



ÇALMUN'25

ÇALMUN 25

UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

STUDY GUIDE

Topic: The Suez Crisis

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1. Welcome Letters

Letter From Secretaries General

Most Esteemed Participants

It is our utmost pleasure and enthusiasm to host you at the second edition of ÇemberlitaşMUN'25. As Secretaries-General, we are beyond honoured to witness this conference grow into a platform where diplomacy, intelligence, and collaboration flourish. The past few months have been filled with tireless efforts from our team, shaping what we are confident will be an experience you will never forget.

Our mission is to give a community that encourages active discussion, independent thinking, and innovative answers. With the rapidly changing world today, we believe that today's younger generation has the potential to drive changes. With every one of your speeches delivered, every resolution drafted, and every debate you conduct in this room, our youth deepen their knowledge of the world today.

ÇemberlitaşMUN'25 is not just about the debates—it is about the friends you will make, the skills and the perspective you will gain. We are thrilled to share this experience with all of you and await the energy, diligence, and leadership that will define this conference.

Beste Nur Filiz, Ayça Ayaz

Letter From Under Secretary General

Dear Esteemed Delegates of the Historical United Nations Security Council,

As the Under Secretary General of this esteemed committee, I have the great pleasure and excitement of addressing you on this special occasion of ÇALMUN'25. Please allow me to greet each and every one of you with great affection as we set out on this diplomatic and conversational journey. I am quite confident that our efforts during this conference will further cement the UNSC's reputation as one of the most prestigious and sought-after committees. You bring a multitude of experience, viewpoints, and tenacity to the table as

delegates from different countries and interests; these are necessary ingredients for deep and fruitful conversations.

We will have the chance to examine the intricacies of the Suez Crisis and possible resolutions that take into account the worries and goals of all sides over the course of the next three days. In the middle of the discussions and agreements, I sincerely hope that we will discover not only intellectual stimulation but also a sense of respect and companionship.

The problems we are supposed to be solving are extremely serious and have broad ramifications for both global security and regional stability. I therefore implore each of you to approach our conversations with the utmost attraction and commitment. Our ability to succeed as a team will depend on your capacity to clearly state the positions of your nation, have productive conversations, and look for areas of agreement. I recognize that each of you has spent a great deal of time and energy getting ready for this conference, and I want to thank you all for your hard work and dedication. You may be sure that your efforts will not go unappreciated and that they will soon bear fruit in the days to come.

Let me conclude by thanking you all again for your participation and sincerely hoping that everyone has a positive and fulfilling experience. Let's rise to the challenges at hand as a team and work toward a more promising and tranquil future. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me before, during, and after the conference.
ggwwpru5@gmail.com

Warm regards,

Danyal Ok

2. Introduction to the Committee

The Historical Security Council is the historical simulation of the Security Council, which is the strongest organ authorized to take legal measurements worldwide of the United Nations responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is so organized as to be able to function continuously, and a representative of each of its members must be present including the permanent countries; United States of America, the French Republic,

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Russian Federation and the people's Republic of China, at all times at the United Nations Headquarters.

A State, which is a Member of the United Nations but not of the Security Council, may participate, without a vote, in its discussions when the Council considers that that country's interests are affected. Both Members of the United Nations and non-members, if they are parties to a dispute being considered by the Council, are invited to take part, without a vote, in the Council's discussions; the Council sets the conditions for participation by a non-member State. The Presidency of the Council rotates monthly, according to the English alphabetical listing of its member States.

The Security Council takes the lead in determining the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression. It calls upon the parties to a dispute to settle it by peaceful means and recommends methods of adjustment or terms of settlement.

Function

The United Nations Security Council was created to primarily maintain international peace and security across the world. It is also entitled to accept new members to the United Nations and accept changes to the UN charter.

Powers

The UN Security Council has the power to establish peacekeeping operations and enforce international sanctions as well as authorize military actions through the resolutions it submits. It is also the only UN body that is authorized to issue binding resolutions to its member states, meaning that all countries have to abide by the passed resolutions of the Security Council.

Structure

The Security Council consists of fifteen members, including five permanent members and ten non-permanent members, elected on a regional basis to serve a term of two years. The five permanent members can veto resolutions and clauses without giving an explanation.

