accept the refugees meant that she would be confronted with a substantial number of Arabs in her country - Arabs who have sworn to erase Israeli existence.

The next two aspects, direct negotiations and Arab pride were interwoven. The Arabs refused to admit defeat and continue to advocate the extermination of Israel.

The Israelis did not understand why the Arabs did

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not face reality. Israel defeated them twice - in 1948 and in 1956. The Arabs should negotiate with Israel and stop trying to erase the reality of the existence of Israel. From the Arab viewpoint the Israelis should realize that they will not be able to survive surrounded by hostile Arab nations. The Israelis have only won battles in the long standing war between Arabs and Israelis. They have not won the war. The Arabs will continue to resist the Israeli aggression until the Israelis have been driven from Arab soil.

Israel's claim for direct negotiations clashed with the total Arab character. By conceding to such a demand would be tantamount to recognition of Israel. This concession was difficult to visualize. Israel thought that direct negotiations were the only way to obtain a solution, but the Arabs rejected this offer.

William R. Polk, director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies of the University of Chicago, suggested some elements for a possible settlement after the 1967 war which were applicable to the situation in 1956:

1) Israel, Egypt, Jordan, and Syria should accept a limitation on the size of their military forces.
2) The Arab states should agree to recognize, de jure, the existence of the state of Israel within the frontiers to be approved by a United Nations frontier commission.

3) Egypt should allow Israel passage through the Suez Canal and the Strait of Tiran.

4) Solution of the refugee population by apportioning refugees to specific nations and by increasing United Nations technical training of the refugees to make them productive citizens.

5) Both the Arabs and the Israelis would cease derogatory statements against each other.

6) Establishment of a fund, administered by the World Bank, to raise the economic level of the Arab countries in which long term peace becomes feasible.117

One of the underlying motives of Anglo-French intervention was the attainment of a permanent solution to the Middle East problem. The United States also emphasized the necessity of a lasting peace. The aftermath of the Suez Crisis brought no permanent answer to the Middle East cauldron. It was to simmer until June 1967 when the cauldron would spew forth its pent-up emotions and hostilities.

History is a record of man's past events and his participation in them. Aristotle remarked ages ago.

that man is a social animal. The record of history is pockmarked with instances in which man has disregarded Aristotle's statement and has allowed his animalistic nature to pursue what is best for him and as a result injure his fellow man. This analogy also applies to nations who seek the best policy for their own people. The 1956 Suez Crisis was such an instance. Each nation sought what was best for its own individual interests. As a result of this policy, the 1956 Suez Crisis occurred and caused a major split among the "Western Allies."
DEFINITIVE EGYPTIAN CONCESSION FOR CONSTRUCTION OF THE
SUEZ MARITIME CANAL, ALEXANDRIA, JANUARY 5, 1856

Act of Concession of the Viceroy of Egypt, and Terms and
Conditions for the Construction and Operation of the
Suez Maritime Canal and Appurtenances

Alexandria, January 5, 1856

We, Mohammed Said Pasha, Viceroy of Egypt.

In view of our Act of Concession dated November 30,
1854, by which we gave to our friend, Mr. Ferdinand
de Lesseps, exclusive power for the purpose of estab-
lishing and directing a universal company to cut through
the Isthmus of Suez, to operate a passage suitable for
large vessels, to establish or adapt two adequate
entrances, one on the Mediterranean, the other on the
Red Sea, and to establish one or two ports:

Mr. Ferdinand de Lesseps having represented to
us that, in order to establish the aforementioned
company in the form and under the conditions generally
adopted for companies of this nature, it is desirable
to stipulate in advance, in a more detailed and more
complete act, on the one hand, the responsibilities,
obligations, and charges to which such company will be
subject and, on the other hand, the concessions,
immunities, and advantages to which it shall be
entitled, as well as the facilities that will be granted
to it for its administration.

We have laid down as follows the conditions for
the concession which forms the subject of these presents.