3. Introduction to the Agenda Item

The Suez Crisis, also known as the Second Arab–Israeli War, the Tripartite Aggression in the Arab world and the Sinai War in Israel, was a British–French–Israeli invasion of Egypt in 1956. Israel invaded on 29 October, having done so with the primary objective of re-opening the Straits of Tiran and the Gulf of Aqaba as the recent tightening of the eight-year-long Egyptian blockade further prevented Israeli passage. After issuing a joint ultimatum for a ceasefire, the United Kingdom and France joined the Israelis on 5 November, seeking to depose Egyptian president

Gamal Abdel Nasser and regain control of the Suez Canal, which Nasser had earlier nationalised by transferring administrative control from the foreign-owned Suez Canal Company to Egypt's new

government-owned Suez Canal Authority.

Shortly after the invasion began, the three countries came under heavy political

pressure from both the United States and

the Soviet Union, as well as from the United Nations, eventually prompting their withdrawal from Egypt. The Crisis demonstrated that the United Kingdom and France could no longer pursue their independent foreign policy without consent from the United States. Israel's

four-month-long occupation of the Egyptian-occupied Gaza Strip and Egypt's Sinai Peninsula enabled it to attain freedom of navigation through the Straits of Tiran, but the Suez Canal was closed from October 1956 to March 1957.



4. General Overview

Historical Background

The Suez Canal was opened in 1869, after ten years of work financed by the French and Egyptian governments. The canal was operated by the Suez Company, an Egyptian-chartered company; the area surrounding the canal remained sovereign Egyptian territory and the only land-bridge between Africa and Asia.

The canal instantly became strategically important, as it provided the shortest ocean link between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean. The canal eased commerce for

trading nations and particularly helped European colonial powers to gain and govern their colonies.

In 1875, as a result of debt and financial crisis, Egypt was forced to sell its shares in the operating company to the British government. They were willing buyers and obtained a 44% share in the company for £4 million (equivalent to £476 million in 2023). This maintained the majority shareholdings of the mostly-French private investors. With the 1882 invasion and occupation of Egypt, the UK took de facto control of the country as well as the canal, its finances and operations.

The 1888 Convention of Constantinople declared the canal a neutral zone under British protection. In ratifying it, the Ottoman Empire agreed to permit international shipping to pass freely through the canal, in time of war and peace. The Convention came into force in 1904, the same year as the Entente Cordiale between Britain and France.

Despite this convention, the strategic importance of the canal and its control were proven during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05, after Japan and Britain entered into a separate bilateral agreement. Following the Japanese attack on the Russian Pacific Fleet at Port Arthur, the Russians sent reinforcements from their fleet in the Baltic Sea. The British denied the Russian Baltic Fleet use of the canal after the Dogger Bank incident and forced it to steam around the Cape of Good Hope in Africa, giving the Imperial Japanese Armed Forces time to consolidate their position.

The importance of the canal as a strategic intersection was again apparent during the First World War, when Britain and France closed the canal to non-Allied shipping. The attempt by the German-led Ottoman Fourth Army to storm the canal in 1915 led the British to commit 100,000 troops to the defence of Egypt for the rest of the war.

Nationalisation of the Suez Canal

On 26 July 1956, in a speech in Alexandria, Nasser gave a riposte to Dulles. During his speech he deliberately pronounced the name of Ferdinand de Lesseps, the builder of the canal, a code-word for Egyptian forces to seize control of the canal and implement its nationalisation. He announced that the Nationalization Law had been published, that all assets of the Suez Canal Company had been frozen, and that stockholders would be paid the price of

their shares according to the day's closing price on the Paris Stock Exchange. That same day, Egypt closed the canal to Israeli shipping. Egypt also closed the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping, and blockaded the Gulf of Aqaba, in contravention of the Constantinople Convention of 1888. Many argued that this was also a violation of the 1949 Armistice Agreements.

According to the Egyptian historian Abd al-Azim Ramadan, the events leading up to the nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company, as well as other events during Nasser's rule, showed Nasser to be far from a rational, responsible leader. Ramadan notes Nasser's decision to nationalise the Suez Canal without political consultation as an example of his predilection for solitary decision-making.

British response

The nationalisation surprised Britain and its Commonwealth. There had been no discussion of the canal at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in London in late June and early July: 7–8 Egypt's action, however, threatened British economic and military interests in the region. Prime Minister Eden was under immense domestic pressure from Conservative MPs who drew direct comparisons between the events of 1956 and those of the Munich Agreement in 1938. Since the U.S. government did not support the British protests, the British government decided in favour of military intervention against Egypt to keep the oil supply flowing and avoid the complete collapse of British influence in the region.