OBLIGATIONS

Art. I. The company founded by our friend,
Mr. Ferdinand de Lesseps, by virtue of our grant of
November 30, 1854, must execute at its own expense,
risk, and peril, all work, including construction,
necessary for the establishment of:

(1) A canal for large seagoing vessels, between
Suez on the Red Sea and the Bay of Pelusium
in the Mediterranean Sea;

(2) An irrigation canal also suitable for use by Nile shipping, connecting the river with the maritime canal above-mentioned;

(3) Two irrigation and feeder branches leading off from the above-mentioned canal and flowing in the two directions of Suez and Pelusium.

The work will be carried out so as to be finished within a period of six years, except in the event of hindrances and delays resulting from force majeure.

II. The company shall be empowered to carry out the work with which it is charged by itself under State supervision or to cause it to be carried out by contractors through competitive bids or on an agreed-price basis. In all cases at least four-fifths of the workmen employed in this work are to be Egyptians.

III. The canal suitable for large seagoing vessels shall be dug to the depth and width fixed by the program of the International Scientific Commission.

In conformity with this program it shall start from the port of Suez itself; it shall use the basin known as the Bitter Lakes Basin and Lake Timsa; it shall have its outlet in the Mediterranean, at a point on the Bay of Pelusium to be determined in the final plans to be drawn up by the company's engineers.

IV. The irrigation canal suitable for river shipping under the conditions of the said program shall begin near the city of Cairo, follow the valley (wadi) of Tumilat (ancient land of Goshen) and meet the large maritime canal at Lake Timsa.

V. The branches of the said canal are to lead off from it above the outlet into Lake Timsa; from that point they will be made to flow in the one case toward Suez and in the other case toward Pelusium, parallel to the large maritime canal.

VI. Lake Timsa will be converted into an inland port capable of receiving vessels of the largest tonnage.
The company will be bound, moreover, if necessary: (1) to construct a harbor at the point where the maritime canal enters the Bay of Pelusium; (2) to improve the port and roadstead of Suez, so as also to afford shelter to vessels there.

VII. The maritime canal and ports belonging to it, as well as the canal connecting with the Nile and the lead-off canal, shall at all times be kept in good conditions by the company, at its expense.

VIII. Owners of riparian property wishing their land to be irrigated by water from the canals constructed by the company may obtain permission from it for this purpose through payment of compensation or a fee the amount of which shall be fixed by the conditions of Art. XVII hereinafter mentioned.

IX. We reserve the right to appoint at the administrative headquarters of the company a special commissioner, whose salary shall be paid by it, and who will represent with its administration the rights and interests of the Egyptian Government for the execution of the provisions of these presents.

If the company's administrative headquarters is established elsewhere than in Egypt, the company shall have itself represented at Alexandria by a superior agent vested with all powers necessary to see to the proper functioning of the service and the company's relations with our government.

CONCESSIONS

X. In return for the construction of the canals and appurtenances mentioned in the foregoing articles, the Egyptian Government allows the company, without tax or fee, to enjoy the use of all such land, not belonging to private parties, as may be necessary.

It also allows it to enjoy the use of all now uncultivated land not belonging to private parties, which will be irrigated and cultivated by its efforts and at its expense, with this difference: (1) That the portions of land included in this last category shall be exempt from all taxes for ten years only, dating
from their connection with the undertaking; (2) That after that period, and until the expiration of the concession, they shall be subject to the obligations and taxes to which the land of the other Egyptian provinces is subject under the same circumstances; (3) That the company can, subsequently, acting itself or through its assigns, retain the right to enjoy possession of this land and of the water-supply facilities necessary for its fertilization, subject to payment to the Egyptian Government of the taxes levied upon land under the same conditions.

XI. To determine the extent and limits of the land granted to the company, under the conditions of (1) and (2) of Article X above, reference is made to the plans annexed hereto, it being understood that on the said plans the lands granted for the construction of the canals and appurtenances free of tax or fee in conformity with (1) are shown in black, and the lands granted for cultivation through payment of certain fees in conformity with (2) are shown in blue.