Eden was hosting a dinner for King Feisal II of Iraq and his Prime Minister, Nuri es-Said, when he learned the canal had been nationalised. They both unequivocally advised Eden to "hit Nasser hard, hit him soon, and hit him by yourself" – a stance shared by the vast majority of the British people in subsequent weeks. "There is a lot of humbug about Suez," Guy Millard, one of Eden's private secretaries, later recorded. "People forget that the policy at the time was extremely popular." Leader of the Opposition Hugh Gaitskell was also at the dinner. He immediately agreed that military action might be inevitable, but warned Eden would have to keep the Americans closely informed. After a session of the House of Commons expressed anger against the Egyptian action on 27 July, Eden justifiably believed that Parliament would support him; Gaitskell spoke for his party when he called the nationalisation a "high-handed and totally unjustifiable step" When Eden made a ministerial broadcast on the nationalisation, Labour declined its right to reply.

French response

The French Prime Minister Guy Mollet, outraged by Nasser's move, determined that Nasser would not get his way. French public opinion very much supported Mollet, and apart from the French Communist Party, all of the criticism of his government came from the right, who very publicly doubted that a socialist like Mollet had the guts to go to war with Nasser. During an interview with publisher Henry Luce, Mollet held up a copy of Nasser's book *The Philosophy of the Revolution* and said: "This is Nasser's *Mein Kampf*. If we're too stupid not to read it, understand it and draw the obvious conclusions, then so much the worse for us."

On 29 July 1956, the French Cabinet decided upon military action against Egypt in alliance with Israel, and Admiral Nomy of the French Naval General Staff was sent to Britain to inform the leaders of that country of France's decision, and to invite them to co-operate if interested. At the same time, Mollet felt very much offended by what he considered to be the lackadaisical attitude of the Eisenhower administration to the nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company. This was especially the case because earlier in 1956 the Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov had offered the French a deal whereby if Moscow ended its support of the FLN in Algeria, Paris would remain in NATO but become "semi-neutralist" in the Cold War.

Given the way that Algeria (which the French considered an integral part of France) had become engulfed in a spiral of increasing violence that French leaders longed to put an end to, the Mollet administration had felt tempted by Molotov's offer, but in the end, Mollet, a firm Atlanticist, had chosen to remain faithful to NATO. In Mollet's view, his fidelity to NATO had earned him the right to expect firm American support against Egypt, and when that support proved not forthcoming, he became even more determined that if the Americans were not willing to do anything about Nasser, then France would act.

Commonwealth response

Among the "White Dominions" of the British Commonwealth, Canada had few ties with the Suez Canal and twice had refused British requests for peacetime military aid in the Middle East. It had little reaction to the seizure before military action. By 1956 the Panama Canal was much more important than Suez to Australia and New Zealand; the following year two experts would write that it "is not vital to the Australian economy". The memory, however, of the two nations fighting in two world wars to protect a canal which many still

called their "lifeline" to Britain or "jugular vein", contributed to Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies and New Zealand Prime Minister Sidney Holland supporting Britain in the early weeks following the seizure. On 7 August Holland hinted to his parliament that New Zealand might send troops to assist Britain, and received support from the opposition. On 13 August, Menzies, who had travelled to London from the United States after hearing of the nationalisation and became an informal member of the British Cabinet discussing the issue, spoke on the BBC in support of the Eden government's position on the canal. He called the dispute over the canal "a crisis more grave than any since the Second World War ended". An elder statesman of the Commonwealth who felt that Nasser's actions threatened trading nations like Australia, he argued publicly that Western powers had built the canal but that Egypt was now seeking to exclude them from a role in its ownership or management. South Africa's Johannes Strijdom stated "it is best to keep our heads out of the beehive". His government saw Nasser as an enemy but would benefit economically and geopolitically from a closed canal, and diplomatically from not opposing a nation's right to govern its internal affairs.

The "non-white Dominions" saw Egypt's seizing of the canal as an admirable act of anti-imperialism, and Nasser's Arab nationalism as similar to Asian nationalism. Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was with Nasser when he learned of the Anglo-American withdrawal of aid for the Aswan Dam. As India was a major user of the canal, however, he remained publicly neutral other than warning that any use of force, or threats, could be "disastrous". Suez was also very important to the Dominion of Ceylon's economy, and it was renegotiating defence treaties with Britain, so its government was not as vocal in supporting Egypt as it would have likely been otherwise. Pakistan was also cautious about supporting Egypt given their rivalry as leading Islamic nations, but its government did state that Nasser had the right to nationalise.

Motives for invading Egypt

Britain and France

Britain was anxious lest it lose efficient access to the remains of its empire. Both Britain and France were eager that the canal should remain open as an important conduit of oil.



Both the French and the British felt that Nasser should be removed from power. The French "held the Egyptian president responsible for assisting the anti-colonial rebellion in Algeria". France was nervous about the growing influence that Nasser exerted on its North African colonies and protectorates.

Israel

On the eve of the invasion, David Ben-Gurion outlined to Guy Mollet, the French Prime minister, his plan for a 'new order' in the Middle East. This consisted of (a) Israel occupying and annexing both the Gaza Strip and the Sinai; (b) an Israeli annexation of Southern Lebanon, and the creation of a Christian Maronite state in the remaining territory; (c) the dismantling of Jordan by dividing its land between Israel and Iraq, with Israel annexing the West Bank and Iraq undertaking in a peace treaty to absorb the Palestinian refugees in the former, and in Jordanian refugee camps. Aspiring also to overthrow Nasser, the plan foresaw Israeli exercising control over the Gulf of Aqaba.

Israel wanted to reopen the Straits of Tiran leading to the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli shipping, and saw the opportunity to strengthen its southern border and to weaken what it saw as a dangerous and hostile state. This was particularly felt in the form of attacks injuring approximately 1,300 civilians emanating from the Egyptian-held Gaza Strip, during the period of Israel's Border Wars

The Israelis were also deeply troubled by Egypt's procurement of large amounts of Soviet weaponry that included 530 armoured vehicles, of which 230 were tanks; 500 guns; 150 MiG-15 jet fighters; 50 Ilyushin Il-28 bombers; submarines and other naval craft. The influx of this advanced weaponry altered an already shaky balance of power. Israel was alarmed by the Czech arms deal, and believed it had only a narrow window of opportunity to hit Egypt's army. Additionally, Israel believed Egypt had formed a secret alliance with Jordan and Syria.

Notably, the strategic alignment of Israel and Britain leading up to the Suez invasion, as represented in the Protocol of Sèvres, "marked the end of the estrangement between Britain and the Zionist movement that went back to the White Paper of 1939.

Forces:

British

Universal Newsreel from 6 August about the departure of British and French ships for Egypt

British troops were well-trained, experienced, and had good morale, but suffered from the economic and technological limitations imposed by post-war austerity. The 16th Independent Parachute Brigade Group, which was intended to be the main British strike force against Egypt, was heavily involved in the Cyprus Emergency, which led to a neglect of paratroop training in favour of counter-insurgency operations. The Royal Navy could project formidable power through the guns of its warships and aircraft flown from its carriers, but lacked amphibious capability.

The Royal Navy had just undergone a major and innovative carrier modernisation program. The Royal Air Force (RAF) had just introduced two long-range bombers, the Vickers Valiant and the English Electric Canberra, but owing to their recent entry into service the RAF had not yet established proper bombing techniques for these aircraft. Despite this, General Charles Keightley, the commander of the invasion force, believed that air power alone was sufficient to defeat Egypt. By contrast, General Hugh Stockwell, the Task Force's ground commander, believed that methodical and systematic armoured operations centred on the Centurion battle tank would be the key to victory.

French

French troops were experienced and well-trained but suffered from cutbacks imposed by post-war politics of economic austerity. In 1956, the French Armed Forces was heavily involved in the Algerian war, which made operations against Egypt a major distraction. French paratroopers of the elite Regiment de Parachutistes Coloniaux (RPC) were extremely experienced, battle-hardened, and very tough soldiers, who had greatly distinguished themselves in the fighting in Indochina and in Algeria. The men of the RPC followed a "shoot first, ask questions later" policy towards civilians, first adopted in Vietnam, which was to lead to the killing of a number of Egyptian civilians. The rest of the French troops were described by the American military historian Derek Varble as "competent, but not outstanding".

The main French (and Israeli) tank, the AMX-13, was designed for mobile, flanking operations, which led to a tank that was lightly armoured but agile. General André Beaufre, who served as Stockwell's subordinate, favoured a swift campaign of movement in which the main objective was to encircle the enemy. Throughout the operation, Beaufre proved himself to be more aggressive than his British counterparts, always urging that some bold steps be taken at once. The French Navy had a powerful carrier force which was excellent for projecting power inland, but, like its British counterpart, suffered from a lack of landing craft.

Israeli

American military historian Derek Varble called the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) the "best" military force in the Middle East while at the same time suffering from "deficiencies" such as "immature doctrine, faulty logistics, and technical inadequacies". The IDF's Chief of Staff, Major General Moshe Dayan, encouraged aggression, initiative, and ingenuity among the Israeli officer corps while ignoring logistics and armoured operations. Dayan, a firm infantry man, preferred that arm of the service at the expense of armour, which Dayan saw as clumsy, pricey, and suffering from frequent breakdowns.