All acts executed subsequent to our act of November 30, 1854 shall be considered null and void if they would result in creating for private parties as against the company either rights to compensation which did not exist at the time with respect to those lands, or rights to compensation that are more extensive than those which they were able to claim at that time.

XII. The Egyptian Government will make over to the company, if desirable, privately-owned land the possession of which may be necessary to the execution of the work and the exploitation of the concession, provided the company pay fair compensation to the owners.

Compensation for temporary occupation or for definitive expropriation shall be settled amicably in so far as possible; in case of disagreement, it shall be fixed by a court of arbitration acting in summary proceedings and composed of: (1) an arbitrator chosen by the company; (2) an arbitrator chosen by the interested parties, and (3) a third arbitrator appointed by us.
The decisions of the court of arbitration shall become executory immediately and shall not be subject to appeal.

XIII. The Egyptian Government grants the concessionary company, for the entire life of the concession, the right to extract from mines and quarries belonging to the public domain, without payment of any fee, tax, or compensation, all materials necessary for the work of constructing and maintaining the installations and establishments belonging to the company.

Furthermore, it exempts the company from all customs, entry, and other duties on the importation into Egypt of all machinery and material of any kind that it may bring in from abroad for the needs of its various services during construction or operation.

XIV. We solemnly declare, for ourselves and our successors, subject to ratification by His Imperial Majesty the Sultan, that the great maritime canal from Suez to Pelusium and the ports belonging to it shall be open forever, as neutral passages, to every merchant vessel crossing from one sea to the other, without any distinction, exclusion, or preference with respect to persons or nationalities, in consideration of the payment of the fees, and compliance with the regulations established by the universal company, the concession-holder, for the use of the said canal and its appurtenances.

XV. In consequence of the principle laid down in the foregoing article, the universal company holding the concession may not, in any case, give to any vessel, companies, or private parties on the same terms.

XVI. The life of the company is fixed at 99 years, counting from the completion of the work and the opening of the maritime canal to large vessels.

At the expiration of that period, the Egyptian Government will resume possession of the maritime canal constructed by the company, and it shall be its responsibility, in this case, to take over all materials and supplies used in the company's maritime service and, in return, to pay the company the value to be fixed, either by amicable agreement or on the basis of an opinion of experts.
Nevertheless, should the company retain the concession for successive periods of 99 years, the levy for the benefit of the Egyptian Government stipulated in Article XVIII below shall be increased for the second period to 20 percent, for the third period to 25 percent, and so on, at the rate of 5 percent for each period; but such levy shall, however, never exceed 35 percent of the net profits of the company.

XVII. In order to compensate the company for the expenses of construction, maintenance, and operation for which it is made responsible by these presents, we authorize it, henceforth and for its entire term of possession, as specified in paragraphs 1 and 3 of the foregoing article, to establish and collect, for passage in the canals and the ports belonging thereto, navigation, pilotage, towage, and anchorage fees, according to rate-schedules which it may change at any time, subject to the express condition that it shall:

(1) Collect these fees without exception or favor from all vessels, under the same terms

(2) Publish the rate-schedules three months before they become effective, in the capitals and principal commercial ports of the countries concerned

(3) Not exceed for the special navigation fee the maximum figure of ten francs per ton of burden for vessels and ten francs a head for passengers.

The company may, also, for all water-supply facilities granted at the request of private parties, by virtue of Article VIII above, collect, according to rate-schedules which it will fix, a fee proportionate to the quantity of water used and the area of the land irrigated.

XVIII. At the same time, in view of the land grants and other advantages accorded the company in the foregoing articles, we shall make, for the benefit of the Egyptian Government, a levy of 15 percent of the net profits for each year as determined and apportioned at the general meeting of shareholders.
XIX. The list of charter members who contributed by their work, their studies, and their capital to the accomplishment of the undertaking, before the founding of the company, shall be prepared by us.