At the same time, the IDF had a rather disorganised logistics arm, which was put under severe strain when the IDF invaded the Sinai. Most of the IDF weapons in 1956 came from France. The main IDF tank was the AMX-13 and the main aircraft were the Dassault Mystère IVA and the Ouragan. Superior pilot training was to give the Israeli Air Force an unbeatable edge over their Egyptian opponents. The Israeli Navy consisted of two destroyers, seven frigates, eight minesweepers, several landing craft, and fourteen torpedo boats.

Egyptian

In the Egyptian Armed Forces, politics rather than military competence was the main criterion for promotion. The Egyptian commander, Field Marshal Abdel Hakim Amer, was a purely political appointee who owed his position to his close friendship with Nasser. A heavy drinker, he would prove himself grossly incompetent as a general during the Crisis. In 1956, the Egyptian military was well equipped with weapons from the Soviet Union such as T-34 and IS-3 tanks, MiG-15 fighters, Ilyushin Il-28 bombers, SU-100 self-propelled guns and assault rifles.

Rigid lines between officers and men in the Egyptian Army led to a mutual "mistrust and contempt" between officers and the men who served under them. Egyptian troops were excellent in defensive operations, but had little capacity for offensive operations, owing to the lack of "rapport and effective small-unit leadership".

Invasion of Egypt

Khan Yunis Massacre

The Khan Yunis massacre took place on 3 November 1956, perpetrated by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in the Palestinian town of Khan Yunis and the nearby refugee camp of the same name in the Gaza Strip during the Suez Crisis.

According to Benny Morris, during an IDF operation to reopen the Egyptian-blockaded Straits of Tiran, Israeli soldiers shot two hundred Palestinians in Khan Yunis and Rafah. According to Noam Chomsky's *The Fateful Triangle*, citing Donald Neff, 275 Palestinians were killed in a brutal house-to-house search for fedayeen (while a further 111 were reportedly killed in Rafah).

Israeli authorities say that IDF soldiers ran into local militants and a battle erupted.

United Nations Report

On 15 December 1956, the Special Report of the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East Covering the Period 1 November 1956 to mid-December 1956 was presented to the General Assembly of the United Nations. The report told both sides of the "Khan Yunis incident". According to the UNRWA report, "the Director has received from sources he considers trustworthy lists of names of persons allegedly killed on 3 November, numbering 275 individuals". The Director's notes also acknowledge a similar incident, the Rafah massacre, immediately following that city's occupation

Aftermath Of “Khan Yunis”

A curfew imposed on the citizens of Gaza prevented them from retrieving the bodies of their fellow villagers, leaving them strewn about the area overnight. Injured victims of the shootings would later be transported to Gaza City by the International Red Cross for medical treatment. Israel, bowing to international pressure, withdrew from Gaza and the Sinai in March 1957. Shortly thereafter, a mass grave was unearthed in the vicinity of Khan Yunis, containing the bound bodies of forty Palestinian men who had been shot in the back of the head

Palestinian sources list the number at 415 killed, and a further 57 who were unaccounted for, or disappeared. According to the future Hamas leader Abdel Aziz al-Rantisi, an 8-year-old child in Khan Yunis at the time who witnessed one of the killings, of his uncle, 525 Gazans were killed by the IDF "in cold blood".

Israeli soldier Marek Gefen was serving in Gaza during the Suez Crisis. In 1982, Gefen, having become a journalist, published his observations of walking through the town shortly following the killings. In his account of post-occupation Khan Yunis, he said, "In a few alleyways we found bodies strewn on the ground, covered in blood, their heads shattered. No one had taken care of moving them. It was dreadful. I stopped at a corner and threw up. I couldn't get used to the sight of a human slaughterhouse."

Casualties

British casualties stood at 22 dead and 96 wounded, while French casualties were 10 dead and 33 wounded. The Israeli losses were 172 dead and 817 wounded. The number of Egyptians killed was "never reliably established". Egyptian casualties to the Israeli invasion were estimated at 1,000–3,000 dead and 4,000 wounded, while losses to the Anglo-French operation were estimated at 650 dead and 900 wounded. 1,000 Egyptian civilians are estimated to have died.

End of hostilities:

British anti-war protests

Although the public believed the British government's justification of the invasion as a separation of Israeli and Egyptian forces, protests against the war occurred in Britain after it began. On the popular television talk show Free Speech, an especially bitter debate took place on 31 October with the leftist historian A. J. P. Taylor and the Labour journalist and future

party leader Michael Foot by calling their colleague on Free Speech, the Conservative MP Robert Boothby, a "criminal" for supporting the war.

According to some historians, the majority of British people were on Eden's side. On 10 and 11 November an opinion poll found 53% supported the war, with 32% opposed.