After deduction of the amount levied for the Egyptian Government stipulated in Article XVIII above, 10 percent of the annual net profits of the enterprise is to be allotted to the charter members or their heirs or assigns.

XX. Independently of the time necessary for the execution of the work, our friend and representative, Mr. Ferdinand de Lesseps, will preside over and direct the company as first founder for ten years from the time when the period of the enjoyment of the 99-year concession begins, under the terms of article XVI above.

XXI. The articles of incorporation of the company thus created under the name of Universal Company of the Maritime Canal of Suez are hereby approved; this approval constitutes authorization for establishment in the form of a corporation, effective on the date on which the capital of the company shall have been subscribed in full.

XXII. In token of the interest we attach to the success of the enterprise, we promise the company the loyal cooperation of the Egyptian Government and by these presents expressly request the officials and agents of all the departments of our Government to accord it assistance and protection under all circumstances.

Our engineers, Linant Bey and Mougel Bey, whom we place at the company’s disposal for the direction and management of the work laid out by it, shall be in charge of the supervision of the workers and shall be responsible for enforcement of the regulations for putting the work programs into operation.

XXIII. All provisions of our ordonnance of November 30, 1854 are hereby revoked, together with any others which may be in conflict with the clauses and terms of the present articles and conditions, which alone shall govern the concession to which they apply.

Done at Alexandria, January 5, 1856.
CONVENTION RESPECTING THE FREE NAVIGATION
OF THE SUEZ MARITIME CANAL, CONSTANTINOPLE,
OCTOBER 29, 1888

Convention Between Great Britain, Austria-Hungary,
France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Russia,
Spain, and Turkey, Respecting the Free Navigation
of the Suez Maritime Canal

In the name of Almighty God,

Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of
Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India; His Majesty the German Emperor, King of Prussia; His Majesty the Emperor of Austria, King of Bohemia, etc., and Apostolic King of Hungary; His Majesty the King of Spain, and in His Name the Queen Regent of the Kingdom; the President of the French Republic; His Majesty the King of Italy; His Majesty the King of the Netherlands, Grand Duke of Luxemburg, etc.; His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias; and His Majesty the Emperor of the Ottomans, being desirous of establishing, by a Conventional Act, a definitive system intended to guarantee, at all times and to all the Powers, the free use of the Suez Maritime Canal, and thus to complete the system under which the navigation of this canal has been placed by the Firman of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan, dated February 22, 1966 (2 Zilkadé, 1282), and sanctioning the Concessions of His Highness the Khedive, have appointed as their plenipotentiaries, to wit:

Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, the Right Honorable Sir William Arthur White, Her Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary;

His Majesty the German Emperor, King of Prussia, His Excellency Joseph de Radowitz, His Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary;

His Majesty the Emperor of Austria, King of Bohemia, etc., and Apostolic King of Hungary, His Excellency Baron Henri de Calice, His Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary;

His Majesty the King of Spain and in His Name the Queen Regent of the Kingdom, Mr. Miguel Florez y Garcia,
His Chargé d'Affaires;

The President of the French Republic, His Excellency Gustave Louis Lannes, Count de Montebello, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of France;

His Majesty the King of Italy, His Excellency Baron Albert Blanc, His Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary;

His Majesty the King of the Netherlands, Grand Duke of Luxemburg, etc., Mr. Gustave Keun, His Chargé d'Affaires;

His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, His Excellency Alexandre de Nelidow, His Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary;

His Majesty the Emperor of the Ottomans, Mehemmed Said Pasha, His Minister of Foreign Affairs;

Who, having communicated to each other their respective full powers, found in good and due form, have agreed upon the following articles:

ART. I. The Suez Maritime Canal shall always be free and open, in time of war as in time of peace, to every vessel of commerce or of war, without distinction of flag.

The Canal shall never be subject to the exercise of the right of blockade.

ART. II. The High Contracting Parties, recognizing that the Fresh-Water Canal is indispensable to the Maritime Canal, take cognizance of the engagements of His Highness the Khedive towards the Universal Suez Canal Company as regards the Fresh-Water Canal; which engagements are stipulated in a Convention dated March 18, 1863, containing a preamble and four Articles.

They undertake not to interfere in any way with security of that Canal and its branches, the working of which shall not be the object of any attempt at obstruction.
ART. III. The High Contracting Parties likewise undertake to respect the equipment, establishments, buildings and work of the Maritime Canal and of the Fresh-Water Canal.

ART. IV. The Maritime Canal remaining open in time of war as a free passage, even to ships of war of the belligerents, under the terms of Article I of the Treaty, the High Contracting Parties agree that no right of war, act of hostility or act having for its purpose to interfere with the free navigation of the Canal, shall be committed in the Canal and its ports of access, or within a radius of 3 nautical miles from those ports, even though the Ottoman Empire should be one of the belligerent Powers.

Warships of belligerents shall not take on fresh supplies or lay in stores in the Canal and its ports of access, except in so far as may be strictly necessary. The transit of the said vessels through the Canal shall be effected as quickly as possible, in accordance with the regulations in force, and without stopping except for the necessities of the service.

Their stay at Port Said and the roadstead of Suez shall not exceed 24 hours, except in case of putting in through stress of weather. In such case, they shall be bound to depart as soon as possible. A period of 24 hours shall always elapse between the sailing of a belligerent ship from a port of access and the departure of a ship belonging to the enemy Power.

ART. V. In time of war, belligerent powers shall not discharge or take on troops, munitions, or war materiel in the Canal and its ports of access. In case of an accidental hindrance in the Canal, however, troops broken up into groups not exceeding 1000 men, with a corresponding amount of equipment, may be embarked or disembarked at the ports of access.

ART. VI. Prizes shall in all respects be subject to the same rules and regulations as the warships of belligerents.

ART. VII. The Powers shall not keep any warship in the waters of the Canal (including Lake Timsah and the Bitter Lakes).
They may, however, have warships, the number of which shall not exceed two for each Power, stationed in the ports of access of Port Said and Suez.

This right shall not be exercised by belligerents.

ART. VIII. The Agents in Egypt of the Signatory Powers of the present Treaty shall be charged to see that it is carried out. In any circumstance threatening the security and free passage of the Canal, they shall meet at the summons of three of them and under the presidency of their Doyen, to make the necessary verifications. They shall inform the Khedivial Government of the danger perceived, in order that it may take proper steps to assure the protection and the free use of the Canal. In any case, they shall meet once a year to take note of the due execution of the Treaty.

These latter meetings shall be presided over by a Special Commissioner appointed for that purpose by the Imperial Ottoman Government. A Khedivial Commissioner may also take part in the meeting, and may preside over it in case of the absence of the Ottoman Commissioner.

They shall demand, in particular, the removal of any work or the dispersion of any assemblage on either bank of the Canal, the purpose or effect of which might be to interfere with the freedom and complete safety of navigation.

AFT. IX. The Egyptian Government shall, within the limits of its powers based on the Firmans, and under the conditions provided for in the present Treaty, take the necessary measures for enforcing the execution of the said Treaty.

In case the Egyptian Government should not have sufficient means at its disposal, it shall appeal to the Imperial Ottoman Government, which shall take the necessary measures for responding to such appeal, give notice thereof to the other Signatory Powers of the Declaration of London of March 17, 1885, and, if necessary, consult with them on the matter.

The provisions of Articles IV, V, VI, and VII shall not stand in the way of the measures taken by virtue of the present Articles.
ART. X. Likewise, the provisions of Articles IV, V, VII, and VIII shall not stand in the way of any measures which His Majesty the Sultan and His Highness the Khedive in the name of His Imperial Majesty, and within the limits of the Firmans granted, might find it necessary to take to assure by their own forces the defense of Egypt and the maintenance of public order.