The majority of Conservative constituency associations passed resolutions of support to "Sir Anthony". Gilbert Murray was among Oxford scholars who signed a statement supporting Eden; such an act by the famous advocate of internationalism amazed both sides. He explained that, if not stopped, he believed Nasserism would become a Soviet-led worldwide anti-western movement.

International Reaction:

Response by Western governments

The operation, aimed at taking control of the Suez Canal, Gaza, and parts of Sinai, was highly successful for the invaders from a military point of view, but was a disaster from a political point of view, resulting in international criticism and diplomatic pressure. Along with the Suez crisis, the United States was also dealing with the near-simultaneous Hungarian revolution. Vice-President Richard Nixon later explained: "We couldn't on one hand, complain about the Soviets intervening in Hungary and, on the other hand, approve of the British and the French picking that particular time to intervene against Nasser". Beyond that, it was Eisenhower's belief that if the United States were seen to acquiesce in the attack on Egypt, that the resulting backlash in the Arab world might win the Arabs over to the Soviet Union.



Despite having no commercial or military interest in the area, many countries were concerned with the growing rift between Western allied nations.

When Israel refused to withdraw its troops from the Gaza Strip and Sharm el-Sheikh, Eisenhower declared, "We must not allow Europe to go flat on its back for the want of oil." He sought UN-backed efforts to impose economic sanctions on Israel until it fully withdrew from Egyptian territory. Senate Majority Leader Lyndon B. Johnson and minority leader William Knowland objected to American pressure on Israel. Johnson told the Secretary of State John Foster Dulles that he wanted him to oppose "with all its skill" any attempt to apply sanctions on Israel.

Dulles rebuffed Johnson's request, and informed Eisenhower of the objections made by the Senate. Eisenhower was "insistent on applying economic sanctions" to the extent of cutting off private American assistance to Israel which was estimated to be over \$100 million a year. Ultimately, the Democratic Party-controlled Senate would not co-operate with Eisenhower's position on Israel. Eisenhower finally told Congress he would take the issue to the American people, saying, "America has either one voice or none, and that voice is the voice of the President – whether everybody agrees with him or not." The President spoke to the nation by radio and television where he outlined Israel's refusal to withdraw, explaining his belief that the UN had "no choice but to exert pressure upon Israel".

Reception in the Muslim world

The attack on Egypt greatly offended many in the Muslim world. In Pakistan, 300,000 people took part in a rally in Lahore to show solidarity with Egypt, and a violent mob in Karachi chanting anti-British slogans burned down the British High Commission. In Syria, the government blew up the Kirkuk–Baniyas pipeline, which had allowed Iraqi oil to reach tankers in the Mediterranean, to punish Iraq for supporting the invasion and to cut Britain off from one of its main routes for taking delivery



of Iraqi oil. King Saud of Saudi Arabia imposed a total oil embargo on Britain and France.

Condemnation of the U.N. in West Germany

A rare example of support for the Anglo-French actions against Egypt came from West Germany. Though his Cabinet was divided, West Germany's Chancellor Konrad Adenauer was furious with the United States for its "chumminess with the Russians" as Adenauer called the U.S. refusal to intervene in Hungary and voting with the Soviet Union at the UN Security Council. Adenauer told his Cabinet on 7 November that Nasser was a pro-Soviet force that needed to be cut down to size, and in his view the attack on Egypt was completely justified.

What appalled Adenauer about the crisis was that the United States had come out against the attack on Egypt and voted with the Soviet Union at Security Council against Britain and France, which led Adenauer to fear that the United States and Soviet Union would "carve up the world" according to their own interests with no thought for the interests of European states. Adenauer was especially worried by the fact that the American embassy in Bonn would not provide a clear answer as to what was the American policy in response to the Bulganin letters. Adenauer maintained to his Cabinet that the French had every right to invade Egypt because of Nasser's support for the FLN in Algeria, but the British were partly to blame because they "inexplicably" shut down their Suez Canal base in 1954.

Subsequently, the traditionally Francophile Adenauer drew closer to Paris. On 5–6 November 1956, he refused to cancel a planned visit to Paris, and his summit with Mollet was clearly meant to be seen as a gesture of moral support. One of Adenauer's aides, Fritz von Eckardt, commented regarding the opening ceremony in Paris where Mollet and Adenauer stood side by side that the national anthems were played "in the most serious hour France had experienced since the end of the war the two governments were standing shoulder by shoulder". During the summit in Paris, Mollet commented to Adenauer that a Soviet nuclear strike could destroy Paris at any moment, which added considerably to the tension and helped to draw the French and Germans closer.