In case His Imperial Majesty the Sultan or His Highness the Khedive should find it necessary to avail himself of the exception provided for in the present Article, the Signatory Powers of the Declaration of London would be notified thereof by the Imperial Ottoman Government.

It is also understood that the provisions of the four Articles in question shall in no case stand in the way of measures which the Imperial Ottoman Government considers it necessary to take to assure by its own forces the defense of its other possessions situated on the eastern coast of the Red Sea.

ART. XI. The measures taken in the cases provided for by Articles IX and X of the present Treaty shall not interfere with the free use of the Canal. In the same cases, the erection of permanent fortifications contrary to the provisions of Article VIII is prohibited.

ART. XII. The High Contracting Parties, by application of the principle of equality as regards free use of the Canal, a principle which forms one of the bases of the present Treaty, agree that none of them shall seek, with respect to the Canal, territorial or commercial advantages or privileges in any international arrangements that may be concluded. Furthermore, the rights of Turkey as the territorial Power are reserved.

ART. XIII. Aside from the obligations expressly provided for by the clauses of the present Treaty, the sovereign rights of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan and the rights and immunities of His Highness the Khedive based on the Firmans are in no way affected.
ART. XIV. The High Contracting Parties agree that the engagements resulting from the present Treaty shall not be limited by the duration of the Acts of Concession of the Universal Suez Canal Company.

ART. XV. The stipulations of the present Treaty shall not interfere with the sanitary measures in force in Egypt.

ART. XVI. The High Contracting Parties undertake to bring the present Treaty to the knowledge of those States which have not signed it, inviting them to accede thereto.

ART. XVII. The present Treaty shall be ratified, and the ratifications thereof shall be exchanged at Constantinople within one month or sooner if possible.

In witness whereof the respective Plenipotentiaries have signed the present Treaty, and have affixed thereto the seal of their arms.

Done at Constantinople, on the 29th day of the month of October, of the year 1888.

For Great Britain
Germany
Austria-Hungary
Spain
France
Italy
Netherlands
Russia
Turkey
(L.S.) W.A. White
(L.S.) Radowitz
(L.S.) Calice
(L.S.) Miguel Florez y Garcia
(L.S.) G. de Montebello
(L.S.) A. Blanc
(L.S.) Gus. Keun
(L.S.) Nelidow
(L.S.) M. Said
NATIONALIZATION LAW
JULY 26, 1956

ARTICLE 1

The International Company of the Suez Maritime Canal (Egyptian Joint Stock Company) is hereby nationalized. Its assets and liabilities revert to the State and the councils and committees at present responsible for its administration are dissolved.

The shareholders and holders of founders' shares will be compensated for the stock and shares which they own on the basis of their closing price on the Paris Bourse immediately preceding the date on which this law enters into force.

Payment of this compensation will be made when all the assets of the nationalized company have been fully handed over to the State.

ARTICLE 2

The administration of traffic services through the Suez Canal will be carried out by an independent body with the legal status of a corporation; it will be attached to the Ministry of Commerce. An order of the President of the Republic will fix the composition of this body and the payment to be made to its members. This body will have full powers necessary for controlling this service and will not be subject to administrative routine and regulations.

Subject to the right of the Cour des Comptes to supervise its final accounts, this body will have an independent budget which will be drawn up according to the rules established by commercial legislation. The financial year will begin on 1 July and end on 30 June each year. The budget and final accounts will be approved by an order of the President of the Republic. The first financial year will begin on the date on which this law enters into force and will end on 30 June 1957.

The body may delegate to one or more of its members the responsibility for carrying out its decisions or any duties it may assign to them.
It may set up technical committees consisting of its members or other qualified persons whose services it will use for purposes of research and study.

The chairman of the body will act as its representative before judicial, governmental and other authorities. He will represent it in its relations with third parties.

ARTICLE 3

The funds of the nationalized company and its rights in Egypt and abroad are hereby frozen. Banks, institutions and private persons are forbidden to dispose of these assets in any way, to pay out any sum whatever or to meet claims for payment without previous sanction by the body envisaged in Article 2.

ARTICLE 4

The body will retain the services of the officials of the nationalized company and of its employees and manual workers. These must continue their work and are forbidden to leave their employment or to abandon it in any way or for any reason whatsoever without the previous permission of the body envisaged in Article 2.

ARTICLE 5

Any breach of the terms of Article 3 will be punished with imprisonment and a fine equal to three times the value of the sum involved. Any breach of the terms of Article 4 will be punished with imprisonment; the offender will, in addition, be deprived of any right to a gratuity, pension or compensation.

ARTICLE 6

This decision will be published in the Journal Officiel. It will have the force of law and will be effective from the date of its publication.
The Minister of Commerce will make the orders necessary for its implementation. This decision will bear the seal of the State and will be implemented as a law of the State.
The Governments of France, the United Kingdom and the United States join in the following statement:

1. They have taken note of the recent action of the Government of Egypt whereby it attempts to nationalise and take over the assets and the responsibilities of the Universal Suez Canal Company. This Company was organised in Egypt in 1956 under a franchise to build the Suez Canal and operate it until 1968. The Universal Suez Canal Company has always had an international character in terms of its shareholder, directors and operating personnel and in terms of its responsibility to assure the efficient functioning as an international waterway of the Suez Canal. In 1888 all the great Powers then principally concerned with the international character of the Canal and its free, open and secure use without discrimination joined in the treaty and Convention of Constantinople. This provided for the benefit of all the world that the international character of the Canal would be perpetuated for all time, irrespective of the expiration of the concession of the Universal Suez Canal Company. Egypt as recently as October, 1954, recognised that the Suez Canal is 'a waterway economically, commercially and strategically of international important,' and renewed its determination to uphold the Convention of 1888.

2. They do not question the right of Egypt to enjoy and exercise all the powers of a fully sovereign and independent nation, including the generally recognised right, under appropriate conditions, to nationalise assets, not impressed with an international interest, which are subject to its political authority. But the present action involved for more than a simple act of nationalisation. It involves the arbitrary and unilateral seizure by one nation of an international agency which has the responsibility to maintain and to operate the Suez Canal so that all the signatories to, and beneficiaries of, the Treaty of 1888 can effectively enjoy the use of an international waterway upon which the economy, commerce, and security of much of the
world depends. This seizure is the more serious in its implications because it avowedly was made for the purpose of enabling the Government of Egypt to make the Canal serve the purely national purposes of the Egyptian Government, rather than the international purpose established by the Convention of 1888.

Furthermore, they deplore the fact that as an incident to its seizure the Egyptian Government has had recourse to what amounts to a denial of fundamental human rights by compelling employees of the Suez Canal Company to continue to work under threat of imprisonment.

3. They consider that the action taken by the Government of Egypt, having regard to all the attendant circumstances, threatens the freedom and security of the Canal as guaranteed by the Convention of 1888. This makes it necessary that steps be taken to assure that the parties to that Convention and all other nations entitled to enjoy its benefits shall, in fact, be assured of such benefits.

4. They consider that steps should be taken to establish operating arrangements under an international system designed to assure the continuity of operation of the Canal as guaranteed by the Convention of 29th October, 1888, consistently with legitimate Egyptian interests.

5. To this end they propose that a conference should promptly be held of parties to the Convention and other nations largely concerned with the use of the Canal. The invitations to such a conference, to be held in London, on 16th August, 1956, will be extended by the Government of the United Kingdom to the Governments named in the Annex to this Statement. The Governments of France and the United States are ready to take part in the conference.
ANGLO-FRENCH ULTIMATUM TO THE GOVERNMENTS
OF EGYPT AND ISRAEL, 30 OCTOBER 1956

The Governments of the United Kingdom and France have taken note of the outbreak of hostilities between Israel and Egypt. This event threatens to disrupt the freedom of navigation through the Suez Canal on which the economic life of many nations depends.