Soviet sabre-rattling

Although the Soviet Union's position in the crisis was as helpless as was the United States' regarding Hungary's uprising, Premier Nikolai Bulganin threatened to intervene on the

Egyptian side, and to launch rocket attacks on Britain, France and Israel. Bulganin accused Ben-Gurion of supporting European colonialism, and Mollet of hypocrisy for leading a socialist government while pursuing a right-wing foreign policy.

The Soviet threat to send troops to Egypt to fight the Allies led Eisenhower to fear that this might be the beginning of World War III. One of Eisenhower's aides Emmet Hughes recalled that the reaction at the White House to the Bulganin letters was "sombre" as there was fear that this was the beginning to the countdown to World War III, a war that if it occurred would kill hundreds of millions of people. In private, Eisenhower told Undersecretary of State Herbert Hoover Jr. of his fears that:

The Soviet Union might be ready to undertake any wild adventure. They are as scared and furious as Hitler was in his last days. There's nothing more dangerous than a dictatorship in that frame of mind.

If the Soviet Union did go to war with NATO allies Britain and France, then the United States would be unable to remain neutral, because the United States' obligations under NATO would come into effect, requiring them to go to war with the Soviet Union in defence of Britain and France. Likewise, if the Soviet Union attacked Israel, though there was no formal American commitment to defend Israel, the Eisenhower administration would come under heavy domestic pressure to intervene. From Eisenhower's viewpoint, it was better to end the war against Egypt rather than run the risk of this escalating into the Third World War, in case Khrushchev was serious about going to war in defence of Egypt as he insisted in public that he was.

Eisenhower's reaction to these threats from the Soviet Union was: "If those fellows start something, we may have to hit 'em — and, if necessary, with everything in the bucket." Eisenhower immediately ordered Lockheed U-2 flights over Syria and Israel to search for any Soviet air forces on Syrian bases, so the British and French could destroy them. He told Hoover and CIA director Allen Dulles, "If the Soviets attack the French and British directly, we would be in a war and we would be justified in taking military action even if Congress were not in session." The Americans excluded Israel from the guarantee against Soviet attack, however, alarming the Israeli government. The U-2 showed that Soviet aircraft were not in Syria despite the threats.

Khrushchev often claimed to possess a vast arsenal of nuclear-tipped ICBMs, and while disclaiming any intention of starting a war, maintained that he would be more than happy to turn a conventional war into a nuclear one if war did come. U-2 flights over the Soviet Union, which were intended to discover if the country really did have the nuclear arsenal that it claimed to have, only started in July 1956, and it was not until February 1959 that it firmly established that Khrushchev had vastly exaggerated his nuclear strength.

The supposedly huge Soviet arsenal of ICBMs, with which Khrushchev would wipe out the cities of Britain, France, Israel, and if necessary the United States consisted only of four Semyorka missiles stationed at a swamp south of Arkhangelsk. From the viewpoint of Eisenhower, in 1956 he had no way of knowing for certain whether Khrushchev's nuclear braggadocio was for real or not.

Earlier in 1956, Dulles had warned Eisenhower that Khrushchev was "the most dangerous person to lead the Soviet Union since the October Revolution" as Khrushchev was "not a coldly calculating person, but rather one who reacted emotionally. He was obviously intoxicated much of the time and could be expected to commit irrational acts." Khrushchev later admitted in his memoirs that he was not seriously "thinking of going to war" in November 1956 as he claimed at the time as he lacked the necessary ICBMs to make good his threats.

Economic pressure on Britain and France

The United States also put financial pressure on the UK to end the invasion. Because the Bank of England had lost \$45 million between 30 October and 2 November, and Britain's oil supply had been restricted by the closing of the Suez Canal, the British sought immediate assistance from the IMF, but it was denied by the United States. Eisenhower in fact ordered his Secretary of the Treasury, George M. Humphrey, to prepare to sell part of the US Government's Sterling Bond holdings. The UK government considered invading Kuwait and Qatar if oil sanctions were put in place by the US.

Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer, Harold Macmillan, advised his Prime Minister, Anthony Eden, that the United States was fully prepared to carry out this threat. He also warned his Prime Minister that Britain's foreign exchange reserves simply could not sustain

the devaluation of the pound that would come after the United States' actions; and that within weeks of such a move, the country would be unable to import the food and energy supplies needed to sustain the population on the islands. However, there were suspicions in the Cabinet that Macmillan had deliberately overstated the financial situation in order to force Eden out. What Treasury officials had told Macmillan was far less serious than what he told the Cabinet.