The Governments of the United Kingdom and France are resolved to do all in their power to bring about the early cessation of hostilities and to safeguard the free passage of the Canal.

They accordingly request the Government of Israel:

(a) to stop all warlike action on land, sea and air forthwith;

(b) to withdraw all Israeli military forces to a distance of 10 miles east of the Canal.

A communication has been addressed to the Government of Egypt, requesting them to cease hostilities and to withdraw their forces from the neighbourhood of the Canal, and to accept the temporary occupation by Anglo-French forces of key positions at Port Said, Ismailia and Suez.

The United Kingdom and French Governments request an answer to this communication within 12 hours. If at the expiration of that time one or both Governments have not undertaken to comply with the above requirements, United Kingdom and French forces will intervene in whatever strength may be necessary to secure compliance.
The Security Council,

Noting the declarations made before it and the accounts of the development of the exploratory conversations on the Suez question given by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Foreign Ministers of Egypt, France and the United Kingdom;

Agrees that any settlement of the Suez question should meet the following requirements:

(1) there should be free and open transit through the Canal without discrimination, overt or covert - this covers both political and technical aspects;

(2) the sovereignty of Egypt should be respected;

(3) the operation of the Canal should be insulated from the politics of any country;

(4) the manner of fixing tolls and charges should be decided by agreement between Egypt and the users;

(5) a fair proportion of the dues should be allotted to development;

(6) in case of disputes, unresolved affairs between the Suez Canal Company and the Egyptian Government should be settled by arbitration with suitable terms of reference and suitable provisions for the payment of sums found to be due;

Considers that the proposals of the Eighteen Powers correspond to the requirements set out above and are suitably designed to bring about a settlement of the Suez Canal question by peaceful means in conformity with justice;
Notes that the Egyptian Government, while declaring its readiness in the exploratory conversations to accept the principle of organized collaboration between an Egyptian Authority and the users, has not yet formulated sufficiently precise proposals to meet the requirements set out above;

Invites the Governments of Egypt, France and the United Kingdom to continue their interchanges and in this connexion invites the Egyptian Government to make known promptly its proposals for a system meeting the requirements set out above and providing guarantees to the users not less effective than those sought by the proposals of the Eighteen Powers;

Considers that pending the conclusion of an agreement for the definitive settlement of the regime of the Suez Canal on the basis of the requirements set out above, the Suez Canal Users' Association, which has been qualified to receive the dues payable by ships belonging to its members, and the competent Egyptian authorities, should co-operate to ensure the satisfactory operation of the Canal and free and open transit through the Canal in accordance with the 1888 Convention.
The General Assembly,

Having requested the Secretary General in its resolution adopted on 4 November 1956 (A/3276) to submit to it a plan for an emergency international United Nations force for the purposes stated,

Noting with satisfaction the first report of the Secretary General on the plan (A/3289), and having in mind particularly paragraph 4 of that report,

1. Establishes a United Nations Command for an emergency international force to secure and supervise the cessation of hostilities in accordance with all the terms of the resolution of the General Assembly of 2 November 1956 (A/3256),

2. Appoints, on an emergency basis, the Chief of Staff of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, Major General E.L.M. Burns, as Chief of the Command;

3. Authorizes the Chief of the Command immediately to recruit from the observer corps of the Truce Supervision Organization a limited number of officers who shall be nationals of countries other than those having permanent membership in the Security Council; and further authorizes him, in consultation with the Secretary General, to undertake the recruitment directly from various Member States, other than the permanent members of the Security Council, of the additional number of officers needed; and

4. Invites the Secretary General to take such administrative measures as may be necessary for the prompt execution of the actions envisaged in this resolution.
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