In concert with U.S. actions, Saudi Arabia started an oil embargo against Britain and France. The U.S. refused to fill the gap until Britain and France agreed to a rapid withdrawal. Other NATO members refused to sell oil they received from Arab nations to Britain or France.

Ceasefire

Because the British government faced political and economic pressure, the Prime Minister, Anthony Eden, announced a ceasefire on 6 November, warning neither France nor Israel beforehand. Troops were still in Port Said and on operational manoeuvres when the order came from London. Port Said had been overrun, and the military assessment was that the Suez Canal could have been completely taken within 24 hours.

Eisenhower initially agreed to meet with Eden and Mollet to resolve their differences, but then cancelled the proposed meeting after Secretary of State Dulles advised him it risked inflaming the Middle Eastern situation further.



Eisenhower was not in favour of an immediate withdrawal of British, French and Israeli troops until the US ambassador to the United Nations, Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. pushed for it. Eden's predecessor Winston Churchill commented on 22 November, "I cannot understand why our troops were halted. To go so far and not go on was madness." Churchill further added that while he might not have dared to begin the military operation, nevertheless once having ordered it he would certainly not have dared to stop it before it had achieved its objective. Without further guarantee, the Anglo-French Task Force had to finish withdrawing by 22 December 1956, to be replaced by Danish and Colombian units of the UNEF.

The Israelis refused to host any UN force on Israeli-controlled territory and withdrew from the Sinai and Gaza in March 1957. Before the withdrawal the Israeli forces systematically destroyed infrastructure in the Sinai peninsula such as roads, railways and telephone lines, and all houses in the villages of Abu Ageila and El Quseima. Before the railway was destroyed, Israeli troops confiscated Egyptian National Railways equipment including six locomotives and a 30-ton breakdown crane for use by Israel Railways. The UNEF was formed by forces from countries that were not part of the major alliances, NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Canadian Armed Forces troops participated in later years, since Canada had spearheaded the idea of a neutral force. By 24 April 1957, the canal was fully reopened to shipping.

5. Relevant UN Treaties, Resolutions and Events

U.N. General Assembly Resolution 997

On 30 October, the Security Council held a meeting, at the request of the United States, when it submitted a draft resolution calling upon Israel immediately to withdraw its armed forces behind the established armistice lines. It was not adopted because of British and French vetoes. A similar draft resolution sponsored by the Soviet Union was also rejected. On 31 October, also as planned, France and the UK



launched an air attack against targets in Egypt, which was followed shortly by a landing of their troops at the northern end of the canal zone. Later that day, considering the grave situation created by the actions against Egypt, and with lack of unanimity among the permanent members preventing it from exercising its primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security, the Security Council passed Resolution 119; it decided to call an emergency special session of the General Assembly for the first time, as provided in the 1950 "Uniting for Peace" resolution, in order to make appropriate recommendations to end the fighting.

The emergency special session was convened 1 November; the same day Nasser requested diplomatic assistance from the U.S., without requesting the same from the Soviet Union; he was at first sceptical of the efficacy of U.S. diplomatic efforts at the UN, but later gave full credit to Eisenhower's role in stopping the war.

In the early hours of 2 November, the General Assembly adopted the United States' proposal for Resolution 997 (ES-I); the vote was 64 in favour and 5 opposed (Australia, New Zealand, Britain, France, and Israel) with 6 abstentions. It called for an immediate ceasefire, the withdrawal of all forces behind the armistice lines, an arms embargo, and the reopening of the Suez Canal, which was now blocked. The Secretary-General was requested to observe and report promptly on compliance to both the Security Council and General Assembly, for further action as deemed appropriate in accordance with the UN Charter.

Over the next several days, the emergency special session consequently adopted a series of enabling resolutions, which established the first United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), on 7 November by Resolution 1001. This proposal of the emergency force and the resulting cease-fire was made possible primarily through the efforts of Lester B. Pearson, the Secretary of External Affairs of Canada, and Dag Hammarskjöld, the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Britain and France agreed to withdraw from Egypt within a week; Israel did not.

The role of Nehru, both as Indian Prime minister and a leader of the Non Aligned Movement was significant; the Indian historian Inder Malhotra wrote that "Now Nehru—who had tried to be even-handed between the two sides—denounced Eden and co-sponsors of the aggression vigorously. He had a powerful, if relatively silent, ally in the U.S. president

Dwight Eisenhower who went to the extent of using America's clout in the IMF to make Eden and Mollet behave". The Indian historian Inder Malhotra wrote about Nehru's role that: "So the Suez War ended in Britain's humiliation. Eden lost his job. Nehru achieved his objective of protecting Egypt's sovereignty and Nasser's honour".

6. Further Reading

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